

11 April 2018

Consultation on micro-credentials in New Zealand's education and training system

We are pleased to provide comment to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) on proposals to recognise micro-credentials in New Zealand's education and training system.

About Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand is a national organisation that promotes high-quality early childhood education (ECE) through initial teacher education, professional development, leadership programmes, advocacy and membership services.

Te Rito Maioha is a membership organisation. We represent early childhood education services and the teachers who provide education and care to thousands of infants, toddlers and young children. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based and privately-owned education and care services, home-based services and kindergartens.

Te Rito Maioha is also one of New Zealand's top providers of initial teacher education for ECE teachers, and is recognised as a leader in bicultural teacher education. We deliver a suite of qualifications and teacher education and professional development programmes that are of interest to both domestic and international students.

Te Rito Maioha is committed to high-quality early childhood care and education for every New Zealand child. That has been our purpose for 55 years since our formation in 1963, originally as the New Zealand Association of Childcare Centres and later as Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa | NZ Childcare Association.

Response to proposals to recognise micro-credentials

We support proposals to recognise micro-credentials, alongside qualifications, being delivered by tertiary providers within New Zealand's regulated education and training system from July 2018. We have no objection to the term "micro-credential".

We consider micro-credentials a potentially very useful means by which to upskill parts of the unqualified early childhood education (ECE) workforce. There are unqualified staff in ECE services who do not necessarily aspire to become qualified ECE teachers, but whose practice as educators would benefit from acquiring some specific skills in and knowledge about working with tamariki. Upskilling staff in this way could help to strengthen the quality of education and care for tamariki at those services.

We would support moves to list approved micro-credentials on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, and to record learners' achievement on the New Zealand Record of Achievement. We think that recognition of this kind lends greater legitimacy to the skills and knowledge being acquired by learners, and may inspire them to further upskill or even gain formal qualifications. We also consider that embedding micro-credentials in the system will help to protect the quality and consistency of education and training in New Zealand.



The consultation documentation is careful to point out that decisions about what government should quality assure are separate from decisions about what government should fund. We understand that the decision to fund micro-credentials rests with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC); and we would support the TEC funding micro-credentials.

We think it worth noting here though that the education sector is currently developing a workforce strategy, so it can plan for the future – this is of particular importance given current teacher shortages in both ECE and the compulsory sector. We think that government funding to support the unqualified education workforce to upskill would be a positive step towards strengthening the learning outcomes and life prospects of all New Zealanders.

Email submission to NZQA by 13 April 2018: gadconsultations@nzqa.govt.nz

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