

# A Foundation For Progression:

Graduate Profiles  
for Level 1 and 2 Qualifications



# Acknowledgements

This report is a result of many voices, all of which have helped to form and refine the development of these graduate profiles. Ako Aotearoa greatly appreciates the thoughtful and informed input of those who participated in the consultation processes, particularly the members of the Sector Advisory Group. A full list of those who contributed is available in Appendix B of this report.

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# Foreword

Ako Aotearoa has a strong commitment to high-quality foundation education. As discussed in our 2012 *Lifting Our Game* report, these programmes have significant potential to provide routes back into education, address inequality, and develop the collective skills and knowledge Aotearoa New Zealand needs for social and economic prosperity.

We were therefore pleased to be invited by the Tertiary Education Commission to develop, in consultation with the sector, a set of general graduate profiles for qualifications at levels 1 and 2 of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. These profiles will help us to think more systematically about the core elements of such education, and what we need to do to ensure that these qualifications are of consistently high quality in terms of relevance and purpose.

As with *Lifting Our Game*, this report emphasises that the primary purpose of foundation education is progression. Being able to go on to further study or training is an important element of all education. For levels 1 and 2, however, equipping learners with the necessary skills, knowledge, and dispositions to move along a flexible education pathway must be the main aim of qualification designers, programme developers, tutors, and tertiary organisations. This is true whether we are talking about general educational qualifications or more contextualised, industry-focused learning.

Learners pursue these qualifications for a variety of reasons, and from a variety of starting points. The design and intended outcomes of specific qualifications and programmes must recognise this. However, defining the purpose of foundation education as progression has allowed us to identify a set of common characteristics and skills that all learners should possess when they graduate with such qualifications.

These profiles do not just reflect what the literature tells us is important for learners at these levels. They also draw on the expertise of those who work in this area, and their practical experience of what creates successful progression. I would therefore like to extend Ako Aotearoa's sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to this work through workshops, meetings, and online consultation, and particularly acknowledge the contributions made by the Sector Advisory Group. I would also especially like to thank Liz Chinlund and Nyk Huntington, our Research Associate and Senior Project/Research Analyst respectively, for their work on this project and preparation of this report.

These graduate profiles are an important step for high-quality foundation education in Aotearoa New Zealand, as they ensure that all of us are 'on the same page' when we discuss appropriate policies, practices, and approaches for supporting success in this part of the tertiary sector. I look forward to Ako Aotearoa's ongoing involvement in work to achieve the best possible outcomes for foundation learners.



Dr Peter Coolbear  
Director  
Ako Aotearoa

# Executive Summary

This report presents generalised graduate profiles for learners studying at Levels 1 and 2 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF). Based on work commissioned by the Tertiary Education Commission, it builds on Ako Aotearoa’s earlier *Lifting Our Game* work, which sought to establish how our educational system could better meet the needs of priority learners

Having these profiles available will make it easier for learners, tertiary organisations, qualification and programme developers, and government agencies to all be ‘on the same page’ when discussing the purpose and nature of qualifications at these levels. It is anticipated that these profiles will inform future government thinking about investment and qualifications review.

The project involved an analysis of current graduate profiles in level 1 and level 2 qualifications, exploration of relevant literature, public consultation through online submissions and small group workshops, and input from two reference groups: one of practitioners from the sector and one of government officials.

The key consideration of this project has been to ensure that the needs of all Level 1 and 2 learners are met by the qualifications they achieve, and to bring together existing expertise within the sector. Their purpose is to promote good practice and consistency across Level 1 and 2 education, not prescribe specific qualifications or methods of achieving outcomes. Throughout our consultation there was general consensus that a *qualification* should be designed serve all types of potential learners studying at Levels 1 and 2, while different *programmes* may provide different approaches to achieving that qualification which cater more specifically to different learner groups.

Learners pursue Level 1 and 2 qualifications for a variety of reasons, and these qualifications are designed for a variety of purposes. However, our starting point has been that the fundamental purpose of these levels is enabling learners to be ready to progress into more advanced education and more skilled employment. Level 1 and 2 qualifications should provide a basis for moving along a pathway, while recognising that learners are usually not yet ready to ‘specialise’ and therefore should not be confined to one specific path.

Through this work, we have been able to summarise four different types of graduate profiles as described in the matrix below. Within these profiles are a common set of *Core Capabilities* that collectively describe what a person with a Level 1 or 2 qualification needs to know, do, and be in order to progress to the next level of learning. These capabilities are: *literacy, numeracy, learning, work, community and cultural, and progression*. Graduates who have engaged with a qualification intended to provide more specific forms of occupational or educational readiness would also benefit from developing *Occupational Capability* along with the suggested *Core Capabilities*.

## LEVEL 1 AND 2 GRADUATE PROFILES MATRIX

Readiness:		General	Occupational
Progression ↑	Level 2	<i>Level 2 graduates are confident in applying core capabilities necessary to participate in their communities (work, study, and other) and are ready to progress to level 3 qualifications.</i>	<i>Level 2 graduates are confident in applying core capabilities and occupational capability necessary to participate in a linked set of occupations, and are ready to progress along a career path that includes level 3 qualifications.</i>
	Level 1	<i>Level 1 graduates are able to apply core capabilities necessary to participate in their communities (work, study, and other) and are ready to progress to level 2 qualifications.</i>	<i>Level 1 graduates are able to apply core capabilities and occupational capability necessary to participate in a linked set of occupations, and are ready to progress along a career path that includes level 2 qualifications.</i>

## ***Literacy***

Literacy is a core skill that in many ways underpins all other capabilities. In practice, literacy is situated in particular contexts, and involves the application of learners' literacy knowledge and skills in order to participate in those contexts.

## ***Numeracy***

Numeracy capability recognises learners' ability to "use mathematical knowledge to meet the varied demands of their personal, study, and work lives" (TEC 2008b, p34). It represents the numeracy skills and knowledge required to function in society – making sense of numbers, measuring and statistical reasoning.

## ***Learning***

The learning capability is about being able to learn effectively. It involves the acquisition and confident use of learning strategies, and learners beginning to manage their own learning. This capability can apply to various work, study or community learning contexts.

## ***Work***

Work capability involves generic skills of problem solving, functioning in a particular environment, and developing adaptability and resilience strategies. This does not just represent skills necessary for paid employment, but those needed to carry out tasks effectively in a variety of situations.

## ***Community and Cultural***

The Community and Cultural capability represents the capabilities expected from citizens in order to function in and contribute to our society. It should be noted that this capability is not simply about a learner understanding themselves and their community. Developing this capability is also about being able to interact with others in appropriate ways, such as understanding and behaving appropriately toward workmates and customers.

## ***Progression***

The Progression capability is predominately about readiness to progress, and involves learners applying the previously mentioned capabilities to choose and pursue their next career and learning step, while recognising the important role of self-awareness, self-confidence and consideration for others. For many learners, one of the most important dimensions of this purposefulness is the opportunity to explore what their career aspirations and expectations might be and to provide the skills for them to plan and progress their pathways towards these aspirations.

## ***Occupational Capability***

In addition to the above Core Capabilities, there are qualifications that focus on preparing learners for a particular set of occupations, and require including Occupational Capability to their graduate profile. Occupational Capability recognises that particular knowledge, skills, or applications may be required even at these levels for learners who want to engage with a particular industry pathway, or perhaps re-skill or change their career. It is important to note that this capability is not a substitute for the Core Capabilities outlined above. Level 1 and 2 qualifications that address occupational preparation still need to provide learners with the skills needed to progress, and these include appropriate ability in literacy, numeracy, learning, work, community and cultural, and progression.

Overleaf, we have identified a set of example outcome statements for each capability that provide a reference point for establishing specific profiles for an individual qualification.

Having common graduate profiles for all Level 1 and 2 qualifications should help to ensure that educational stakeholders have a common understanding of what graduates from these levels should know, do, and be. These profiles also provide guidelines on how those capabilities can be expressed in a qualification while maintaining the flexibility of providers to design and deliver programmes that respond to the specific learner needs.

We would like to thank the many contributors to this project, who have helped us to verify the capabilities for readiness outlined in this report, and identify how they could be represented. We hope that these common Level 1 and 2 graduate profiles help ensure that all learners are able to effectively progress onto their next work and study opportunity and are appropriately equipped to fully participate in their communities.



