FOOD & FIBRE CoVE
Learner-Focused, Industry-Led, Government-Enabled

Transferable Skill Standards Framework

Situation Report

With the participation of:

NZQA Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa New Zealand Qualifications Authority

OHU AHUMAHI Workforce Development Councils

May 2025

Contents

Prepared by:

Kathryn Koopmanschap – Boost Business Services Ltd

Dr Nicky Murray – On Task Ltd

Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

FFCoVE	Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence
ISB	Industry Skills Board
ITO	Industry Training Organisation
MQS	Māori Qualification Services
NQS	National Qualification Services
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQCF	New Zealand Qualification and Credentials Framework
SoL	Science of Learning
SSB	Standard Setting Body
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WDC	Workforce Development Council

Key point summary

In response to their industries' workforce development needs and gaps, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (FFCoVE) and Muka Tangata worked together to develop a Food and Fibre Skills Framework. The Skills Framework provides a foundation to build the skills industry needs to develop an engaged, effective and empowered workforce.

Building off the Skills Framework, a Transferable Skills Forum has been established, with representatives from the six Workforce Development Councils and other standard-setting bodies, the NZQA National Qualification Services and Māori Qualification Services.

Its purpose is to advance the development, recognition, and portability of transferable skills within vocational education, aligning with workforce demands and ensuring equitable outcomes for learners.

This report comprises:

- data analysis of existing standards,
- the current work in progress across the WDCs,
- and an analysis of some of the constraints and barriers reported by the Transferable Skills Forum members, including industry resistance.

Key findings

Importance of this work to the Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs): There is good support within the current SSB organisations to create principles, processes and definitions for core transferable and technical skills.

Data analysis of existing standards and qualifications is difficult across the whole spectrum of industries, however, analysis does show that there are existing products which include core transferable and technical skills, in a widely varied manner.

Current work in progress: All SSBs are working on elements of core transferable and technical skills – from their own industries' perspective, acknowledging that other industries may use them.

Current constraints: There are multiple constraints to a more coherent approach to developing core transferable skills across standards and qualifications, which will need to be addressed for any change to be effective. While some are internal and this project will seek to resolve, others are external, and a wider system change approach would be required to address these.

Mechanisms in existing processes: There are mechanisms within the current New Zealand qualification development process that could be used to give more emphasis and guidance for developers and providers about core transferable and technical skills. In addition, the Australian Units of Competency as building blocks for training packages, plus the Foundation Skills section, could be used as a model for New Zealand SSBs.

Introduction

Background – Transferable Skills

Recent publications from global organisations such as World Economic Forum[1], consultants such as PwC[2], and local recruitment advisers such as Hays[3], are quantifying what every organisation knows – there is a skills shortage that needs to be carefully managed.

> "85% of hiring managers in Australia and New Zealand report skills gaps …that was negatively impacting the performance of their organisation."
> The top three skills hiring managers believe they will need going forward are Communication, Teamwork and Collaboration (84%), Critical Thinking – Problem Solving (81%), Adaptability – Flexibility (71%).
> *The Hays 2025 Skills Report, p.8*

The food and fibre sector, crucial to New Zealand's economic prosperity, reports endemic skill and labour shortages, with the number of people in formal vocational education in the sector also dropping over the last five years. Attraction and retention, and the recognition and utilisation of existing skills (including those gained through informal and non-formal learning) were key issues identified in the 14 industry specific Workforce Development Plans developed in 2023 by Muka Tangata (People, Food and Fibre Workforce Development Council). In response to their industries' workforce development needs and gaps, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (FFCoVE) and Muka Tangata co-created the Food and Fibre Skills Framework[4] in order to:

- Develop a common language to describe skills and knowledge, to support simplified, flexible qualifications and transferable skills
- Help understand which skills are relevant across many food and fibre sectors and workplaces, and which are more specialised
- Help recognise skills that are gained outside of the formal qualification system
- Enable the future proofing of food and fibre sector skills and capabilities, addressing new and emerging skills as well as current skills.

The key parts of the framework are:

- Core transferable skills – 'skills to build skills': learning to learn, learning for work, and learning for life. The term 'core transferable skills' has been deliberately chosen as these skill sets underpin the ability of individuals to gain, value, extend and transfer any skills or knowledge to different contexts.
- Core technical skills – generic skills common to most industries in the food and fibre sector
- Specialised technical skills – unique skills or knowledge for a certain industry
- Bodies of knowledge – develop superior knowledge in a particular area.

[1] World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report (https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf).
[2] PwC: Navigating the changing work landscape: https://www.pwc.co.nz/insights-and-publications/2024-publications/global-risk-survey/navigating-the-changing-workforce-landscape-to-address-skills-challenges.html
[3] Hays: The Changing face of skills.
[4] *A New Approach to Learner Pathways* (Muka Tangata, January 2023) put forward concepts and design principles to simplify and streamline qualifications in the Food and Fibre sector, and to support increased flexibility and transferability of skills. From there, a research project co-funded by Muka Tangata and FFCoVE investigated what type of framework would provide the desired outcomes for the sector (See research report here).

The Skills Framework provides an approach that can be contextualised for any organisation, establishing a foundation to build the skills the industry needs to develop an engaged, effective and empowered workforce. (See Appendix 1 for the high-level visualisation of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework).

Following the development of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework, multiple parties within Ohu Ahumahi, the umbrella name for the six Workforce Development Councils (WDC), showed an interest in how the framework may be used to underpin the development of skill standards and qualifications that are applicable to multiple industries. A Transferable Skills Forum was established, with representatives from the six Workforce Development Councils (WDC) and other standard-setting bodies (SSB), the NZQA National Qualification Services (NQS) and Māori Qualification Services (MQS). Its purpose is to advance the development, recognition, and portability of transferable skills within vocational education, aligning with workforce demands and ensuring equitable outcomes for learners.

This report outlines the current situation of qualification development within the New Zealand vocational education and training ecosystem, with regards to skills that build skills, and technical skills that are common across multiple if not all industries.

Background – Standards and Standard Setting Bodies

Qualifications, Unit Standards, Skills Standards and Micro-credentials

This project is focused on the formal vocational education and training sector, with training delivered that sits on the NZ Qualification and Credentials Framework (NZQCF). The *Education and Training Act 2020* aimed to reflect a shift towards a more unified, flexible, and industry-responsive vocational education system. For this project the key changes were:

- Removal of training schemes, and focus on micro-credentials as the primary mechanism for delivering smaller units of training (less than 40 credits).
- Introduction of Skills Standards, which will progressively replace unit standards in sub-degree qualifications, with the ability to make these mandatory as components of a qualification.

A summary of the key changes from Unit Standards to Skills Standards[5] are:

- Holism vs fragmentation: Skill standards are designed to be broader and more holistic
- Mandatory Inclusion: Skill standards are now generally mandatory in relevant qualifications, supporting portability and consistency
- Assessment Levels: Skill standards can include merit and excellence grades, unlike most unit standards which typically offered “achieved” or “not achieved”
- Industry Alignment: Skill standards are developed in close partnership with industry.

[5] FAQs October 2022 - https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Consultations-and-reviews/Rules-2022/FAQs-External-Release-Oct-2022.pdf

Vocational Standard Setting Bodies

Workforce Development Councils

The *Education and Training Act 2020* also created Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to replace the standard setting functions of the Industry Training Organisations (ITOs).[6] Some of the key changes were in the remit of the WDCs. Their core functions are standard-setting, developing qualifications, shaping national curriculum, workforce planning and providing industry leaders. Other functions that had been the responsibility of the former ITOs were not included in the new remit. For example, arranging of training, programme delivery and assessment was no longer a function, quality assurance of delivery now sits with education providers and NZQA, and managing completions and reporting now sits with the training providers.

These changes have enabled WDCs to have a focus on working with industry to understand the skills required for their current and future workforce, without the responsibility of providing the training, which is now completed by accredited training providers.

NZQA's standard setting role

Within the 2020 redesign of the standard setting bodies, two standards areas were allocated to NZQA.

1. National Qualifications Services (NQS) – is responsible for the development, maintenance and review of generic qualifications and unit standards that are not specific to any one industry or covered by a WDC. For example: English, Foundation and Bridging and Supported Learning.
2. Māori Qualifications Services (MQS) – is responsible for the development, maintenance and review of mātauranga Māori qualifications and Field Māori unit standards. They also support the development of resources, provide specialist advice and manage moderation systems for standards and qualifications based on mātauranga Māori.

Current Industry Skills Boards consultation

There is a current consultation by Government for the establishment of Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) to replace the WDCs from 1 January 2026[7]. ISBs will be statutory standard-setting bodies, with a majority industry governance. They will be responsible for developing qualifications, endorsing programmes and moderating assessments over key industry sectors. They will also have a workforce analysis function for their sectors, and provide investment advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

For the purposes of this Situation Report, given that there are still too many unknowns with the future system, we will be describing the current model and working arrangements. We will use Standard Setting Body (SSB) to include the two bodies within NZQA along with the current WDCs as the organisations charged with setting of standards.

[6] TEC Workforce Development Councils - https://www.tec.govt.nz/vocational-education/vocational-education/strengthening-vocational-education/workforce-development-councils-wdcs.
[7] TEC Consultation on grouping and coverage of ISBs (April 2025).

