



Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector

Submission to NZQA: Changing the New Zealand Master's Degree Definition

Organisation: Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector

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Background

The National Association of Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector (NETS) aims to provide a proactive voice on national issues in nursing education and nursing workforce development in Aotearoa/New Zealand. NETS members are heads of nursing from nursing education providers and organisations with an indentified role in nursing education. Our goals are to provide a national focus for groups seeking informed comment on nursing education and nursing related issues. We honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi commitments and the bi-cultural partnership. We aim to work in partnership with, practice colleagues, other health professionals, government agencies, national nursing organisations and regulatory bodies. NETS also promotes, participates in and commissions research related to nursing education.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this consultation proposal.

Consultation Questionnaire on Master's Degrees August 2012

1. What, in your view, would be the impact on the international competitiveness and comparability, if NZQA allows 180-credit Master's Degrees?

- Promotes greater flexibility and more attractive to overseas students who may choose Australia.
- Cheaper and therefore probably more attractive to the international market as well as domestic students who may opt to undertake a 180 credit Master's degree rather than proceed through a Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma.

2. What do you regard as the likely impact of the proposal on New Zealand institutions?

- Potential increase in the number and range of people undertaking a Masters degree rather than an enrolment of domestic students into Master's study.
- Potential increase in compliance costs as education providers offer different postgraduate programmes, reassess post graduate programme offerings and phase out some offerings, replacing them with new Masters level programmes.
- Opportunity for industry to argue for additional vocationally focussed professional Master's degrees.

- Stronger focus on post graduate study, and the need for teaching staff with higher level qualifications and increased research involvement and outputs.

3. Please explain your preference for either of the following options:

- **Option One – entry requirements are left to individual providers to specify, as long as they are based on completion of a Bachelors Degree; or**
- **Option Two - entry to a 180-credit Master’s Degree must follow a three-year Bachelors Degree completed at a specified level of attainment (such as a grade point average) that is subject to programme approval by NZQA or CUAP?**

- We prefer Option One. We note, however that there appears to be no provision for Recognition of Prior learning. Many registered nurses gain entry into Masters programmes on the basis that they have a combination of professional/advanced experience and a qualification at a lower level than a Bachelor’s degree.

4. Can you identify any concerns with the proposed minor wording changes:

- **on credit requirements for a Master’s Degree by thesis or primarily by thesis;**
No
- **that delete repetitive wording on credit requirements for each type of degree;**
No
- **on individual admission requirements?**
No

Other Comments

- It is clear that the proposal does not make any change to the current requirements for the proportion of credits at level 9 in a Master’s degree, and that New Zealand institutions will continue to be able to offer 240 credit Master’s degrees.
- Clinical Master’s degrees of 240 credits for registered nurses were developed with the specific focus on advanced nursing practice roles, such as nurse specialist and nurse practitioner roles. Currently a Clinical Master’s degree is one requirement of the Nursing Council of New Zealand’s pathway to registration as a Nurse Practitioner.
- It would be of concern if funding to providers was affected by the introduction of 180 credit Master’s degrees. In particular, we are concerned that where a professional body requires a 240-credit Masters for the qualification to be recognised by that body, those providers will not be disadvantaged by this requirement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.