## CORE CAPABILITIES FOR LEVEL 1 AND 2 GRADUATES: EXAMPLE OUTCOME STATEMENTS

Capability	A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
<b>Literacy</b>	<p>Communicate with familiar individuals and interact with a group, considering the audience</p> <p>Locate and use information for a specified purpose, using digital technology</p> <p>Make simple inferences (or connections) from texts</p> <p>Manage written tasks relevant to everyday life</p> <p>Use appropriate vocabulary for different everyday situations; Understand familiar words and recognise a few specialised words (e.g. define, summarise)</p>	<p>Interact with a variety of people in a few contexts, considering the purpose, audience, and context</p> <p>Explain, interpret meaning, and evaluate information, including from digital media</p> <p>Match, compare and contrast at least two points of view from texts</p> <p>Manage written tasks appropriate to more specific contexts (e.g. work based)</p> <p>Understand some academic vocabulary (e.g. describe, evaluate) and some words specific to a particular context (e.g. industry)</p>
<b>Numeracy</b>	<p>Do accurate simple calculations and arithmetic operations</p> <p>Perform simple measurements</p>	<p>Identify and understand basic mathematical concepts</p> <p>Interpret graphs and basic statistics</p>
<b>Learning</b>	<p>Take responsibility for their own learning</p> <p>Understand the importance of developing learning strategies and the value of learning</p> <p>Be aware of how external pressures may impact learning</p>	<p>Take responsibility for own learning and performance, respecting interdependence</p> <p>Identify and use a range of learning strategies, such as time-management and an enquiry process; Ask questions and use feedback to improve learning</p> <p>Manage external pressures in order to focus on learning</p>
<b>Work</b>	<p>Follow instructions and demonstrate timeliness</p> <p>Accomplish tasks with guidance, seeking assistance when required</p> <p>Apply basic solutions to simple problems</p>	<p>Adapt to non-routine/a variety of situations and changing circumstances with support or guidance, using strategies to increase resilience</p> <p>Use effective service, teamwork, and technology</p> <p>Apply known solutions to familiar problems</p>
<b>Community &amp; Cultural</b>	<p>Identify their own cultural identity, and begin to identify similarities and differences in individuals' perspectives</p> <p>Understand te ao Māori concepts; recognise the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand</p> <p>Understand appropriate tikanga Māori in everyday settings, and a few te reo Māori words such as greetings</p> <p>Be aware of community needs and confident to participate in their community</p>	<p>Describe their own cultural identity and other diverse perspectives in Aotearoa New Zealand, including Māori and Pacific</p> <p>Apply basic knowledge of te ao Māori concepts and Aotearoa New Zealand culture, including applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles to community involvement</p> <p>Use some te reo Māori words and follow appropriate tikanga Māori, including in formal settings</p> <p>Be involved with community activities (e.g. learning, work, civil, social etc.) and aware of environmental challenges</p>
<b>Progression</b>	<p>Locate and begin to identify and explore relevant opportunities, knowing how and when to seek assistance</p> <p>Use technology (e.g. computers and the internet) for basic tasks</p> <p>Understand the impact of their learning and work on whānau/family and the wider community</p> <p>Establish a sense of belonging and the self-confidence to pursue future opportunities</p>	<p>Consider, set and work towards self-evaluated personal, work, learning, study, and/or life goals that motivate them to act on opportunities</p> <p>Use digital technology to access relevant information and progress with opportunities</p> <p>Understand the importance of the impact of their decisions on themselves and others, and the contribution that they can make to whānau, family, and society</p> <p>Establish a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within a range of situations</p>

## OCCUPATIONAL CAPABILITY FOR LEVEL 1 AND 2 GRADUATES: EXAMPLE OUTCOME STATEMENTS

Capability	A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
<b>Occupational</b>	<p>Engage with new tasks to accomplish a set purpose</p> <p>Use basic occupational health and safety and operational skills</p> <p>Work in highly structured contexts under guidance</p>	<p>Understand basic use of tools, terminology, content, operational procedures, technology, practices, and methods common to the field</p> <p>Use occupational health and safety skills</p> <p>Apply theory and concepts to practices, interactions and workplace challenges</p>

# 1. Introduction

This report presents a set of generalised graduate profiles for learners studying at Levels 1 and 2 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF). Based on work undertaken by Ako Aotearoa for the Tertiary Education Commission in late 2013, it explores the role of foundational education, specifically at Levels 1 and 2, and provides a common set of graduate profiles while recognising diverse learner needs and qualification purposes. This project has built on Ako Aotearoa's earlier *Lifting Our Game* work, and in particular the notion that foundation education needs to be purposeful.

We believe that having these profiles available will make it easier for learners (including industry trainees), tertiary organisations, qualification and programme developers, and government agencies to all be 'on the same page' when discussing the purpose and nature of qualifications at these levels. It is anticipated that these profiles will inform future government thinking about investment and qualifications review.

The report begins by presenting the context for Level 1 and 2 provision, including the purpose of foundational education and the core concept of readiness to progress. This is followed by descriptions of the developed graduate profiles for levels 1 and 2, including a discussion of the multiple capabilities that provide a foundation for readiness. It closes by discussing some related issues that arose during consultation on this work.

The key consideration of this project has been to ensure that the needs of all Level 1 and 2 learners are met by the qualifications they achieve, and to bring together existing expertise within the sector. The purpose of these graduate profiles is to promote good practice and consistency across Level 1 and 2 education and training by improving overall clarity around the purpose of these qualifications. Their goal is not to prescribe specific qualifications or methods of achieving particular outcomes.

The process used to develop this report is described in Appendix A. In summary, this work is based on existing good practice within the sector and involved a desk review of current Level 1 and 2 qualifications to identify common elements within existing graduate profiles, exploration of existing literature and frameworks, the drafting of a discussion paper,<sup>1</sup> and a comprehensive consultation phase that included workshops, targeted meetings, and online submissions. Two advisory groups also provided input into this work, one composed of sector-based experts and one of education agency officials. Appendix B contains a full list of contributors.

The goal throughout this process has been to engage the sector and reflect their views on the core elements of foundation education. We recognise that there exists a wide range of perspectives regarding desirable elements of foundation qualifications, and that contributions by organisations, agencies, or individuals does not constitute their endorsement of this report. We are confident, though, that this report represents a blending of these views into a common and coherent basis for thinking about Level 1 and 2 qualifications.

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<sup>1</sup> Available from. <https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-9382/foundation-graduate-profile-projectdiscussion-document.pdf> Literature used to inform both the discussion paper and this report can be found in the Bibliography.

## Understanding the Graduate Profiles

A qualification's graduate profile provides a description of what a learner can demonstrate (know, be and do) upon completing that qualification. Graduate profiles provide clarity for learners, programme designers, teachers, assessors, and other stakeholders regarding what knowledge a graduate will have, the quality they will display, and the skills they can apply after completion. The graduate profiles in this report aim to:

- Articulate (to multiple audiences) what learners should be expected to know and be able to do when they have completed a qualification.
- Identify core capabilities that enable transferability of skills and practices, yet permit variability in specific programme content.
- Support the tailoring of programmes to meet particular learner needs and goals.
- Allow for flexibility to meet specific qualification purposes.

Through this project, Ako Aotearoa aimed to develop graduate profiles that inclusively meet learners' needs and enable readiness to progress to higher level study, meaningful employment opportunities, and better societal participation. Our goal was to establish common ground around what might be the most appropriate graduate profiles to describe and distinguish different types of qualifications at NZQF Levels 1 and 2.

Note that not all learners will need to develop all of the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions during their programme of study. Some learners will arrive having already developed some of the necessary capabilities, and some may actually surpass the expected achievement level. However, all learners should possess these capabilities upon completing a qualification, in order to ensure they can get a good job, enjoy genuine portability of their qualifications to other contexts, and effectively progress to further education and training.

The graduate profiles are meant to provide guidelines for a mutual understanding of learners' capabilities at Levels 1 and 2, rather than prescribe specific outcomes for assessment. The profiles are inherently generic, and are designed to be contextualised to the specific purpose of particular qualifications.

Graduate profiles serve multiple purposes and audiences. We anticipate that these graduate profiles can be used by:

- Tertiary Education Organisations to create qualifications, to develop and monitor programmes, and support appropriate systems for student enrolment and support.
- Learners to better understand and communicate their capabilities, assist with their transitions and understand their qualifications' portability.
- Employers to recognise learners' achievement and suggest further development opportunities.
- Government agencies in their discussions with Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) around funding as well as future qualification and policy reviews.