Approach

A multi-layered approach was used to create this situation report. This involved:

- Seeking initial input from the members of the Transferable Skills Forum, including:
    - Details on any completed qualification development which included Core Transferable Skills
    - Details on any planned qualification development, review or consultation
    - Usage data.
- Key informant interviews with members of the Transferable Skills Forum, including:
    - Exploring current practices and principles
    - Discussing barriers and enablers to this work.
- Desktop analysis of relevant documentation, including:
    - Qualification Development Guidelines from NZQA
    - Relevant legislation and guidelines
    - Scan of Australian Skills Packages.
- Data and content analysis of available primary source data and documentation, including:
    - Data usage from NZQA
    - Qualification outlines from NZQA
    - Analysis of title, purpose and learning outcomes.

Categories of skills

To provide clarity during discussions, draft categories and definitions of skills were developed. The skill categories used within the Skills Framework were used as the starting point for categorising skills, and then broadened to cover the entire workforce. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of these skills and Table 1 gives working definitions of each category.

Figure 1: Skills categories

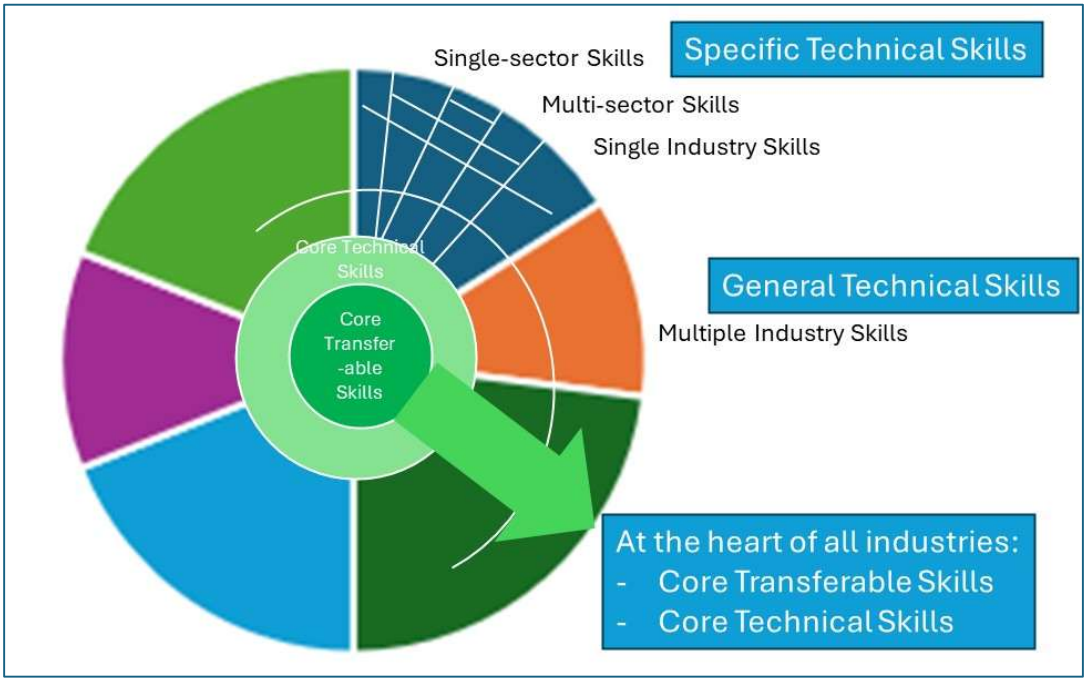


Table 1: Skills category definitions

Category	Definition
Core Transferable Skills	Skills to build skills – all Standard Setting Bodies (SSB) (e.g. thinking critically)
Core Technical Skills	Technical Skills across majority of SSB (e.g. digital skills, health, safety and well-being skills)
General Technical Skills	Technical Skills across two or more SSB Industries (e.g. trades essentials)
Specific Technical Skills	Technical skills specific for one SSB, or a sector within an SSB (e.g. understanding construction plans)

Core Transferable Skills

Similarly, the Food and Fibre Skills Framework provides the starting point for the definition and outline of Core Transferable Skills, summarised in Table 2. Five skills sets were developed based on New Zealand and international research and which align with the secondary education sector's New Zealand Curriculum Key Competencies. (See Appendix 2 for a summary table).

Table 2: Skills Framework Core Transferable Skills

Skill Set	Practical Definition
Sense of Self	*You know your strengths and weaknesses. You believe in yourself.*
Learning to Learn	*You have a growth mindset.*
Thinking Critically	*You are known for being curious and others ask your advice*.
Interacting with People	*You can get things done because a wide range of people like working with you.*
Participating and Contributing	*You act fairly for everyone.*

For each skill set there are details for three to five skills, outlining a definition and active "I Can" statements which show progression from entry level/supervised skills, to intermediate/independent skills, and on to experienced/strategic leadership skill levels. While these were not designed to be used directly for qualification development, they do provide a broadly accepted starting point for this analysis and forum activity.

Core Technical Skills

In addition, the Skills Framework also identifies the five categories of Core Technical Skills, summarised in Table 3. At this stage, only limited work to explore each of these has been completed. While these may be more specific to the Food and Fibre sector, in discussions with the Forum members, they largely fit the wider workforce.

Table 3: Core Technical Skills

Skill Set	Practical Definition
Living Beings and Environmental Skills	The skills required to work in the chosen environment.
Machinery and Technology Skills	The skills required to work with tools and technology of the industry.
Legislative and Regulatory Skills	The skills to understand the laws and regulations that govern the industry.
Good Practice Operations	The skills and operating procedures to ensure smooth running of the organisation.
Quality Management	The skills to assess and adjust process to meet the quality requirements of the industry.

General Technical Skills

This is a working title and definition, created during the initial discussions with the Forum members. As the project is progressed, this may be refined further. This category of skills is for technical skills which are required in a few industries, across multiple SSB remits. For example, Trades Essentials is a foundation qualification that could be used by a wide range of industries. While it was created for the construction and engineering industries, it has applicability across any industry that has a workforce that uses tools – e.g. agriculture, manufacturing.

Specific Technical Skills

This is the second working title and definition of this project. It represents the technical skills required by industries within one SSB remit. This is where the majority of qualification development activity occurs, and will not be covered in this project, except to note that when these skills are built on Core and General Technical skills, then the standards that already exist should be used where possible.

Current Situation

In this section, we outline the importance of this work, report on the data analysis of existing standards, the current work in progress across the WDCs, and some of the constraints and barriers reported by the Transferable Skills Forum members, including industry resistance.

Importance of creating Core Transferable Skills processes

In the initial discussions with the Forum members, an open question was asked about the project and the approach being taken. Many members took the opportunity to stress how important the project was.

> "This is a critical project. A clear formal process should be in place, to enable collaboration across the newly formed ISBs (in July), particularly around core skill standards. They need to know what each other is doing, and how to best manage risk."

> "We are fully supportive of this project – think it is great and needed. Everything we create should be able to be shared across the industries, needs to be relatable to learners, and consider their culture."

Indeed, the majority of WDCs have noted the importance of Core Transferable skills within their TEC Advice documents. Table 4 shows a summary of where there are implicit or explicit notes about Core Transferable Skills from the most recent TEC Advice Documents.

Table 4: Core Transferable Skills – advice to TEC

WDC	Core Transferable Skill Reference
Toi Mai	Future Workforce Needs in the TEC advice document – explicitly highlights the importance of transferable skills and recommends WDC and TEC develop a shared understanding of how transferability of skills can be recognised and credentialised.
Muka Tangata	Implicit in the New Qualification descriptions in the TEC advice document • "We are planning to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners".
Waihanga Ara Rau	A few explicit mentions of requirements for core transferable skills (referred to as soft skills in this document) • "integrate soft skills development (communication, teamwork and leadership) into education programmes to enhance the overall capabilities of professionals in the sector"
Ringa Hora	Implicit references in the common themes outlined in the TEC advice document • "Recognition of prior learning…experience is not always acknowledged or credentialised"
Toitu te Waiora	Implicit in the future workforce needs outlined in the TEC advice document • Recognition of lived experience.
Hanga-Aro-Rau	Explicit in the Executive Summary • "A work readiness focus for those not yet in the work that includes core transferable skills…" Also implicit in these two items • "More accessible upskilling...to support transitioning career changers" • "Promote lifelong learning to ensure adaptability".

Finding

There is good support within the current SSB organisations to create principles, processes and definitions for core transferable and technical skills.

Data analysis

Objective

A completed stocktake and analysis of existing standards on the NZQCF covering transferable skills (including those with industry context but written using generic outcomes).

Challenges

From the outset this was always going to be a challenging task. There are:

- 9000+ unit standards,
- 300+ skill standards,
- 700+ qualifications and
- 70+ micro-credentials.

Data sources

The NZQA website has three different areas to search – standards, qualifications and micro-credentials. The search functionality is limited, and search results bring up matching qualifications, that need to be investigated individually.

The WDCs have created Te Mata Raraunga. It is the shared platform for consistent and accurate vocational education and workforce data at an iwi, regional and national level. This shared database is used by the WDCs and Government Departments for consistent data on the ākonga (learners) and workforce of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is designed to provide information at an industry level, and there is no ability for the public to look across WDC, or to download data to consolidate.

Multiple files containing all the standards and qualifications by WDC were provided to the researchers. These were consolidated and key word search of titles of standards and qualifications was possible. This data does not include standards and qualifications held by either of the NZQA standard setting bodies (National Qualification Service (NQS) and Māori Qualification Service (MQS).

Through the Steering Committee reach, the researchers were put in touch with the Change and Insights Team within the Quality Assurance Division of NZQA. They were able to run queries using the same keywords across the qualifications information – specifically the Graduate Profile and Purpose. Unfortunately, the same couldn't be done for the Standards data within the timeline of this project.

Data analysis summary

The hypothesis for this analysis is that the use of a key word in a standard or qualification title can act as a proxy for the product containing some focus on demonstrating core transferable or technical skills. The search used key words, shown in Table 5, for each of the core skills.

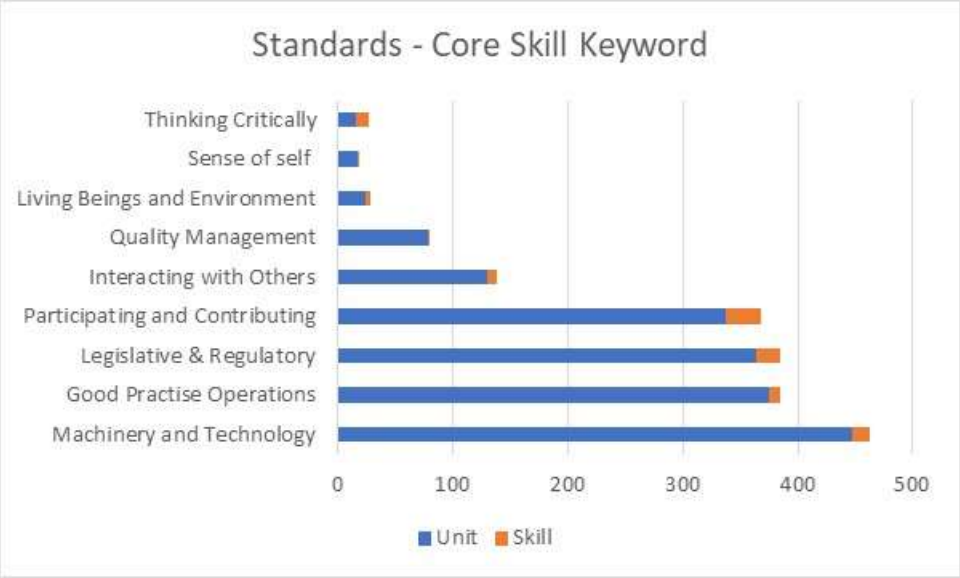
Table 5: Keywords

Core Transferable Skills	
Sense of Self	- resilience, wellbeing, self (manage)
Learning to Learn*	
Thinking Critically	- critical, critically (analyse/think), problem(solve), calculate-calculation
Interacting with Others	- team, communicate, communication, conflict (management)
Participating and Contributing	- lead, leadership, plan, manage, contribute, culture
Core Technical Skills	
Living Beings & Environment	- sustainable, waste
Machinery & Technology	- operate
Legislative & Regulatory	- regulations, safety
Good Practice Operation	- business, procedures, practices
Quality Management	- quality, audit

Note: 'Learning to learn' is inherent in the standards, and so there is no keyword indicator required. All standards contain elements of learning to learn skills.

Figure 2 shows the number of times keywords were mentioned across unit and skills standards.

Figure 2: Core skill keyword count



For **standards** – both unit and skill standards, it is now more common for the title to contain a core transferable skill keyword (13% compared with 5% of unit standards). However, with the core technical skill keywords, there was a roughly equal measure - ~14%.

For **qualifications**, the keyword search of titles has less meaning, as it is a summary of many courses within one qualification. For example: NZ Certificate in Agriculture would not be selected in this search for core transferable keywords. However, by looking at the Graduate Profile, there are keywords explicit, and transferable skills evident:

- Graduates of this qualification will be able to:
  - Coordinate agribusiness activities using appropriate technology and a range of effective communication and interpersonal skills.
  - Benchmark a farm's physical performance against data from industry high performers to identify strategies for improving farm physical and financial performance.
  - Produce routine management reports to inform decision making for a farm production system.
  - Take responsibility for routine maintenance of vehicles, plant, machinery, and equipment.
  - Implement and monitor a farm environmental plan.

The current Core Generic standards were also analysed. There was understandably good alignment with the Core Transferable Skills, with 50 standards aligning to the skills sets. However, the vast majority of these were at Foundation Levels (1-2) with only two standards at level 3-4. Given that the majority of the SSB qualification development is at Level 3-4 to meet industry needs, these existing standards of not overly useful.

The Data and Insights team at NZQA used the same keywords, across current qualifications, level 1-6 (n: 1,112). The initial search, Summarised in Table 6, shows that the Graduate Profile, and the Purpose, mention core transferable skills in about a quarter of the qualifications.

Table 6: Keywords across qualifications

Skill Set	Content	Graduate Profile	Purpose
Sense of Self	4%	25%	28%
Thinking Critically	2%	22%	5%
Interacting with Others	2%	31%	13%
Participating and Contributing	3%	24%	48%

Further work can be done with the NZQA dataset and tools. With more time, more sophisticated parameters could be developed. However, at this point in time, we have found evidence that core transferable and technical skills are mentioned across qualifications and standards titles.

It should be noted that, just as the researchers had difficulty in building a picture of these skills from the public websites, learners and employers will also struggle to find qualifications to match their requirements with these vital skills.

Finding

Data analysis of existing standards and qualifications is difficult across the whole spectrum of industries, however, analysis does show that there are existing products which include core transferable and technical skills, in a widely varied manner.

SSB work in progress

All WDCs have completed or are in the development stage with qualifications and/or standards that contain Core Transferable Skills, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: SSB work in progress

WDC	Qualification/Standard Reviews and Developments
Hanga Aro Rau	Reviewing the Estimate and Quotes standard. Developing a standard for Industrial Textile Manufacturing. Reviewing standards around waste (reduction, audit, kaitiakitanga, circular economy).
Māori Qualification Services (MQS)	Conducting cyclical reviews of their qualifications and unit standards. Just completed Māori Business review. Changing very little in high usage unit standards in the transition to skills standards. Developing qualifications based on Guiding Principles (Mata Pono).
Muka Tangata	Completed Seafood review and qualification (skill standards built into micro-credentials). Underway with Entry Level and Agriculture reviews. Working with Ringa Hora on what can be transferable in the Level 5 NZ Cert in Primary Industries Business and the Emerging Leadership Micro-credential.
National Qualification Service (NQS)	NQS will continue to maintain current standards for which they are SSB but not develop any new standards. The current NQS position is that these Core Generic standards will be reviewed as per their schedule.
Ringa Hora	Completed the NZ Certificate in Service Sector Skills. The Service Support area is going into review. Working with Service IQ for one skill standard related to sustainability. Working with Muka Tangata on transferable skills for Level 5 NZ Cert in Primary Industries Business and the Emerging Leadership M-C.
Toi Mai	Consultation around a NZ Certificate in Creative Industries Foundation.
Toitū Te Wairoa	Reviewing New Zealand Certificates in Health and Wellbeing, proposing new structure with 10 credit core transferable skills.
Waihanga Ara Rau	Finished creating 26 core technical construction skills standards. Work on mapping these into new qualification developments. New project on Site Supervision Skills.

Finding

All SSBs are working on elements of core transferable and technical skills – from their own industries' perspective, acknowledging that other industries may use them.

Current constraints in qualification development

This is a summary of the discussions with the Forum members, highlighting themes that were common across the multiple SSBs when describing the current situation.

Qualification review cycles

Each SSB has an existing list of products - standards and qualifications - with set review periods. In addition, Workforce Development Plans were created to highlight the key factors that are impacting industry sectors now and the actions the WDC is taking to improve the workforce. These are rolled

into Annual Reports and Advice to TEC, and multi-year Operational plans. These focus the resources of the WDC into the areas that have been highlighted through ongoing discussions with industry groups. These show a wide range of focus areas and the high priority areas for their industries, to which WDCs are mandated to respond. It can difficult enough to align priorities across the different sectors within a WDC's coverage, let alone to align focus areas, and therefore project deliverables and timelines across multiple SSBs. What one sector may see as a focus area is not always the same as another sector.

'Ownership' of coverage areas

Adding to this complexity is that different WDCs have coverage responsibilities for areas that may be considered 'core'. Those WDCs must address these areas with a planned and measured approach but this can cause frustration with other WDCs if areas have been identified as high priority within their industries, and yet do not sit within their mandated coverage area.

Resourcing levels

There are differing levels of resourcing across the SSBs. This is linked to overall budget and size of sectors, but also changes due to staff movements and immediate budget constraints. The impact of this is that projects which extend across multiple SSB are more difficult to prioritise and resource.

Industry challenges

Several WDCs mentioned that there is resistance from industry to the changes required in the transition from Unit Standards to Skill standards. Unit standards were introduced in the early 1990s. Industry are familiar with them, and some are resistant to change. Some examples of this include industry wanting to see:

- Their specific industry in the title
- Continuity from existing unit standards
- The assessment criteria specificity that exists in unit standards.

However, as noted in the Background section above, Skill Standards are to be designed to be more generic, to reduce fragmentation and increase portability for learners.

In addition, there is resistance to paying for training in Core Transferable Skills, which many employers believe are life skills, picked up by experience, rather than formal training. In consultation with industry, it has been the experience of qualification developers that there is a desire to include Core Transferable Skills into a new qualification, but when presented with a draft qualification, it is this content which is most likely to be debated and removed.