### ***What is a Graduate Profile?***

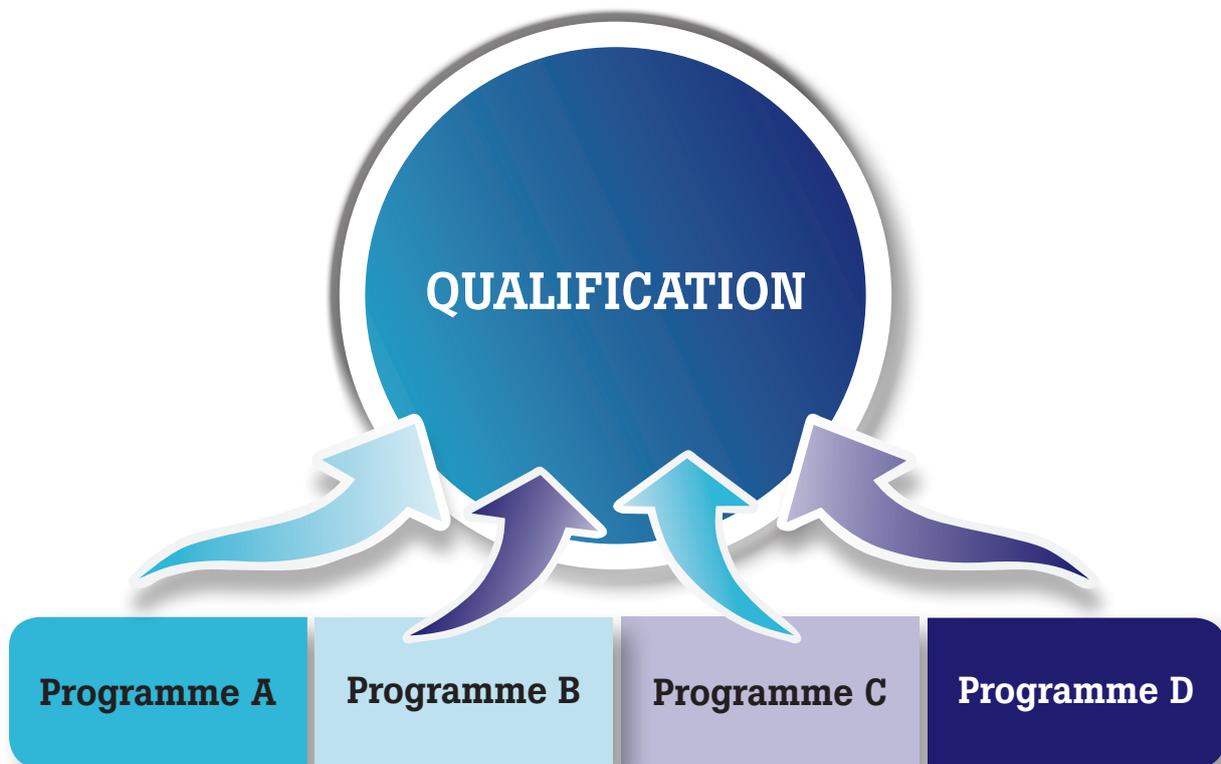
*Graduate profiles identify the expected learning outcomes of a qualification. This is captured in notions of what a learner will know and understand and be able to do when they achieve the qualification (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2011b).*

Establishing common and consistent graduate profiles should enable educational stakeholders to understand and reference what learners gain from participating in these qualifications. These graduate profiles also have potential to support for learners' own self-assessment and awareness of their readiness to progress.

## Programmes vs. Qualifications

A key starting point for this work has been drawing a strong line between a 'programme' and a 'qualification'. A qualification can be thought of as a destination, with a programme being the path that learners use to arrive at that point. A graduate profile describes what that destination 'looks like' in terms of the learner. As illustrated in figure 1 below, our tertiary education system is based on the concept that a variety of programmes can lead to achieving the same qualification/graduate profile.

FIGURE 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROGRAMMES AND QUALIFICATIONS



Teaching approaches and course content can be contextualised at the programme level based on what is relevant to learners. For example, some programmes may emphasise project-based work that assess capabilities holistically, while others may take a more modular design, assessing capabilities in sequence. Some programmes may have a strong link with 'real-world' environments – industry training, for example, largely takes place within a trainee's workplace. Others may emphasise greater use of controlled simulated environments. All, however, are designed to provide graduates with the same set of competencies at the end.

A key advantage of maintaining flexibility in programmes is that we can ensure that teaching practices meet the various needs of diverse learners. Having consistent qualifications means that learners have confidence in the outcomes of their education or training, but Tertiary Education Organisations can adopt appropriate pedagogy and support systems that best facilitate the achievement of these qualifications.

## Links to Current Initiatives

In addition to the above areas, the graduate profiles can inform government agencies' own work, initiatives and policy. These profiles are intended to establish greater consistency across the education sector regarding what learners attaining Level 1 and 2 qualifications should be intended to achieve. We therefore hope that they will contribute to an integrated approach to strategic and operational policy decisions across agencies – particularly the Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Education, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.<sup>2</sup>

Defining graduate profiles for learners at levels 1 and 2 helps ensure there is a common understanding of what learners should be gaining at each level, regardless of where they complete their qualifications. Establishing common graduate profiles should assist with 'joining up the system' by helping to align expectations of agencies, Tertiary Education Organisations, schools, providers, employers, community organisations, and not least, learners themselves.

This greater clarity should support government investment decisions – and the ability of organisations to work with investment processes – by establishing the outcomes that all of us should be looking for from this level of provision. The profiles will also support current and future reviews of qualifications – and any review of foundation education in general – by establishing core elements that such qualifications need to consider. This is particularly the case for 'mixed field' qualifications that are often intended to provide more general employment, academic, and life skills than those in other fields.

We also hope that that these profiles will provide a strong basis for further considering the links and transitions between secondary and tertiary education, careers and employment, and how these relationships can be made clear and easy to manage for learners. These graduate profiles complement the recently developed Vocational Pathways<sup>3</sup> by establishing a clear basis for progression through levels 1 and 2, and recognising that in addition to specific types of capabilities there are common core capabilities that all learners should possess.



<sup>2</sup> We would also note that the Ministry of Social Development has a significant role to play in foundation education, both in supporting targeted training programmes and through supporting skill development and transitions to 'good' jobs. We believe that these profiles can contribute to the Ministry's thinking in this area.

<sup>3</sup> Available from <http://youthguarantee.net.nz/vocational-pathways/>

## 2. Context

Foundational learning is immensely valuable in that it creates new beginnings for many learners, providing the basis for future education and employment. For the purposes of this report, we are solely focusing on foundation education in terms of Level 1 and 2 qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), whilst recognising that foundation education may extend beyond these levels. This includes learners in both provider-based programmes and industry training.

### Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori Qualifications

Through this report, we have given particular thought to how these graduate profiles should relate to te reo Māori and tikanga Māori qualifications. We are aware that a significant review of these qualifications is currently underway, and we are also conscious that developing clearly suitable profiles would require appropriate specialist expertise and additional specific consultation.

We do believe that the profiles are relevant to these qualifications, as they provide a consistent base for expectations around the core capabilities that all learners at levels 1 and 2 should possess.

However, the emphasis or way in which these capabilities are expressed may need to be altered for te reo Māori and tikanga Māori qualifications, and/or additional capabilities added. We recommend that those undertaking the above review consider this report, to inform the development of appropriate graduate profiles for teo reo Māori and tikanga Māori qualifications at levels 1 and 2.

### Learner Characteristics

In 2012, there were 11,560 students enrolled in provider-based tertiary qualifications at Level 1 and 46,080 at Level 2,<sup>4</sup> and a further 8,605 learners were engaged in Level 1 qualifications and 40,250 in level 2 qualifications through industry training.<sup>5</sup> These students can largely be characterised as belonging to these broad groups:

- Disengaged school leavers (16-17 years old).
- Individuals who until enrolment have not been in either education or employment (NEETS).
- Adults who have not demonstrated adequate foundation skills in some areas, or without necessary foundation qualifications.
- Workplace learners in industry-specific foundation learning.
- Learners in language and cultural programmes.

Level 1 and 2 education is a particularly important path for Māori and Pacific peoples. In 2012, Māori learners comprised 40% of all Level 1 learners ( $n = 4,410$ ) and 33% of all Level 2 learners ( $n = 14,950$ ) at providers. Pacific learners made up 17% of Level 1 learners ( $n = 1,920$ ) and 10% of Level 2 learners ( $n = 4,490$ ) at providers. This compares with Māori learners making up 21% and Pacific learners 9% of all provider-based tertiary students.<sup>4</sup> Based on this, it is clearly important that our overall system of foundation level education serves these learners well. It is imperative that

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary\\_education/participation](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary_education/participation). *Provider-based enrolments*

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary\\_education/participation](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary_education/participation). *Participation in Workplace-based Learning*.

qualifications and programmes encourage Māori to succeed as Māori, and engage Pacific learners whether they are New Zealand born or migrants from other Pacific nations. Although we recognise that what this means may be contested in practice, there are a variety of methods that can be used to support this aim.<sup>6</sup> Programme flexibility also provides a basis to meet this objective by supporting the use of distinct teaching approaches and learning environments.

Learners engage in foundation education for a variety of reasons. Notably, many learners studying at levels 1 and 2 have limited participation in education, or an interrupted study experience, and many have yet to experience educational success. In other cases, learners are studying at this level as an initial step for a career in a particular industry or set of occupations. These different reasons are not mutually exclusive, but can be broadly grouped as being:

- *To experience initial educational success* (learners returning to study with little prior educational attainment; e.g. recent school leavers with no or few qualifications and/or standards).
- *To re-engage with formal learning* (mature learners re-entering education after a significant time away).
- *To develop language, literacies and cultural capabilities* (e.g. new migrants, or learners wishing to develop capability in te reo Māori and tikanga Māori).
- *To engage with a specific occupational or educational pathway* (learners who are undertaking targeted preparation for specific role(s) within an industry or a particular study path; e.g. many industry trainees, or learners entering pre-apprenticeship programmes).
- *To re-skill or change career* (e.g. learners wanting to develop specific career competencies to significantly change roles or occupations).

The recent report by Ako Aotearoa's Educational Attainment Working Group on provision for priority learners, *Lifting Our Game*, recommended that foundation programmes must be purposeful from the perspective of the learner – i.e. they are connected to explicit academic or employment outcomes that have real meaning for the learners who participate in them (Educational Attainment Working Group, 2012). In this vein, and just as learners engage in level 1 and 2 study for diverse reasons, different qualifications serve different purposes. These can be categorised as:

- *General preparation* (Preparing people for general participation in work, further study and life – including whānau, family, and community).
- *Occupational Preparation* (Preparing people for specific forms of employment).
- *Te reo Māori and te ao Māori development* (Programmes focused on developing skills in Māori language and worldview).
- *Intensive (or tailored) literacy and numeracy development.*
- *English language learning for non-native speakers.*

Although it is important to avoid unnecessary duplication, it is also important that we maintain a range of qualifications to suit the reasons why learners engage in foundation education – from those designed to accredit 'generic' foundation skills to ones which are specific pre-apprenticeship qualifications and provide a focused opportunity for learning in a particular industry. The new qualification review process recently implemented by NZQA provides a good basis for balancing the need to have a coherent and usable suite of qualifications with the need for qualifications to be specific enough that they are genuinely fit-for-purpose.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these variations in learner motivation and qualification purpose, there is a clear common

<sup>6</sup> For examples, see Chauvel and Rean (2013), Chu, Samala Abella, and Paurini (2013), and Fiso and Huthnance (2012).

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqa/reviews-of-qualifications/> for a description of the qualification review purpose and process.

element to all education at this level: it is intended to provide a starting point for further education and more skilled employment. It is therefore critical that all of these qualifications equip learners with key capabilities that support their transition to the next step of developing skills and knowledge (including via the portability of qualifications).

It is also worth noting the importance of Level 1 and 2 provision for supporting literacy and numeracy skills. Findings from the 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey revealed that 43% of the population were unable to use their literacy skills to filter information or make inferences and 20% had very low numeracy skills (Satherley, Lawes, & Sok, 2008). These skills are critical for participating effectively in society, and were therefore important to specify in the graduate profiles.

### **Spikey Profiles and Recognising Capability**

A particularly distinctive characteristic of learners studying or training for Level 1 and 2 qualifications is the wide range of existing capability they bring to a course. Often referred to as a 'spikey profile', learners at these levels may exhibit quite advanced competency in some areas, while having very low or no skills in another (Smyth & Lane, 2009). This is particularly well-recognised in the context of embedding Literacy and Numeracy (LN) into foundation programmes. While many foundation learners will benefit from embedding Literacy and Numeracy into the curriculum, some learners have only specific gaps in their LN capabilities and others do not require any basic LN development.

The TEC *Adult Literacy Learning Progressions*' steps (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008a, b, c) provide a basis for recognising and responding to learners' varying capabilities. In fact, providers are encouraged to embed literacy and numeracy into teaching and learning practices through using the Learning Progressions to map programmes and courses and identify individual learner needs, according to TEC's *Embedded Literacy and Numeracy (ELN) Practices* table (2013).

This notion of the spikey profile was a strong theme that emerged from our consultation for this work. Although we recognise that this creates challenges, we believe that these can be resolved through good processes for recognising learners' capability in an area, and programmes that are flexible enough to accommodate these. This reflects the recommendations set out in *Lifting Our Game* around advice and support for learners, and purposeful and personalised programmes (EAWG, 2012). Similarly, good foundation education policy supports this flexibility in programme design and delivery.

For example regardless of their LN entry level, all learners who graduate with a qualification at Level 1 or 2 must have the level of LN capability to progress to the next level (Level 2 or 3 respectively). Use of the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool should allow learners' requirements to be identified before admission to – or during the very first part of – a programme to ensure that it is responsive to their needs.

It is fundamental that each programme recognises learners' prior learning, achievement, experiences, existing competencies, strengths and abilities. Some learners may access foundation education because they need to gain a new skill (e.g. computing, English language), but their prior experience and level of knowledge should be identified and recognised prior to their attendance. This may enable learners to progress more quickly or engage with a different educational pathway that appropriately meets their needs – not the needs of the provider. Over-qualified learners who are able to demonstrate readiness to progress should not necessarily be placed into foundation education solely because they lack the formal entry criteria for the next step.

Each group of foundation learners is likely to include students with a wide range of home contexts, educational experiences and diverse learning needs. Understandably, foundation learners' backgrounds, home environments and possibly health and wellbeing challenges may also impact achievement. However, given appropriate time, motivation and support, foundation level teaching, learning and qualifications should provide learners with new opportunities for entry into study or employment/career pathways. Throughout our consultation, there was general consensus that foundation education qualifications should aim to – broadly – serve all types of potential learners studying at Levels 1 and 2, with different *programmes* catering more specifically to the needs of different learner groups.

### Distinctive Learner Groups

A recurrent question in our consultation was whether specific profiles should be created for two particular groups of learners. In our view, the question of whether there should be specific graduate profiles for these learners is part of a broader theme around ensuring our tertiary education system meets the needs of all learners. As the issues involved in these areas are complex, requiring specialist expertise and dedicated consultation, we have not addressed these in this report. However, we do recommend that future work be undertaken around whether specific profiles are needed for qualifications designed to support these learners:

- **Learners with learning disabilities** (those with cognitive impairment, including intellectual disability). Many of these learners may be able to achieve the graduate profiles set out in this report with more time or inclusive support; in other words, specialist programmes may need to exist, but these should be designed to achieve the same qualifications and profiles as any other learner. For some learners, however, this may not be a likely outcome. Government agencies are currently assessing whether it would be useful to generate separate national qualifications or profiles for learners with significant learning disabilities, and we recommend that this work includes reference to the profiles contained in this report.
- **English Language Learners.** These include new migrants to New Zealand, and are a distinctive group based on the cognitive demand of learning a new language, the amount of vocabulary required, and the adaption of existing skills and knowledge into English language and the New Zealand context and society. It is also useful to recognise these learners may or may not have significant prior educational experience or success in a different language, and have had diverse experiences before arriving in New Zealand. It is therefore important to evaluate the extent to which qualifications for these learners should include all of the core capabilities outlined in this report.

### Readiness and Progression: The purpose of foundation education

The starting point for developing the graduate profiles in this report has been that the purpose of education at levels 1 and 2 is to enable learners to demonstrate *readiness to progress* within various work, study, and community environments. By this, we mean that Level 1 and 2 qualifications should provide a basis for moving along a learning and career path, while recognising that learners are usually not yet ready to 'specialise' and therefore need capabilities that will support multiple potential pathways rather than one specialised trajectory.

In the tertiary education context, the key value of foundation level programmes is usually not just the qualifications gained *per se*, but rather the opportunities they open up for learners, and the ability to progress. Programmes at these levels should support learners developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to participate in more advanced employment/career, community, and educational contexts. An individual may choose to end their educational or career progression at a particular point for their own specific reasons, but their *qualification* must be intended to support their further movement.

The attainment of Level 1 and 2 qualifications is essential for many learners to progress to further study, training or employment. This progression may be represented by poutama – a stepped pattern symbolising educational levels and readiness for transition. Many capabilities required for progression are similar, regardless of whether this progression is to employment, education, or better community participation. For example, it is important that learners develop the literacy to participate and function in different environments and contexts, and qualities such as commitment, timeliness, and self-awareness are relevant to all settings.

Given progression is the main goal for foundation education, it is important to determine what is required to be ready for the ‘next step’. From our review of existing qualifications and discussions with stakeholders, it is appropriate that Level 1 and 2 qualifications aim to develop graduates with a variety of skills, knowledge, and dispositions – which are not mutually exclusive – and include:

- *Applied Literacies* – e.g. literacy and numeracy (LN), digital literacy; work readiness and further study/learning.
- *Community Participation* – e.g. community development; functioning in society; personal identity; te ao Māori.
- *Occupational Capabilities* – e.g. vocational, operational procedures and tools; health and safety.

For many foundation-level learners, their development of confidence and self-esteem will also be fundamental for ensuring readiness for progression, particularly if they have not previously experienced educational success, or have been out of study for a while. A critical goal of any foundation programme should be to encourage learners to learn how to learn and be better equipped to make life choices in terms of future personal, educational and employment/career goals. This entails learners developing a level of self-understanding that enables them to progress on to a relevant and meaningful pathway and pursue more purposeful career prospects, as recommended in the *Lifting our Game* report. Foundation qualifications may also enable learners to explore and affirm their ideas of who they are and how they relate to their communities while they are learning.

Figure 2 on the next page outlines the formal NZQF descriptors that characterise the knowledge, skills, and methods of application expected of learners at each of Levels 1-3, and for which learning at the previous level should prepare them.