Provider challenges

While there is sound progress towards development of skill standards and micro-credentials, the uptake of these new products has been slow. There could be a few reasons for this, but the most common reason providers are giving, is the investment required to develop either new programmes, or the resources to teach the new skill standards. There is a feeling that the current poor economic environment is the primary driver for this reticence. However, the state of flux in both Te Pūkenga and the work-based training divisions would also be critical. While there is limited security for their funding, budgets and structure, the appetite for developing new resources is naturally low.

Vocational education ecosystem non-alignment

International and local research highlights the importance of teaching these core transferable skills – as they are the skills required to build skills. This message has not yet reached all of the industry stakeholders who are engaging with qualification development. An aid to this discussion could be understanding what core skills should be recognised and credentialised. At this point in time, neither industry nor the vocational education ecosystem have a clear picture on this.

External and regulatory factors

Alongside internal factors faced by qualification developers - organisational priorities, coverage, resourcing, and industry and provider buy-in, there are regulatory and external factors which need to be considered.

Consultation and stakeholder engagement processes

The need for industry buy-in and the mandate for collaboration between WDCs are clearly set out in the regulatory documents guiding this work. NZQA has produced Operational Rules[8] [9] and Guideline[10] [11] documents for the development of Skill Standards, and Qualifications separately. The impact on these for both stakeholder engagement and collaboration between SSBs is summarised below.

Skills Standards

While there is no mention of stakeholder engagement or consultation in the Operational Rules for Standards, the Guidelines have several statements to be followed in regards to stakeholder engagement:

- "All users of skill standards and sector stakeholders will be consulted during development and review" (p.6)
- To be approved the standard "must match the needs of employers, industry and/or communities" (p.10)
- To be approved "all users of skill standards and sector stakeholders will be consulted during development and review" (p.10)
- "Users of skill standards and sector stakeholders must be consulted during a review. SSBs are expected to provide evidence of consultation." (p.21).

Qualifications (including Micro-credentials)

The Operational rules contain a section on the content and process for approval, which has a list of statements in Clause 11.2 around stakeholder engagement, from which WDC applications are exempt.

---

[8] NZQA Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/rules-fees-policies/nzqa-rules/directory-of-assessment-and-skill-standards-listing-and-operational-rules-2022/

[9] NZQA Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2022: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/rules-fees-policies/nzqa-rules/qualification-and-micro-credentials/

[10] NZQA Guidelines for listing skill standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Tertiary/Approval-accreditation-and-registration/Standards/Skills-standards/Guidelines-for-listing-skill-standards-on-the-DASS.pdf

[11] NZQA Guidelines for listing qualifications on the NZQCF: https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Tertiary/Approval-accreditation-and-registration/Guidelines/guidelines-for-listing-quals-on-the-nzqcf-nz-cert-levels-1-6-nz-dips-levels-5-7.pdf

The Guidelines have a section specifically for WDC applications because their remit is inclusive of industry engagement. This allows that each application doesn't need to show stakeholder engagement evidence.

"WDCs are…required to submit different information to support applications for quality assurance and approval:

- For new qualification listing, a high-level summary of stakeholder engagement, and the need for qualification, is required.
- For reviewed qualifications, a summary of the review process, stakeholders consulted, and review outcomes is required" (p.12).

In the section about review of a qualification there is also an exemption of stakeholder evidence.

- "A Review Report (not for publication) that includes:
  - a summary of the review process, consultation with stakeholders and their support for the changes.
- Evidence of consultation with stakeholders and their support for the changes (not required for WDCs)" (p.32).

Cross SSB collaboration

The Skills Standard guidelines have this guidance:

- "SSBs can share the development of skill standards with one SSB nominated as the lead developer. The lead developer will be responsible for consent to assess requirements and the national external moderation system for the skill standards" (p.6).
- "Consultation should also take place with other SSBs if there is potential for a reviewed standard to overlap with any other SSB's standard setting coverage" (p.21)

There is no similar statement in the Guidelines for Qualifications and Micro-credentials. However, there are implicit collaborative statements:

- "Qualifications are developed collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders in an environment of mutual trust and accountability" (p.5)
- "NZQA will list a qualification at levels 1 to 6 only where it is satisfied that the qualification does not duplicate an existing qualification, that there is a distinct need for the qualification, and that it will meet the outcomes as stated in the outcome statement" (p.16)

See Appendix 3 for details provided by NZQA to standard setting bodies for qualification development.

Future workforce requirement challenges

The SSBs have developed a wealth of research aimed to understand and forecast future workforce requirements. Part of this is the requirement for upskilling and reskilling of the current workforce to cope with demographic and societal changes.

Statistics NZ estimate that the workforce will increase from 2.9 million in 2020, to 3.2 million in early 2030s. The workforce will continue to "grey", as the proportion of labour force who are over 65 years

old, will increase, while the core working-age group (15-64) as a proportion of the total population will shrink. The workforce will become more ethnically diverse. In particular Māori are projected to comprise 21% of the total population by 2043, up from 17.3% in 2023.

In parallel with the changing workforce demographics, the nature of work and workplaces is also forecast to significantly change. The impact of technological advances and increasing digitization will see the need for more higher-level technical skills and digital proficiency from basic to advanced skills across the whole workforce. The Hays 2025 Skills Report estimates that "by 2033, over 90% of new jobs will require post-secondary qualifications, with 44% of those having vocational education and training as the primary pathway to access" (p.6).[12]

While the SSBs attempt to factor these changes into development considerations, industry is focused on the here and now. There is a desire to move to more flexible training to address skills gaps and help adapt the workforce to changing needs, but change to the current system is slow, and most employers are continuing to use the qualifications and standards with which they are familiar.

Funding challenges

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is responsible for investing government funding in tertiary education, which in 2024 amounted to just over $3bn for tertiary tuition and training.

The funding for training organisations is complex and based on both historical performance (how many students completed which qualifications) and the future looking Investment Plans submitted by the training organisation.

The majority of tertiary education programmes are funded through the Level 3-7 (non-degree) on the NZQCF Fund. Table 8 shows the core components for this fund – Mode of Delivery and Equivalent Full-Time Student (EFTS).

Table 8: EFTS per mode of delivery

2025: DQ3-7(Non-Degree): Delivery Component					
Mode of delivery / Equivalent Full-Time Student (EFTS) - Excluding GST					
Subject categories	**Provider-based***	**Provider-based: extramural**	**Work-based**	**Pathway to work**	**Assessment & Verification**
Humanities, Business and Social Service Vocations (F1)	$6,584.00	$6,584.00	$5,701.00	$6,901.00	$1,658.00
Trades, Creative Arts, Information Technology and Health-related Professions (F2)	$10,469.00	$10,469.00	$7,825.00	$9,732.00	$1,658.00
Agriculture, Engineering, Health Sciences and Science (F3)	$11,786.00	$11,786.00	$8,543.00	$10,693.00	$1,658.00
Pilot Training and Priority Engineering (F4)	$14,419.00	$14,419.00	$9,984.00	$12,613.00	$1,658.00
Foreign-going Nautical and Specialist Agriculture (F5)	$19,753.00	$19,753.00	$12,900.00	$16,499.00	N/A
Mātauranga and Te Reo Māori (F6)	$7,827.00	$7,827.00	$7,827.00	$7,827.00	$1,782.00

Due to the nature of this funding structure, there is an unintended incentive for providers to focus on longer training courses. While a year-long training course will provide $11,786 funding (in Agriculture, Engineering, Health Sciences and Science) per learner, a 20-credit micro-credential will bring in just 16% of this (20 credit / 120 credit) – and yet have similar overhead costs for enrolling, marketing, moderating, quality assurance measures and reporting. Most providers are not set up for

[12] Hays: The Changing face of skills.

the delivery of shorter courses, and the workload is typically additional to the year-long delivery programmes for the teachers involved.

A Provider also noted that there is an unintended incentive to create programmes which fall into the higher funding buckets (for example Specialist Agriculture receives nearly $8,000 more per FTE than Agriculture). In addition, there is no additional funding mechanism for programmes which require a very high tutor to student ratio in order to maintain health and safety. For example, in forestry, requires one tutor to four chainsaws and eight students.

In addition, it is difficult for training providers to prepare forecasts for micro-credentials – having no historical delivery to base it on.

NZQA Level Descriptors proposed change

Late in 2024 NZQA consulted on changes to the NZQCF – including updating the level descriptors. The consultation closed on 17 November 2024. Implementation is anticipated to be from 1 July, but there has been no further announcement since the publication of the summary of responses.

The summary of the changes is:

> "We have worked with international experts to update the level descriptors. These describe what is expected of a graduate at each level of the NZQCF.
>
> The first two domains, 'knowledge' and 'skills', have not changed. We have renamed the third domain to 'context, autonomy and responsibility'. It was previously 'application (of knowledge and skills)'.
>
> In the skills domain, we now include transferable competencies of critical thinking, communication and collaboration as sub-domains.
>
> A fourth sub-domain, 'performance and practice', is intended to make vocational outcomes more visible."

See Appendix 4 for the table showing the draft level descriptors, including the additional transferable skills – critical thinking, collaboration, communication.

National Secondary Curriculum - changing focus

There is currently a multi-year change programme underway in the National Curriculum which:

> "Includes refreshing, redesigning and strengthening our curricula and assessment systems so they are in line with the best in the world.
>
> The changes we are making encompass what will be taught and in what sequence for each year of schooling, the teaching practices that teachers and kaiako use in classrooms, and the assessment and aromatawai tools and practices teachers and kaiako use to monitor and respond to learner and ākonga progress."[13]

[13] The National Curriculum: https://tahurangi.education.govt.nz/our-story

This is a move away from a skills-based approach which has focused on generic skills such as problem-solving, towards mastery in a given subject. It is a move from Constructivist principles towards Science of Learning[14] principles. Table 9 highlights some points of difference.