**FIGURE 2: NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK LEVEL 1 TO 3 DESCRIPTORS<sup>8</sup>**

*Knowledge, skills and application describe what a graduate at a particular level is expected to know, do and be. The term application encompasses responsibility, behaviours, attitudes, attributes and competence.*

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	APPLICATION
3	Some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	Select and apply from a range of known solutions to familiar problems Apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	Limited supervision Requiring major responsibility for own learning and performance Adapting own behaviour when interacting with others Contributing to group performance
2	Basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study	Apply known solutions to familiar problems Apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	General supervision Requiring some responsibility for own learning and performance Collaborating with others
1	Basic general and/or foundation knowledge	Apply basic solutions to simple problems Apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Highly structured contexts Requiring some responsibility for own learning Interacting with others

The distinction between the first two NZQF levels mainly includes whether learners require supervision, assistance, or guidance or can cope with an element of self-management (although this may vary by discipline). The levels also represent moving from basic knowledge and skills at Level 1 to content-specific knowledge and skills at Level 2. Learners at Level 2 are also better equipped to adapt to various situations and describe diverse perspectives, whereas Level 1 learners mainly work with routine situations and can simply identify the aforementioned diverse perspectives. For the most part, learners at Level 1 are only required to use basic communication, health and safety, and operational skills. Level 2 qualifications include the development of more specific work and study skills, such as customer service, teamwork, using specific technology, and/or applying theory and concepts to practices.

In considering the capabilities needed to be ready to progress, another influential piece of work is the *Key Competencies* from the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010), which identified the following competencies as “key to learning in every learning area”: *Thinking; Using language, symbols, and texts; Managing self; Relating to others; and Participating and contributing*. Learners who are studying at Levels 1 and 2 may be more adept with the basic skills in each competency:

- *Thinking* – making sense of information, problem-solving.
- *Using language, symbols, and texts* – interpreting texts, using ICT to access and provide information and communicate with others.
- *Managing self* – establishing personal goals, making plans.
- *Relating to others* – interacting effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts.
- *Participating and contributing* – being actively involved with communities, contributing appropriately as a group member, and having a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within new contexts.

These and other resources and frameworks provided a reference for the development of Level 1 and 2 graduate profiles and example outcome statements (see Figures 9 and 10 in Appendix A, and the Bibliography).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/understand-nz-quals/>

Figure 3 illustrates how the various learner needs and qualification purposes at Levels 1 and 2 fit together, along with the graduate profiles. This, along with the exemplars of outcome statements for demonstrated learner capabilities in figures 4 and 5 will be elaborated on in the following section.

FIGURE 3: LEARNER AIMS, QUALIFICATION PURPOSES, AND GRADUATE PROFILES

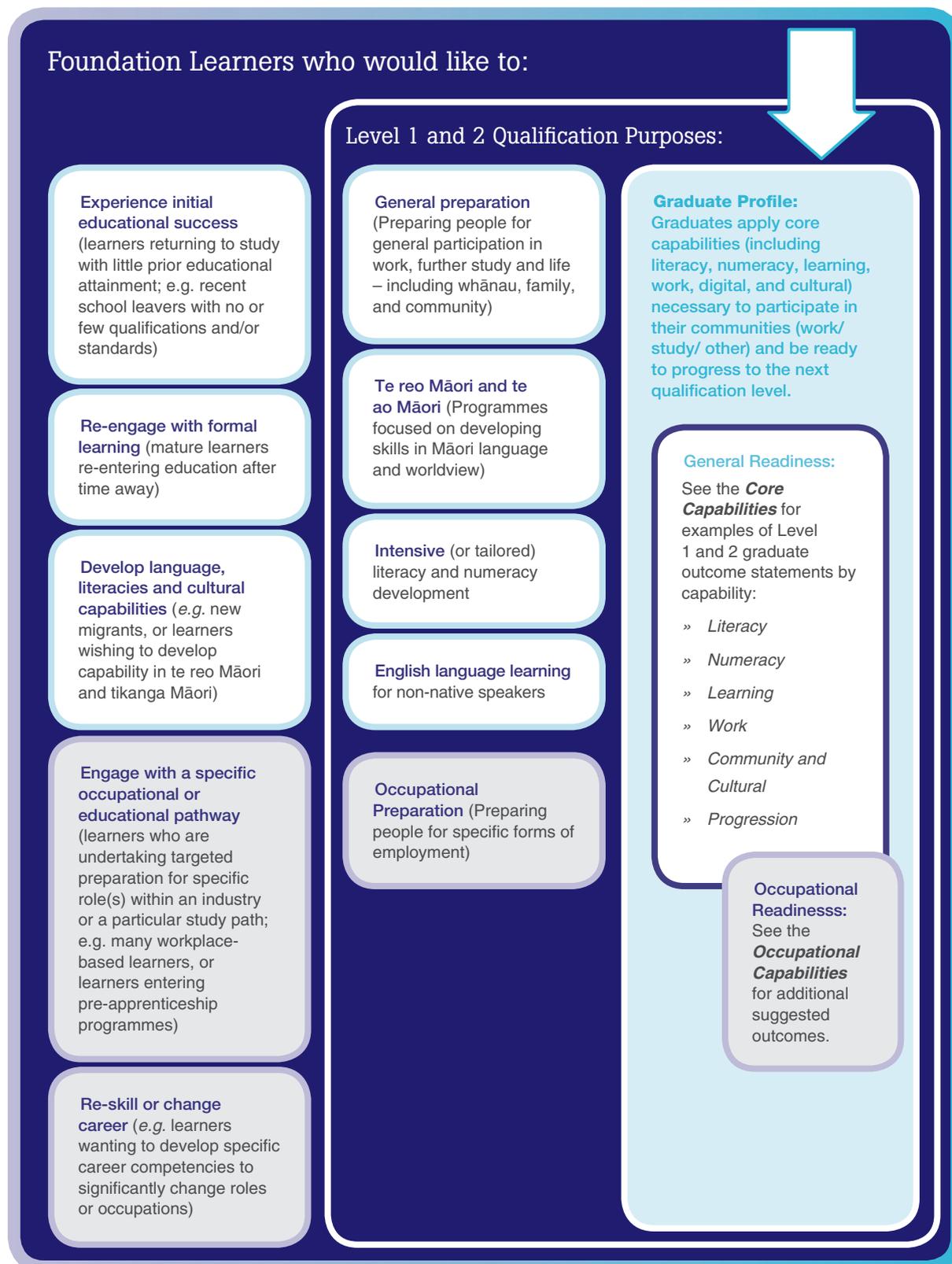


FIGURE 4: CORE CAPABILITIES FOR LEVEL 1 AND 2 GRADUATES – EXAMPLE OUTCOME STATEMENTS

Capability	A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
<b>Literacy</b>	<p>Communicate with familiar individuals and interact with a group, considering the audience</p> <p>Locate and use information for a specified purpose, using digital technology</p> <p>Make simple inferences (or connections) from texts</p> <p>Manage written tasks relevant to everyday life</p> <p>Use appropriate vocabulary for different everyday situations; Understand familiar words and recognise a few specialised words (e.g. define, summarise)</p>	<p>Interact with a variety of people in a few contexts, considering the purpose, audience, and context</p> <p>Explain, interpret meaning, and evaluate information, including from digital media</p> <p>Match, compare and contrast at least two points of view from texts</p> <p>Manage written tasks appropriate to more specific contexts (e.g. work based)</p> <p>Understand some academic vocabulary (e.g. describe, evaluate) and some words specific to a particular context (e.g. industry)</p>
<b>Numeracy</b>	<p>Do accurate simple calculations and arithmetic operations</p> <p>Perform simple measurements</p>	<p>Identify and understand basic mathematical concepts</p> <p>Interpret graphs and basic statistics</p>
<b>Learning</b>	<p>Take responsibility for their own learning</p> <p>Understand the importance of developing learning strategies and the value of learning</p> <p>Be aware of how external pressures may impact learning</p>	<p>Take responsibility for own learning and performance, respecting interdependence</p> <p>Identify and use a range of learning strategies, such as time-management and an enquiry process; Ask questions and use feedback to improve learning</p> <p>Manage external pressures in order to focus on learning</p>
<b>Work</b>	<p>Follow instructions and demonstrate timeliness</p> <p>Accomplish tasks with guidance, seeking assistance when required</p> <p>Apply basic solutions to simple problems</p>	<p>Adapt to non-routine/a variety of situations and changing circumstances with support or guidance, using strategies to increase resilience</p> <p>Use effective service, teamwork, and technology</p> <p>Apply known solutions to familiar problems</p>
<b>Community &amp; Cultural</b>	<p>Identify their own cultural identity, and begin to identify similarities and differences in individuals' perspectives</p> <p>Understand te ao Māori concepts; recognise the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand</p> <p>Understand appropriate tikanga Māori in everyday settings, and a few te reo Māori words such as greetings</p> <p>Be aware of community needs and confident to participate in their community</p>	<p>Describe their own cultural identity and other diverse perspectives in Aotearoa New Zealand, including Māori and Pacific</p> <p>Apply basic knowledge of te ao Māori concepts and Aotearoa New Zealand culture, including applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles to community involvement</p> <p>Use some te reo Māori words and follow appropriate tikanga Māori, including in formal settings</p> <p>Be involved with community activities (e.g. learning, work, civil, social etc.) and aware of environmental challenges</p>
<b>Progression</b>	<p>Locate and begin to identify and explore relevant opportunities, knowing how and when to seek assistance</p> <p>Use technology (e.g. computers and the internet) for basic tasks</p> <p>Understand the impact of their learning and work on whānau/family and the wider community</p> <p>Establish a sense of belonging and the self-confidence to pursue future opportunities</p>	<p>Consider, set and work towards self-evaluated personal, work, learning, study, and/or life goals that motivate them to act on opportunities</p> <p>Use digital technology to access relevant information and progress with opportunities</p> <p>Understand the importance of the impact of their decisions on themselves and others, and the contribution that they can make to whānau, family, and society</p> <p>Establish a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within a range of situations</p>

FIGURE 5: OCCUPATIONAL CAPABILITY FOR LEVEL 1 AND 2 GRADUATES – EXAMPLE OUTCOME STATEMENTS

Capability	A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
<b>Occupational</b>	<p>Engage with new tasks to accomplish a set purpose</p> <p>Use basic occupational health and safety and operational skills</p> <p>Work in highly structured contexts under guidance</p>	<p>Understand basic use of tools, terminology, content, operational procedures, technology, practices, and methods common to the field</p> <p>Use occupational health and safety skills</p> <p>Apply theory and concepts to practices, interactions and workplace challenges</p>

### 3. Level 1 and 2 Graduate Profiles

The graduate profiles for Level 1 and 2 qualifications recognise a common set of capabilities that graduates should develop and demonstrate upon qualification completion. These capabilities refer to learners’ knowledge, skills and dispositions, while recognising that the ways in which these are expressed will vary depending on the particular context for a learner. Graduates competent in a variety of core areas are best equipped to progress with their particular education and career goals.

The suggested capabilities provide guidelines for ensuring all learners at each level are ready to progress with their next opportunity; they do not prescribe specific outcomes learners must demonstrate. Learners’ readiness for progression can be shown by developing or demonstrating the *Core Capabilities* highlighted in Figure 4. In addition, the *Occupational Capability* illustrated in Figure 5 represents capabilities that support occupational learning objectives and qualifications that focus specifically on supporting a particular career path. Following this, we can summarise four different types of graduate profiles as follows:

**Graduate Profile: General Readiness Level 1**

Level 1 graduates are able to apply core capabilities necessary to participate in their communities (work, study, and other) and are ready to progress to level 2 qualifications.

**Graduate Profile: General Readiness Level 2**

Level 2 graduates are confident in applying core capabilities necessary to participate in their communities (work, study, and other) and are ready to progress to level 3 qualifications.

**Graduate Profile: Occupational Readiness Level 1**

Level 1 graduates are able to apply core capabilities and occupational capability necessary to participate in a linked set of occupations, and are ready to progress along a career path that includes level 2 qualifications.

**Graduate Profile: Occupational Readiness Level 2**

Level 2 graduates are confident in applying core capabilities and occupational capability necessary to participate in a linked set of occupations, and are ready to progress along a career path that includes level 3 qualifications.

FIGURE 6: LEVEL 1 AND 2 GRADUATE PROFILES MATRIX

Readiness:	General	Occupational
Level 2	<i>Level 2 graduates are confident in applying core capabilities necessary to participate in their communities (work, study, and other) and are ready to progress to level 3 qualifications.</i>	<i>Level 2 graduates are confident in applying core capabilities and occupational capability necessary to participate in a linked set of occupations, and are ready to progress along a career path that includes level 3 qualifications.</i>
Level 1	<i>Level 1 graduates are able to apply core capabilities necessary to participate in their communities (work, study, and other) and are ready to progress to level 2 qualifications.</i>	<i>Level 1 graduates are able to apply core capabilities and occupational capability necessary to participate in a linked set of occupations, and are ready to progress along a career path that includes level 2 qualifications.</i>

For each capability, a set of expected knowledge, skills, and applications have been developed at both Level 1 and Level 2. It should be noted that these are not intended to be *specific* graduate profiles for all Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications. They represent generalised profiles, and the specific way in which a given capability is expressed in practice will depend on the purpose of a given qualification – this is particularly the case for occupational capability. For example, a Level 2 qualification related to

the automotive industry and a Level 2 qualification related to the hospitality industry would both draw on the Graduate Profile for *Occupational Readiness Level 2*, but the specific ways in which the core and occupational capabilities are expressed might look quite different. However, these statements provide a common reference point for what we can reasonably expect Level 1 and 2 graduates to know, do, and be.

As noted earlier, these profiles have been developed on the basis that *qualifications* should aim to serve all types of potential learners studying at levels 1 and 2, whereas different *programmes* may cater more specifically to the needs of different learner groups. All foundation learners need to possess the capabilities expressed in the graduate profiles. However, it is important that we maintain TEOs’ flexibility to develop the capabilities expressed in the graduate profiles in a way most suitable to the learners, communities, and industries or disciplines to which a given programme is connected.

**Digital Literacy**

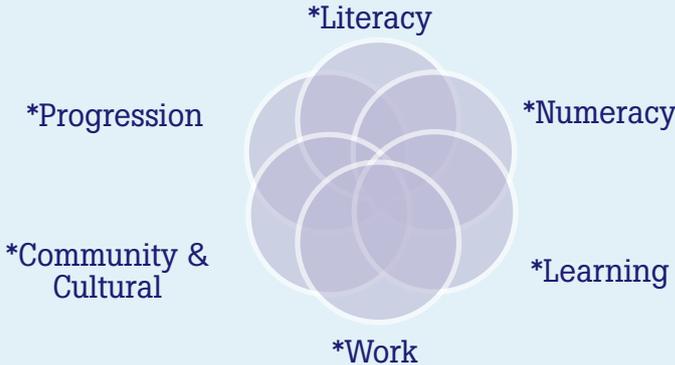
*[Digital Literacy is the] technical ability to use, at basic level, a computer and the internet; understand and critically evaluate digital media; and create content and communications (SCOTese, 2012)*

Being digitally literate is key to living in the modern world. After consideration, however, we decided not to include digital literacy as a separate capability because we recognise its role in ensuring readiness across all capabilities. In some cases, this is specifically reflected in the example capability outcome statements. For instance, in the *literacy* capability, learners are expected to engage with information using digital technology and digital media, and *technology* is also specifically mentioned in the *work* and occupational capabilities. In all cases, however, it can be understood that a given capability includes proficiency in relevant digital environments.

**Core Capabilities for Readiness**

To progress to the next level (relevant to their particular goals) learners should develop a set of multiple capabilities that will enable them to succeed at that higher level. These are further described below. As shown in Figure 7 below these capabilities are not discrete categories. For example, problem-solving has been characterised in this report as an element of the ‘work’ core capability but the skills used in solving work-based problems are usable in multiple environments and underpin a person’s ability in other capability areas.

FIGURE 7: OVERLAPPING CORE CAPABILITIES



## Literacy

Literacy is a core skill that in many ways underpins all other capabilities. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) guidelines for embedding literacy and numeracy (TEC, 2009) define literacy as:

the written and oral language people use in everyday life and work. A person's literacy refers to the extent of their oral and written language skills and knowledge and their ability to apply these to meet the varied demands of their personal study and work lives (p58).

The formal definition of literacy used by the TEC involves the listening, speaking, reading, and writing of texts (written, visual and oral) and the vocabulary that is relevant to all modes to participate more effectively in our society (TEC, 2008b). Other definitions exist, such as that used by the OECD,<sup>9</sup> or by Gee.<sup>10</sup> In practice, literacy is situated in particular contexts, and involves the application of learners' literacy knowledge and skills in order to participate in those contexts.

Readiness in the *Literacy* capability can be demonstrated by the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Communicate with familiar individuals and interact with a group, considering the audience	Interact with a variety of people in a few contexts, considering the purpose, audience and context
Locate and use information for a specified purpose, using digital technology	Explain, interpret meaning, and evaluate information, including from digital media
Make simple inferences (or connections) from texts	Match, compare and contrast at least two points of view from texts
Manage written tasks relevant to everyday life	Manage written tasks appropriate to more specific contexts (e.g. work based)
Use appropriate vocabulary for different everyday situations	Understand some academic vocabulary (e.g. describe, evaluate) and some words specific to a particular context (e.g. industry)
Understand familiar words and recognise a few specialised words (e.g. define, summarise)	

## Numeracy

The *Numeracy* capability recognises learners' ability to "use mathematical knowledge to meet the varied demands of their personal, study, and work lives" (TEC, 2008b, p34). It represents the numeracy skills and knowledge required to function in society – making sense of numbers, measuring and statistical reasoning.

Readiness in the *Numeracy* capability can be demonstrated by the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Do accurate simple calculations and arithmetic operations	Identify and understand basic mathematical concepts
Perform simple measurements	Interpret graphs and basic statistics

## Learning

The *Learning* capability is about being able to learn effectively. It involves the acquisition and confident use of learning strategies, and learners beginning to manage their own learning. It also encompasses maintaining good relationships with tutors, trainers, mentors and the like. This capability can apply to various work, study or community learning contexts.