Table 9: Changes to the National Curriculum

Aspect	Science of Learning (SoL)	Constructivist Theory
Curriculum Structure	Sequenced, explicit, knowledge-rich	Flexible, emergent, context-driven
Teaching Approach	Direct instruction, modelling, practice	Inquiry-based, student-led, exploration
Knowledge Emphasis	Core Disciplinary knowledge, skills and concepts	Learner constructed understanding
Assessment	Regular, formative, focused on mastery	Often project-based, reflective
NZ Curriculum Trends	Moving towards SoL principles	Previous emphasis on competencies, inquire and learner agency

In Forum discussions this point was raised:

> *"Secondary education is moving towards 'knowledge rich' curriculum, but work based learning is skill based – how do we bridge the gap?"*

It will take time to understand what if anything needs to change to accommodate learners who come through the adjusted New Zealand Curriculum. However, the nature of work-based learning is to show and practise until mastery is achieved. This is in line with the Science of Learning approach. However, it may mean that some core transferable skills in Learning to Learn and Thinking Critically may become more important to explicitly teach and recognise in the tertiary environment.

Finding

There are multiple constraints to a more coherent approach to developing core transferable skills across standards and qualifications, which will need to be addressed for any change to be effective. While some are internal and this project will seek to resolve, others are external, and a wider system change approach would be required to address these.

Making it work: Mechanisms to include Core Transferable Skills in qualifications

Several approaches have been taken by the SSBs to incorporate core transferable skills into recent qualification development. There is inherent variation depending on level and industry demand for skills. However, it is useful to understand the different mechanisms available, and how they are being used. Table 10 presents definitions and some examples.

[14] The Science of Learning explained: https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/the-science-of-learning-explained/5637228585.p

Table 10: Mechanisms to include core transferable skills

Mechanism	Definition and *Example*
Purpose Statement	The strategic purpose statement is usually structured as two-three statements that clearly identify the: • target group of learners, industry and/or community that will benefit from the qualification • standard level of responsibility and/or autonomy at which the graduate will operate or a definition of the scope of practice. This refers to any relevant industry or professional standards, licensing or professional registration requirements. *Example: NZ Certificate in Service Sector Skills (NZ5025)* *The purpose of this qualification is to provide New Zealand service-based industries with individuals who have the transferable skills required to operate effectively in a service sector workplace environment.* *It is intended that ākonga who acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviours in this qualification will be able to pursue a career in a variety of work roles in the service sector industry.* *The qualification focus is transferable skills of customer service, teamwork, communication, health and safety, professional and ethical behaviour, problem solving, and critical thinking required by service sector work roles.*
Graduate Profile or Outcome Statement	A graduate profile describes what a person awarded the qualification can do, be and know. The description should reflect the full range of graduate capabilities and competencies. *Example: NZ Certificate in Māori Business and Management (3501)* *Graduates of this qualification will be able to:* *- Apply basic te reo Māori in business and cultural contexts.* *- Apply understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to support effective business operations.* *- Demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour in a socially and culturally appropriate manner.* *- Foster collaboration and robust communications with internal and external parties.* *- Use business management tools and techniques appropriate to business sustainability.* *- Manage personal growth and professional development in relation to business objectives* *- Work cooperatively as a team member to support effective business operations*
Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria	The learning outcomes describe the skill(s) and knowledge a learner will have once they have achieved the standard. Learning outcomes must include an action verb, content, and context. *Unit & skills standards have learning outcomes and assessment criteria.* *Example: 40060 Apply self-management and resilience strategies…* *Learning outcome 1:*

	Describe self-management and resilience strategies. *Assessment Criteria:* *a. Identify self-management and resilience, and potentially relevant strategies* *b. Describe relevance of strategies to self.*
Indicative Content	SSBs include the indicative content they encourage providers to cover with their learners. Along with the learning outcomes, the indicative content provides the framework for a provider to develop its specific learning activities and assessment tasks, while also supporting portability of learning and consistent graduate outcomes. The content is expressed at a high level as topics rather than tasks, and along with other skill standard details, helps inform the credit value *Example: 40289 – Use and respond to trade language to progress construction tasks* ***Ihirangi waitohu |** Indicative content* *Project information* - *Trade language, including jargon, and technical vocabulary* - *Reasons for working to specific timeframes and sequencing.* - *Level of detail required to progress construction tasks.* - *Considering safety and timing.* *Communication methods for construction tasks* - *Sketches and updates to project plans.* - *Task boards.* - *Toolbox meetings.* - *Communication points during the project.* - *Visual communication.* - *Use of technology.* - *Project and task supervisors.* *Developing trade language in a construction environment* - *Reading situations and adapting communication.* - *Noise in the construction environment.* - *Concept of āko (learning) through the project.* - *Onsite buddy system.* - *Tuakana-tēina.*
General Conditions	Qualifications may also contain General Conditions. These may include: • Entry requirements, including a range of contexts and learning pathways, and minimum literacy levels • General guidance for programme developers • The context for delivery or assessment • Any practicum requirements *Example: NZ Cert in Aquaculture (NZ3135):* *TEOs offering programmes leading to this qualification must maintain currency with relevant legislation, regulations, and codes of practice which may include the following:*

	Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992, Biosecurity Act 1993, Animal Products Act 1999, Food Act 2014, Fisheries Act 1996, Wildlife Act 1953. *Company quality, risk management, recording, and reporting; and relevant legislation apply across all outcomes.* *Programmes developed must ensure the behaviours that contribute to compliance with workplace procedures, and commercial standards and timeframes are inherent in the performance of the qualification's outcomes and must be considered as part of the assessment process.* *Programmes informing learners/ākonga on Fisheries Observer roles can find information here:*

In addition there are guiding design principles from NZQA for Skills Standards:

> "The principles aim to support a consistent, collaborative approach to developing and Guidelines for listing skill standards on the DASS (April 2025) 7 designing skill standards.
>
> There are various ways SSBs might choose to use the principles, for example as a foundation document when setting up qualification and skill standard development panels, and in the contextualised content of individual skill standards.
>
> While NZQA expects each SSB to deeply consider how each principle can be applied in context, they are not intended to be used as an evaluation checklist for listing skill standards on the DASS. Although each kaupapa is presented separately in Table 1[15], the overarching intent is that the kaupapa are intrinsically connected throughout the design, learning and teaching process.
>
> Over time, SSBs and NZQA will continue to refine how the principles are used in the skill standard development and design process, and share examples of the principles in action."

Australian VET qualification comparison

This is a situation report about the current vocational education and training qualification development in New Zealand. However, it is useful to look to the Australian VET system for some comparison. The researchers are not advocating a system change, rather to see if there are elements within the Australian system that could be incorporated into practice or system to improve the focus on Core Transferable Skill teaching.

Australia has a National Training Register that includes:

- Nationally recognised training: training packages, qualifications, units of competency, skills sets and accredited courses
- Registered training organisations – that are approved to delivery nationally recognised training.

[15] Table 1 (p.6): Guidelines for listing skill standards, NZQA website, (April 2025)

The basic unit of competency is a building block, that may then be used multiple times in a range of qualifications – either as a mandatory or elective component.

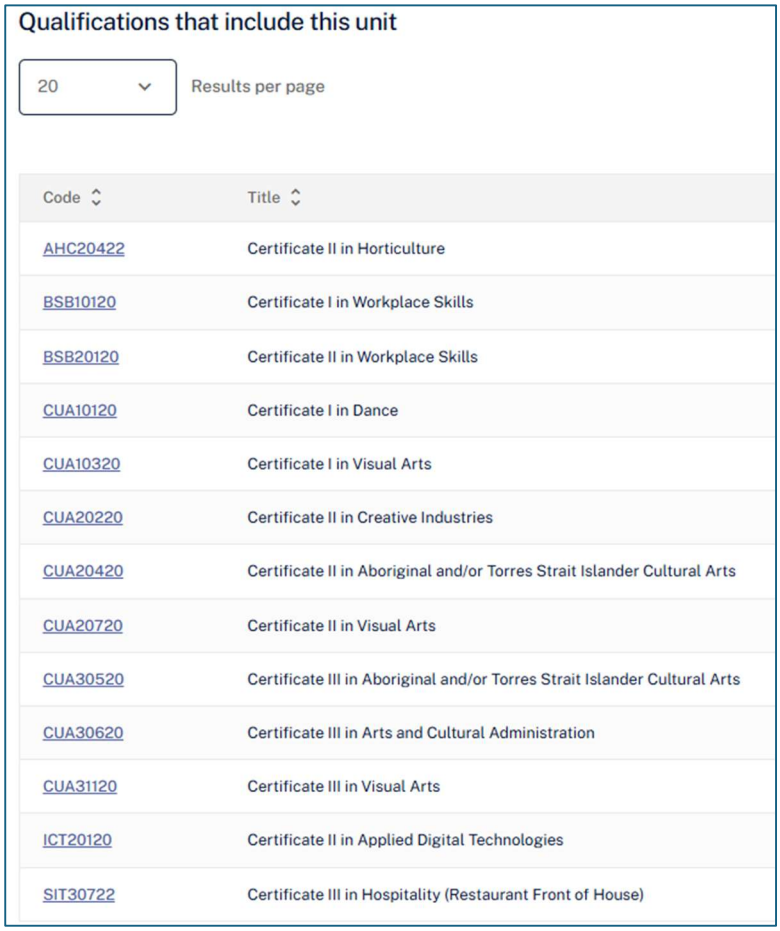
Table 11 provides an example: *BSBCRT201: Develop and apply thinking and problem-solving skills*, comparing its components with a New Zealand Skills Standard, and highlighting where core transferable skills are made explicit (described as 'Foundation Skills' in the Australian system).