<sup>9</sup> "...the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential. Literacy encompasses a range of skills from the decoding of words and sentences to the comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation of complex tasks." (OECD, 2013)

<sup>10</sup> Gee (2008) expresses literacies in terms of discourses that enable learners to be inducted into understanding, adopting, and representing the requirements or expectations of a particular context. For foundation learners, this may simply involve participating appropriately in their learning place, whether that is a TEO or a workplace.

Readiness in the *Learning* capability can be demonstrated by the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Take responsibility for their own learning Understand the importance of developing learning strategies and the value of learning Be aware of how external pressures may impact learning	Take responsibility for their own learning and performance, respecting interdependence Identify and use a range of learning strategies, such as time-management and an enquiry process; Ask questions and use feedback to improve learning Manage external pressures in order to focus on learning

### Work

The *Work* capability involves generic skills of problem solving, functioning in a particular environment, and developing adaptability and resilience strategies. This does not just represent skills necessary for paid employment, but those needed to carry out tasks effectively in a variety of situations.

Readiness in the *Work* capability can be demonstrated by the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Follow instructions and demonstrate timeliness Accomplish tasks with guidance, seeking assistance when required Apply basic solutions to simple problems	Adapt to non-routine/a variety of situations and changing circumstances with support or guidance, using strategies to increase resilience Use effective service, teamwork, and technology Apply known solutions to familiar problems

### Community and Cultural

The *Community and Cultural* capability represents the capabilities expected from citizens in order to function in and contribute to our society. It is particularly important that learners can recognise the distinctive context of Aotearoa New Zealand, for example by including awareness of te ao Māori concepts (a Māori indigenous worldview), tikanga Māori (Māori cultural behaviours and customs), te reo Māori (language), and the place of te Tiriti o Waitangi (our founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi) in the graduate profiles. This also includes recognising the position of Aotearoa New Zealand as a Pacific nation. One way of framing this context for foundation learners could be through the concepts illustrated in Figure 8.<sup>11</sup>

FIGURE 8: AN EXAMPLE OF TE AO MĀORI CONCEPTS FOR FOUNDATION LEARNERS



<b>maanakitanga</b>	▪ respect towards others
<b>whānangatanga</b>	▪ working together
<b>rangatiratanga</b>	▪ self-responsibility and accountability
<b>māramatanga</b>	▪ understanding the value of learning
<b>tātaritanga</b>	▪ developing content knowledge and skills

<sup>11</sup> These examples were suggested through extensive consultation with the sector and relevant te ao Māori literature.

It should be noted that this capability is not simply about a learner understanding themselves and their community. Developing this capability is also about being able to interact with others in appropriate ways, such as understanding and behaving appropriately toward workmates and customers. It is also critical that practitioners are respectful of the diverse cultural experiences and interests of foundation learners when engaging with them around community and culture.

Readiness in the *Community and Cultural* capability can be demonstrated by the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Identify their own cultural identity, and begin to identify similarities and differences in individuals' perspectives Understand te ao Māori concepts; recognise the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand. Understand appropriate tikanga Māori in everyday settings, and a few te reo Māori words such as greetings Be aware of community needs and confident to participate in their community	Describe their own cultural identity and other diverse perspectives in Aotearoa New Zealand, including Māori and Pacific Apply basic knowledge of te ao Māori concepts and Aotearoa New Zealand culture, including applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles to community involvement. Use some te reo Māori words and follow appropriate tikanga Māori, including in formal settings. Be involved with community activities (e.g. learning, work, civil, social etc.) and aware of environmental challenges

### **Progression**

The *Progression* capability is predominately about readiness to progress, and involves applying the previously mentioned capabilities to choose and pursue their next career and learning step, while recognising the important role of self-awareness, self-confidence and consideration for others. For many learners, one of the most important dimensions of this purposefulness is the opportunity to explore their career aspirations, and obtain the necessary skills for them to plan their paths towards these goals.

The *Student Career Management Competencies* (Careers NZ, 2012) provide guidance for developing more aspirational student graduate profiles. In summary, in order to develop the capability to make career decisions and study choices, learners would benefit from developing self-awareness, and connecting and evaluating possible opportunities with this self-knowledge. It is helpful if they understand the value of learning, and can balance their lives with work and learning. Developing resilience strategies, adaptability and motivation to achieve an appropriate plan also has direct utility. The objective is for learners to be able communicate and demonstrate their skills, knowledge and competencies to pursue identified opportunities.

Readiness in the *Progression* capability can be demonstrated by the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Locate and begin to identify and explore relevant opportunities, knowing how and when to seek assistance Use technology (e.g. computers and the internet) for basic tasks Understand the impact of their learning and work on whānau/ family and the wider community Establish a sense of belonging and the self-confidence to pursue future opportunities	Consider, set and work towards self-evaluated personal, work, learning, study, and/or life goals that motivate them to act on opportunities Use digital technology to access relevant information and progress with opportunities Understand the importance of the impact of their decisions on themselves and others, and the contribution that they can make to whānau, family, and society Establish a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within a range of situations

## Occupational Capability for Readiness

In addition to the above Core Capabilities, there are qualifications that focus on preparing learners for a particular set of occupations and therefore require including Occupational Capability to their graduate profile. *Occupational Capability* recognises that particular knowledge, skills, or applications may be required even at these levels for learners who want to engage with particular industry pathways, or perhaps re-skill or change their career.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that this capability is not a substitute for the Core Capabilities outlined above. Level 1 and 2 qualifications that include occupational preparation still need to provide learners with the full range of competencies needed to progress, and this includes appropriate ability in *Literacy, Numeracy, Learning, Work, Community and Cultural*, and *Progression* capabilities. In most cases, though, we would expect these to be very contextualised and developed and assessed in a holistic manner. For example, an ITO may develop a qualification that addresses the *Community and Cultural* capability specifically in terms of customer service and teamwork. What is important at these levels is that qualifications retain flexibility for the learner and will allow them to follow multiple career paths, rather than tying them to one or two specific occupations.

As noted earlier, the specific way in which *Occupational Capability* is expressed will be highly dependent on the industry and career path a given qualification is designed to support. Broadly, however, readiness in *Occupational Capability* can be understood with reference to the following statements:

A Level 1 Graduate is able to:	A Level 2 Graduate is able to:
Engage with new tasks to accomplish a set purpose	Understand basic use of tools, terminology, content, operational procedures, technology, practices and methods common to the field
Use basic occupational health and safety and operational skills	Use occupational health and safety skills
Work in highly structured context under guidance	Apply theory and concepts to practices, interactions and workplace challenges



<sup>12</sup> We do anticipate that Occupational Capability would be used rarely for Level 1 qualifications.

## 4. Conclusion and Associated Issues

This report has presented graduate profiles for Level 1 and 2 learners that take into consideration their learning needs and the purposes of qualifications at these levels. Consultation on this work raised several additional points that, although beyond the scope of this project, are important to highlight.

### ***The key role of programme flexibility***

As mentioned earlier, this work began from the basis that there is a clear distinction between qualifications and programmes. This situation – where a destination is tightly defined, but there are many ways of getting there – is what allows for the development of general profiles that can still account for a diversity of learners, communities, and industries. It is important, therefore, that this flexibility is maintained, and learners are able to access programmes that suit their needs.

### ***Recognising learners' prior learning and current competency***

To be truly responsive to learner needs, practitioners must work to recognise learners' prior learning, experience, current competence, and existing capabilities. This is especially important for learners at levels 1 and 2, as those who have negative prior experiences of education may be particularly 'turned off' by repetition of skills and material they already know. It is therefore important that practitioners and TEOs adopt or establish relevant pre-enrolment processes that enable assessment and recognition of learners' prior learning or current competency.

Part of this is ensuring that providers have appropriately skilled staff who are capable of effective delivery specifically for learners at levels 1 and 2, and are equipped to recognise learners' prior learning and current competency. Organisations must have appropriate capability to support learners at this level, and invest in developing it.

This also points to the need for good quality pre-enrolment processes for foundation programmes. This is discussed in *Lifting Our Game* (EAWG, 2012), but it is worth reiterating here that good practice in foundation education includes sharing information between practitioner, provider and learner before a programme begins, and establishing clear expectations and responsibilities of all three parties.

### ***Supporting appropriate career development***

In discussing the core capability of *Progression*, we highlighted the importance of developing skills in career management. While we do not anticipate that all Level 1 and 2 learners will follow a career path based solely on their foundation education experience, it is important that qualifications at levels 1 and 2 support learners to think about and effectively plan their future career options. As noted in *Lifting Our Game*, this includes being able to make informed educational choices that fit with their ultimate work and life goals. Given this, we believe that TEOs offering Level 1 and 2 education should pay close attention to Careers NZ's Career Development Benchmarks for tertiary education, to ensure that they are supporting their learners' career progression in the most effective way possible.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Improving alignment of frameworks and levels***

We recognise there are good reasons for having different frameworks that serve distinct purposes, such as defining qualifications versus understanding literacy and numeracy skills.

<sup>13</sup> The Career Development Benchmarks can be found at <http://www.careers.govt.nz/educators-practitioners/planning/career-education-benchmarks/tertiary-benchmarks/>

However, a variety of educational frameworks can also create difficulty for the sector. During our consultation, it was suggested that better alignment between these frameworks would assist TEOs to better understand and support their learners. This was noted particularly often with regard to aligning the qualifications framework and Adult Literacy Learning Progressions. We see value in aligning these frameworks and establishing greater consistency among levels and descriptors. We understand that some work is being undertaken in this area (e.g. TEC, 2013a), and we support the continued attention to this issue.

### ***Developing a learner self-assessment resource***

Supporting learners to engage with these profiles is one way of ensuring they have longevity and utility. One way of encouraging this would be through generating a self-assessment resource for Level 1 and 2 learners based on these profiles. This would enable learners to evaluate which capabilities they can demonstrate and which would be useful to develop. This would involve extensive consultation with appropriate learners and tailoring the graduate profiles' wording to be more accessible to learners. It would be beneficial to base this type of resource on strengths-based learning as per other work supported by Ako Aotearoa (e.g. Hay & Campbell, 2012).

### ***Developing a graduate profile for Level 3 qualifications***

Developing common graduate profiles for levels 1 and 2 raises the question of whether common profiles could also be established for NZQF Level 3 qualifications. We recognise that this may be a more difficult task because Level 3 qualifications are by their nature more specialised than those at levels 1 and 2. However, it may still be worthwhile exploring whether there are similar 'core' capabilities that these qualifications should ensure that they address.

Our starting point for this work has been that the fundamental purpose of education at levels 1 and 2 is to develop readiness for and progression onto the next opportunity. Therefore it is important that all learners develop capabilities that will enable them to successfully move on to that next step. Having common graduate profiles for all Level 1 and 2 qualifications should help to ensure that educational stakeholders are 'on the same page' when it comes to understanding what graduates from these levels should know, be, and do. These graduate profiles also provide guidelines on how those capabilities can be expressed in a qualification while maintaining the flexibility of providers to design and deliver programmes that respond to specific learner needs.

We are immensely grateful to the many contributors to this project, who have helped us to identify how the capabilities for readiness outlined in this report could be represented. We hope that these common Level 1 and 2 graduate profiles help ensure that all learners are able to effectively progress on to good jobs and study opportunities, and are appropriately equipped to fully participate in their communities.

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## 6. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Methodology

First, a preliminary desk review was undertaken of all existing Level 1 and 2 qualifications on the NZQF (n = 556), and summaries were produced organised by Subject Area, according to the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED). Additionally, a variety of relevant resources were utilised to further identify common elements of graduate outcome statements (see Figures 9 and 10).

Consultation was an integral part of this project, to ensure that the graduate profiles reflected what was considered good practice and what was realistic for learners to achieve by practitioners in this area. Therefore, a discussion document was drafted to provide a basis for consultation with Tertiary Education Organisations and other relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and various employment and industry organisations and advisory bodies.<sup>14</sup> This work was also supported by two Advisory Groups: one consisting of individuals with particular expertise in aspects of foundation education, and one of officials from key government agencies.

FIGURE 9: SELECTED KEY RESOURCES

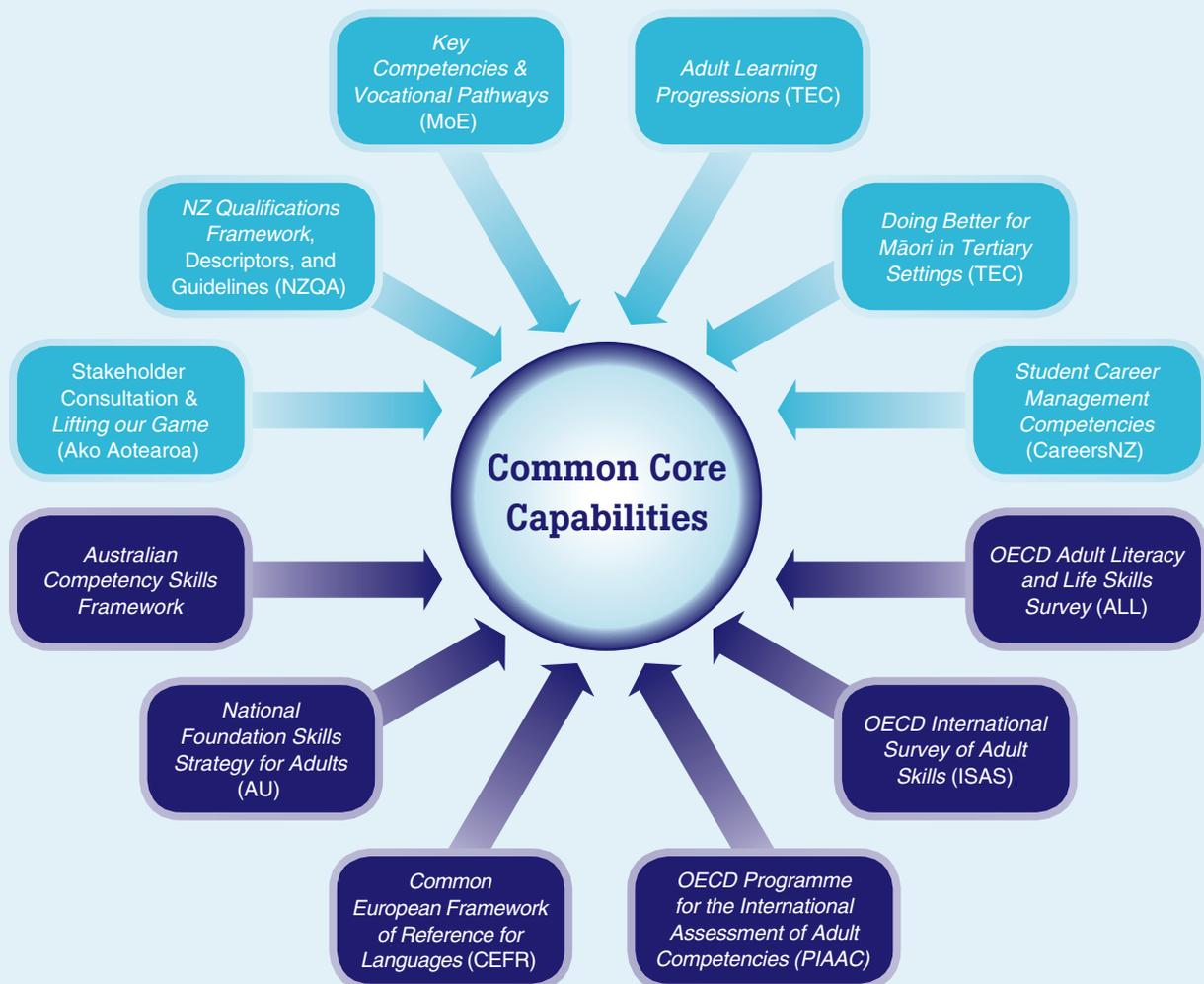


FIGURE 10: SELECTED KEY INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

<sup>14</sup> This document is available at <https://akoaooteaoroa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-9382/foundation-graduate-profile-projectdiscussion-document.pdf>

In the consultation round, a sample of common core graduate outcome statements were scrutinised and evaluated by various educational stakeholders, and the statements were revised accordingly. Through this consultation process, we extended our understanding of foundation learners' needs and purposes of qualifications at these levels.

Individuals with foundation education experience were consulted in regional workshops. Discussions were also held with representatives from Business NZ, Careers NZ, the Tertiary Education Union, the Council of Trade Unions, RAISE Pasifika, the National Centre for Literacy and Numeracy for Adults, the Tertiary Education Commission, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and the Ministry of Education. Ako Aotearoa also received 23 written submissions on the Discussion Document from Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics, Private Training Establishments, Wānanga, a government agency, and independent sources.

At completion of the consultation phase, 711 unique individuals had viewed the project webpage: [www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/communities/foundation-graduate-profiles](http://www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/communities/foundation-graduate-profiles), and 186 downloaded the Discussion Document. Overall, consultative input was received from 120 individuals from 61 organisations: 73 individuals from 34 provider organisations, 12 individuals from Industry Training Organisations and employment sector bodies, 14 individuals (and one division) from other organisations, the officials advisory group comprising 14 officials from three agencies, and the sector advisory group comprising seven members from a variety of TEOs.

Following this, a draft report was developed and circulated to both advisory groups, all those who had participated in the earlier consultation phase, and members of Ako Aotearoa's Māori and Pacific Peoples caucuses. This draft was then further revised based on the feedback received, and presented to the Tertiary Education Commission. This publication is based on that report provided to the TEC.

## APPENDIX B: Acknowledging Contributors

*Contributors are listed here by the organisation with which they were affiliated. This does not necessarily imply formal endorsement of contributions by their affiliated organisation. Sector Advisory Group members were appointed on the basis of their expertise, rather than to represent any particular group or organisation.*

*We would also like to acknowledge members of the Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus and Pacific Peoples Caucus for their contribution.*

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