Table 11: Australian Unit of Competency comparison

Australian Unit of Competency	NZ Skill Standard
Application	Purpose
Elements and Performance Criteria	Learning Outcome and Assessment Criteria
Foundation skills: This section describes those language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance but not explicit in the performance criteria. ***Skills*** - **Oral communication: Uses listening and questioning techniques to obtain specific information and confirm understanding** - **Teamwork: Uses accepted practices to discuss ideas with others** - **Planning and organising: Develops a plan for the use of information gathered.**	
Assessment Requirements - Performance evidence - Knowledge evidence - Assessment conditions	Assessment Specifications - Some overlap with Indicative Content
	Indicative Content
	Resources

The register then lists which qualifications include this unit – and they range across the whole workforce – from Horticulture to Visual Arts, to Digital Technologies and Hospitality, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Qualifications that include Unit of Competency BSBCRT201



Qualifications that include this unit

20 Results per page

Code	Title
AHC20422	Certificate II in Horticulture
BSB10120	Certificate I in Workplace Skills
BSB20120	Certificate II in Workplace Skills
CUA10120	Certificate I in Dance
CUA10320	Certificate I in Visual Arts
CUA20220	Certificate II in Creative Industries
CUA20420	Certificate II in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts
CUA20720	Certificate II in Visual Arts
CUA30520	Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts
CUA30620	Certificate III in Arts and Cultural Administration
CUA31120	Certificate III in Visual Arts
ICT20120	Certificate II in Applied Digital Technologies
SIT30722	Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House)

Table 13 gives an indication of the units of competency that align with the Core Transferable Skills. These are examples, and not intended to be either a direct alignment or an exhaustive list.

Table 13: Units of Competency for Core Transferable Skills

Skill Set	Skill Element examples	Australian Unit of Competency
Sense of Self	Whakapapa Staying Positive Self-managing Turangawaewae Aiming high	BSBPEF302 Develop self-awareness SIRXHWB001 Maintain personal health and wellbeing BSBPEF401 Manage personal health and wellbeing MSMPMC200 Organise self TLIG3003 Apply positive behaviours in the workplace
Thinking Critically	Creative Thinking Problem-Solving Mātauranga Decision-Making	BSBCRT301 Develop and extend critical and creative thinking skills BSBCRT411 Apply critical thinking to work practices BSBCRT511 Develop critical thinking in others BSBCRT201 Develop and apply thinking and problem solving skills MSMSUP390 Use structured problem-solving tools BSBCRT611 Apply critical thinking for complex problem solving RIIBEF404 Undertake informed and dynamic decision making AMPMGT809 Analyse data for business decision making
Interacting with Others	Listening Communicating	FSKOCM006 Use oral communication skills to participate in workplace teams

	Manaakitanga Whanaungatanga Developing People	PSPGEN143 Prepare high-level written communication BSBCMM511 Communicate with influence PUATEA001 Work in a team POLGEN036 Work collaboratively in a team environment CPPCMN4003 Establish, develop and monitor teams
Participating and Contributing	Building inclusivity Kotahitanga Kaitiaki	PSPGEN115 Uphold and support inclusive workplace practices BSBTWK301 Use inclusive work practices PSPGEN118 Provide leadership BSBLDR411 Demonstrate leadership in the workplace CPPCMN4013 Operate a sustainable business

The researchers also did a comparison between the proposed NZQA level descriptors of Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking with both the Food and Fibre Skills Framework and the relevant Australian units of competency and NZQA unit standards. This analysis showed alignment between the four, but the levels of specificity differ. The tables for this can be found in Appendix 5.

Finding

There are mechanisms within the current New Zealand qualification development process that could be used to give more emphasis and guidance for developers and providers about core transferable and technical skills. In addition, the Australian Units of Competency as building blocks for training packages, plus the Foundation Skills section, could be used as a model for New Zealand Standard Setting Bodies.

Summary

There is strong support within the SSBs for the development of cross-SSB processes which provide a more consistent approach to the inclusion of Core Transferable, Core Technical and General Technical skills in new qualifications and standards.

There are instruments available within the skill standard and qualification applications that are being used currently to make implicit and explicit requirements for the teaching of these skills. However, there is no consistent approach or language used.

There are external factors that also need to be recognised and managed. In particular the understanding by industry/employers of the move to more generic skills standards, and the importance of core transferable skills.

With a recognition that there is no one size fits all solution, the analysis shows the range of existing mechanisms which can be used to improve the understanding and delivery of these vital core skills.

Key findings

Importance of this work to the Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs): There is good support within the current SSB organisations to create principles, processes and definitions for core transferable and technical skills.

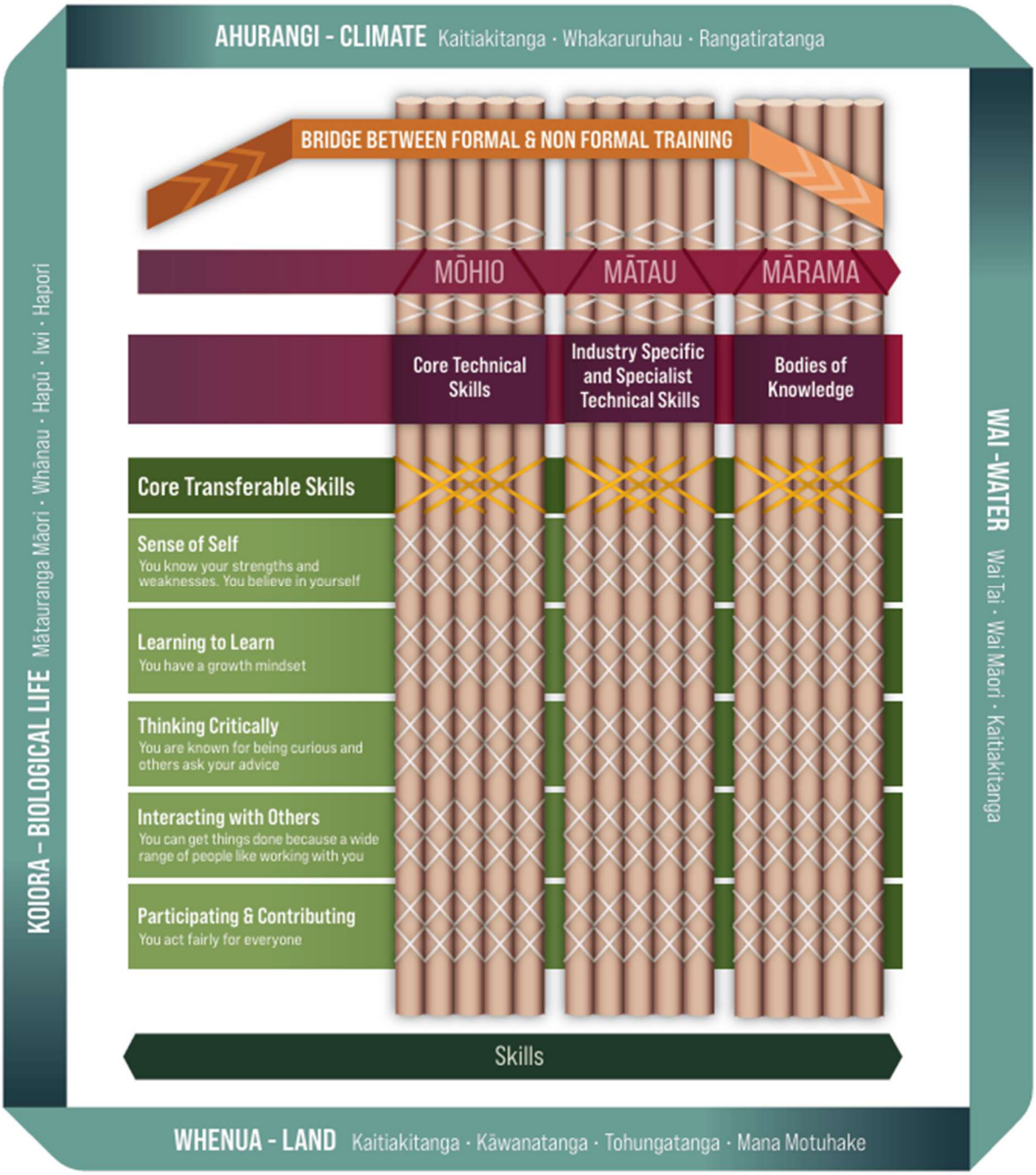
Data analysis of existing standards and qualifications is difficult across the whole spectrum of industries, however, analysis does show that there are existing products which include core transferable and technical skills, in a widely varied manner.

Current work in progress: All SSBs are working on elements of core transferable and technical skills – from their own industries' perspective, acknowledging that other industries may use them.

Current constraints: There are multiple constraints to a more coherent approach to developing core transferable skills across standards and qualifications, which will need to be addressed for any change to be effective. While some are internal and this project will seek to resolve, others are external, and a wider system change approach would be required to address these.

Mechanisms in existing processes: There are mechanisms within the current New Zealand qualification development process that could be used to give more emphasis and guidance for developers and providers about core transferable and technical skills. In addition, the Australian Units of Competency as building blocks for training packages, plus the Foundation Skills section, could be used as a model for New Zealand SSBs.

Appendix 1: Food and Fibre Skills Framework



This is a high-level visualisation of the Food and Fibre Skills Framework, which shows the interwoven nature of the core components. Te Ao Māori principles and values are integrated into The Framework, symbolised by toi Māori in the form of Tukutuku Lattice panels which adorn the pakiwaitara (stories) on the walls of the Whare Tipuna.

The Core Transferable skills are woven in the centre of the panel, as they provide the core skills needed by individuals in life and in work.

For further information about the Skills Framework, refer to the FF CoVE website (here).

Appendix 2: Core Transferable Skills

Skill sets	Definition	Elements
Sense of self	This is understanding who you are. Our sense of self is strengthened when we are connected not only to ourselves, but our whanau, communities and environment. A strong sense of self means you are reliable, resilient and have a can-do attitude. You can be honest when you self-reflect. You know how to set personal goals, make plans and meet challenges. ***You know your strengths and weaknesses. You believe in yourself.***	Whakapapa Staying positive Self-managing Turangawaewae Aiming high
Learning to learn	This is when you solve problems by finding, using and then sharing knowledge. You fill your personal kete and are confident you can keep learning. You keep a positive mindset about yourself when it gets tough. You are comfortable to either be the learner or to share your experience depending on the situation. ***You have a growth mindset.***	Seeking knowledge Reflecting Adapting Ako
Thinking critically	This is when you see connections and opportunities. You are open to the views of others and new experiences. You need this to get ahead with the technical skills in your work. When you think critically you can make sense of information, experiences, and ideas. You make informed decisions and can explain clearly your perspective. ***You are known for being curious and others ask your advice*.**	Creative thinking Problem solving Mātauranga Decision-making
Interacting with others	This is how you engage with people around you. You build strong relationships and know how to operate in different social and cultural dynamics. When you master this, you are strong in listening actively, recognising different points of view, negotiating and sharing ideas. ***You can get things done because a wide range of people like working with you.***	Listening Communicating Manaakitanga Whanaungatanga Developing people
Participating and contributing	This is when you are actively involved in your community. This means you contribute as a group member, you make strong connections with others, and you can create opportunities for others to shine. You have a sense of belonging and the confidence to put your hand up in new situations. When you master this, you understand the importance of balancing rights, roles, and responsibilities of everyone in your community. You play your part in ensuring your place is a quality environment for everyone. ***You act fairly for everyone.***	Building inclusivity Kotahitanga Kaitiaki

Appendix 3: Guidelines[16] by NZQA for Qualification Developments

Standard setting bodies in New Zealand, such as Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), Māori Qualifications Services, National Qualifications Services, and the Ministry of Education, must follow a set of rules and processes to develop qualifications for listing on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF). The key rules and requirements are summarised in this table:

Requirement	Description
Legislative compliance	Follow NZQA rules and Education and Training Act 2020
Stakeholder engagement	Collaborate with industry, iwi, and education sector; provide evidence of need
Qualification design	Align with NZQCF level descriptors; ensure coherence and relevance
Assessment and moderation	Ensure fair, valid, and consistent assessment; implement moderation systems
Ongoing review	Regularly review and update qualifications based on industry and learner needs
Approval and listing	Submit to NZQA for approval; provide comprehensive documentation and evidence

Skill Standards:

Skill standards are defined in the Education and Training Act 2020 as:
(a) a specification of skills, the levels of performance in those skills, and the learning outcomes associated with those skills; and
(b) in relation to any vocational education and training (or proposed vocational education and training), a specification of some or all of the skills in which training is (or is proposed to be) received, the levels of performance in those skills intended to be attained by people receiving the training, and the learning outcomes associated with those skills.

Skill standards are the building blocks of vocational qualifications.

Skill standards that fit with the listed purpose must be used. Skill standards may be used across a number of qualifications, particularly where the learning outcomes are not specific to an industry or community need.

Learning outcomes in skill standards provide:
• a clear link from the skill standard to the graduate profile of the qualification
• the framework for providers to design and deliver teaching and assessment that supports learning and consistent achievement.

Standard setting bodies (Workforce Development Councils and NZQA) lead the collaborative development of skill standards for their industries/sectors. Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) are new leaders in the vocational education and training system, with a very clear focus on skills

[16] NZQA Guidelines for Listing Qualifications on the NZQF. https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Tertiary/Approval-accreditation-and-registration/Guidelines/guidelines-for-listing-quals-on-the-nzqcf-nz-cert-levels-1-6-nz-dips-levels-5-7.pdf

leadership. Providers are responsible for structuring the individual learner journey and delivering a great learning experience. The collaborative development and implementation of skill standards provides the opportunity for WDCs and providers to work together to ensure employer and learner needs are met.

Where skills standards are not available when a qualification is listed, the qualification should be reviewed to include them as soon as they are available.

Stakeholders and Evidence of Need

These are the guidelines for Stakeholder engagement and evidence of need.

1. A stakeholder profile which identifies individuals and/or organisations with a "stake" in the outcome of the qualification, including mandatory stakeholders.

2. A list of the stakeholders from the stakeholder profile that had significant involvement in the development of the qualification.

3. Stakeholder attestations, with those attestations showing the nature, degree and reason for each stakeholder's involvement in the development of the qualification.

4. Evidence of a comprehensive needs analysis that identifies and confirms the distinct need in New Zealand for the qualification, or in the other country or countries in which the qualification has a predominant use (*including evidence of satisfying the requirements of the relevant regulatory body or bodies of that country or those countries*)

5. Evidence of decisions made in the development of the qualification.

Listing rule 11.2

Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) applications

WDCs are required under Section 366 of the Act to provide skills and workforce leadership, identify the current and future needs of their specified industries, and develop and maintain industry qualifications. WDCs carry out their functions, including industry engagement and collaboration, in accordance with their specific Order in Council.

WDCs are therefore required to submit different information to support applications for quality assurance and approval:

• For new qualification listing, a high-level summary of stakeholder engagement, and the need for qualification, is required.

• For reviewed qualifications, a summary of the review process, stakeholders consulted, and review outcomes is required.

Appendix 4: Draft NZQA Level Descriptors

DOMAIN	Sub-domain	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
What graduates know ***Knowledge***	**Knowledge**	Has knowledge of some facts and information relevant to a field of study	Has knowledge of some facts and information and understands some concepts relevant to a field of work or study	Has knowledge of some of the key facts and information in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts	Has knowledge of the key facts and information in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts and key principles	Has in-depth technical or theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts and key principles	Has specialised technical or theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts and key principles
What graduates can do ***Skills***	**Practice and performance**	Performs simple activities	Performs a range of familiar activities	Performs some unfamiliar activities	Performs moderately complex or unfamiliar activities	Customises approach for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities	Develops new methods for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities
	Critical thinking	Identifies simple problems or goals	Identifies simple problems or goals and recommends a solution or plan	Examines familiar problems or goals and recommends a solution or plan	Examines unfamiliar problems and recommends a solution or plan	Applies problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems	Adapts problem solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems
	Collaboration	Contributes to group or team activities	Contributes to group or team activities and acknowledges views and experience of others	Makes a significant contribution to group or team activities and acknowledges views and experience of others	Helps create a collaborative culture within a group or team by role modelling and encouraging the contributions of others	Leads the creation of a collaborative group or team culture	Leads a group or team on moderately complex projects and motivates others
	Communication	Communicates basic information	Communicates basic information and shares ideas on familiar topics	Communicates familiar information and shares ideas on some unfamiliar topics	Communicates familiar information and shares ideas on a range of unfamiliar topics	Communicates moderately complex information and shares ideas with a known audience using an appropriate communication medium and method	Communicates moderately complex information and shares ideas with a range of audiences using customised communication media and methods

Appendix 5: Comparison of Level Descriptors, Skills Framework, Australian and NZ Units

NZQCF Level Descriptors (draft)			
NZQCF: *Skills Domain*	**L1/2 Highly structured**	**L3/4 Structured, some unpredictability**	**L5/6 Dynamic, some ambiguity**
Critical thinking	Identifies simple problems or goals Recommends a solution or plan	Examines familiar / unfamiliar problems or goals and recommends a solution or plan	Applies problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems
Food and Fibre Skills Framework			
FFSF example element	**Mōiho *Finding your place*** **Responsibility:** works with supervision **Autonomy:** becoming independent	**Mātau *Building your place*** **Responsibility:** leading others **Autonomy:** independent	**Mārama *Nurturing your place*** **Responsibility:** set strategy **Autonomy:** leading direction or innovation
Problem solving *You complete tasks. You explore and analyse different solutions when your work is not straight-forward.*	• I complete tasks by following instructions • I complete tasks by finding someone to help if I need them • I complete tasks by explaining problems to someone for advice if I need • I complete tasks by finding information I need myself	• I explore problems by creating different possible solutions • I explore problems by thinking about the pros and cons of possible solutions • I explore complex problems by building my understanding through research • I explore complex problems by analysing the causes and effects	• I create solutions for complex problems by generating a range of options • I create solutions for complex problems by evaluating the positive and negative effects of a range of options • I analyse complex problems by using logical reasoning • I analyse complex problems by creating and testing hypotheses • I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems and assess their success
Australian Skills Quality Authority National Register – units of competency			
	BSBCRT201 Develop and apply thinking and problem solving skills	**MSMSUP390** Use structured problem-solving tools	**MSS408012** Develop problem solving capability of an organisation
	1. Investigate problem solving 2. Prepare and ask questions 3. Solve basic workplace issues 4. Seek feedback on questions and problem solving	1. Identify the problem 2. Determine fundamental cause of problem 3. Determine corrective action 4. Communicate recommendations	1. Develop problem solving framework 2. Improve problem solving ability 3. Review problem solving effectiveness

NZQA Framework			
	US 7123 (L2, 2 credits) Apply a problem-solving model	**US 9695 (L3, 4 credits)** Examine problem-solving models and apply a problem-solving model to a problem of some complexity	**US 9696 (L4, 4 credits)** Solve a complex problem using a problem-solving model
	Outcome 1 Apply a problem-solving model. **Performance criteria** 1.1 The problem is described. 1.2 A problem-solving model is selected and described. 1.3 The model is applied to the problem. 1.4 Results of applying the problem-solving model are described in terms of its suitability and outcome achieved.	**Outcome 1** Examine problem-solving models. **Performance criteria** 1.1 Problem-solving models are described. 1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of each of the three identified models are explained. 1.3 Problem-solving techniques are described in terms of their purpose. 1.4 Advantages and disadvantages of each identified technique are explained. **Outcome 2** Apply a problem-solving model to a problem of some complexity. **Performance criteria** 2.1 The problem is described in terms of its significant factors. 2.2 A problem-solving model is selected and selection is justified in terms of its relevance to the problem. 2.3 The model is applied to the problem. 2.4 Results of applying the problem-solving model are described in terms of its suitability and outcome achieved.	**Outcome 1** Solve a complex problem using a problem-solving model. **Performance criteria** 1.1 The problem is explained in terms of the parties involved, effects, ownership. 1.2 Problem-solving models are described. 1.3 One problem-solving model is selected and justified for its suitability to solve the problem. 1.4 Problem is resolved through application of the model.

NZQCF Level Descriptors (draft)			
NZQCF: *Skills Domain*	**L1/2 Highly structured**	**L3/4 Structured, some unpredictability**	**L5/6 Dynamic, some ambiguity**
Collaboration	• Contributes to group or team activities • Acknowledges views and experience of others	• Makes a significant contribution to group or team activities and acknowledges views and experience of others • Helps create a collaborative culture within a group or team by role modelling and encouraging the contributions of others	• Leads the creation of a collaborative group or team culture • Leads a group or team on moderately complex projects and motivates others
Food and Fibre Skills Framework			
FFSF example element	**Mōiho *Finding your place*** **Responsibility:** works with supervision **Autonomy:** becoming independent	**Mātau *Building your place*** **Responsibility:** leading others **Autonomy:** independent	**Mārama *Nurturing your place*** **Responsibility:** set strategy **Autonomy:** leading direction or innovation
Building inclusivity *You take time to understand and respect the culture, belief and background of others. You make sure everyone is welcome.*	• I work to make links with others and find common ground • I work well with others by understanding and respecting diversity of others' cultures, beliefs and backgrounds • I work well with others by showing kindness and being hospitable • I take the time to welcome others to the team and listen to their background	• I work effectively in a cross-cultural environment • I manage relationships across diverse groups within the organisation • I improve the team by building relationships beyond my immediate team	• I summarise information to lead the resolution of the challenges of operating in a cross-cultural environment • I build our organisation's capabilities to compete in a global environment • I champion processes and practices which build an inclusive work environment • I monitor diverse groups working effectively together
Australian Skills Quality Authority National Register – units of competency			
	BSBTWK301 Use inclusive work practices 1. Establish practices that support individual differences in the workplace 2. Work effectively with individual differences 3. Assess use of inclusive practices	**PSPGEN114 Work effectively with diversity and inclusion** 1. Reflect on own perspectives. 2. Recognise and value individual differences. 3. Work effectively with diverse clients and colleagues.	**BSBTWK501 Lead diversity and inclusion** 1. Review diversity policy 2. Foster respect for diversity in the work team 3. Promote the benefits of diversity

NZQA Framework			
	US 377 (L2, 2 credits) Demonstrate knowledge of diversity in workplaces	**US 9695 (L3, 4 credits)** Examine problem-solving models and apply a problem-solving model to a problem of some complexity	**US 9696 (L4, 4 credits)** Solve a complex problem using a problem-solving model
	Outcome 1 Demonstrate knowledge of diversity in workplaces. **Performance criteria** 1.1 Potential benefits of diversity in workplaces are explained. 1.2 Potential challenges of diversity in workplaces are identified and ways of resolving them are described. 1.3 Strategies are described which promote and support positive diversity within workplaces.	**Outcome 1** Examine problem-solving models. **Performance criteria** 1.1 Problem-solving models are described. 1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of each of the three identified models are explained. 1.3 Problem-solving techniques are described in terms of their purpose. 1.4 Advantages and disadvantages of each identified technique are explained. **Outcome 2** Apply a problem-solving model to a problem of some complexity. **Performance criteria** 2.1 The problem is described in terms of its significant factors. 2.2 A problem-solving model is selected and selection is justified in terms of its relevance to the problem. 2.3 The model is applied to the problem. 2.4 Results of applying the problem-solving model are described in terms of its suitability and outcome achieved.	**Outcome 1** Solve a complex problem using a problem-solving model. **Performance criteria** 1.1 The problem is explained in terms of the parties involved, effects, ownership. 1.2 Problem-solving models are described. 1.3 One problem-solving model is selected and justified for its suitability to solve the problem. 1.4 Problem is resolved through application of the model.

NZQCF Level Descriptors (draft)			
NZQCF: *Skills Domain*	**L1/2 Highly structured**	**L3/4 Structured, some unpredictability**	**L5/6 Dynamic, some ambiguity**
Communication	• Communicates basic information • Shares ideas on familiar topics	• Communicates familiar information and shares ideas on some / a range of unfamiliar topics	• Communicates moderately complex information and shares ideas with a known audience / a range of audiences using customised communication media and methods
Food and Fibre Skills Framework			
FFSF example element	**Mōiho *Finding your place*** **Responsibility:** works with supervision **Autonomy:** becoming independent	**Mātau *Building your place*** **Responsibility:** leading others **Autonomy:** independent	**Mārama *Nurturing your place*** **Responsibility:** set strategy **Autonomy:** leading direction or innovation
Communicating *You communicate well with customers, workmates or other stakeholders in many different settings.*	• I communicate with others to share information, • I respond to general inquiries • I ask for specific information • I show empathy to understand the feelings and actions of others • I check in to make sure there are no misunderstandings • I influence others on our work tasks	• I change communication approaches to suit the audience • I decide suitable methods to convey and exchange information • I develop relationships with stakeholders to build confidence and alignment • I share purpose, goals or objectives	• I summarise information to communicate an overarching message to multiple stakeholders • I build consensus with stakeholders on matters of strategic importance. • I reflect on my own leadership style, and adapt my approach according to the situation • I reflect on my own leadership style and its effect on others
Australian Skills Quality Authority National Register – units of competency			
	AHCWRK213 Participate in workplace communications 1. Follow routine workplace instructions 2. Obtain information from external sources 3. Complete relevant work-related documents 4. Participate in workplace team meetings and discussions	PSPGEN140 Use advanced workplace communication strategies 1. Deal with complex enquiries and complaints. 2. Give directions. 3. Manage meetings. 4. Make presentations 5. Monitor and support workplace communication strategies	PSPGEN143 Prepare high-level written communication 1. Prepare to write high-level communication 2. Critically analyse other positions. 3. Prepare persuasive written communication.

NZQA Framework			
	US 33019 (L2, 3 credits) Communicate in an organisation	**US 9695 (L3, 4 credits)** Examine problem-solving models and apply a problem-solving model to a problem of some complexity	**US 9696 (L4, 4 credits)** Solve a complex problem using a problem-solving model
	Outcome 1 Communicate in an organisation. **Performance criteria** **1**.1 Language, including forms of address, is used as appropriate to the situation and relationship with the other person(s). 1.2 Information is provided to be clear and is presented in a manner appropriate to the other person(s). 1.3 Feedback is sought from the other person(s) and used to demonstrate their understanding of the information. 1.4 Information is communicated in accordance with organisational and legislative requirements. 1.5 Written and oral conventions are used in accordance with organisational requirements.	**Outcome 1** Examine problem-solving models. **Performance criteria** 1.1 Problem-solving models are described. 1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of each of the three identified models are explained. 1.3 Problem-solving techniques are described in terms of their purpose. 1.4 Advantages and disadvantages of each identified technique are explained. **Outcome 2** Apply a problem-solving model to a problem of some complexity. **Performance criteria** 2.1 The problem is described in terms of its significant factors. 2.2 A problem-solving model is selected and selection is justified in terms of its relevance to the problem. 2.3 The model is applied to the problem. 2.4 Results of applying the problem-solving model are described in terms of its suitability and outcome achieved.	**Outcome 1** Solve a complex problem using a problem-solving model. **Performance criteria** 1.1 The problem is explained in terms of the parties involved, effects, ownership. 1.2 Problem-solving models are described. 1.3 One problem-solving model is selected and justified for its suitability to solve the problem. 1.4 Problem is resolved through application of the model.