



GUIDELINES

FOR RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN

QUALIFICATIONS IN SAMOA

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1. Introduction

Increased student and worker mobility across national borders has resulted in the need for processes that enable the recognition of qualifications and certification obtained outside Samoa's national borders.

The task of qualification recognition has been given to SQA in accordance with its responsibilities for policy advice, quality assurance and coordination of the Post-School Education and Training sub-sector. This task is expressed in SQA's legislated function to: "*Work with overseas government agencies and other institutions to recognise overseas qualifications in Samoa and to achieve international recognition for qualifications awarded in Samoa*". SQA Act 2006: Section 4 (n)

The Guidelines for Recognition of Foreign Qualifications is the guiding document for SQA in carrying out its qualification recognition service. This document has been developed after gathering extensive information on how other national qualification authorities/similar agencies conduct qualification recognition. These Guidelines are informed by qualification recognition practices in New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, South Africa and Denmark. While Samoa's context is unique, the process for qualification recognition must be appropriate and internationally comparable.

2. Purpose of Recognition of a Foreign Qualification

The major purpose of this service is to establish whether a foreign qualification is authentic, recognised in the country of award and determines its comparable level on the Samoa Qualifications Framework.

The outcome of an assessment for recognition of a foreign qualification assures the public and stakeholders that a foreign qualification is authentic and recognised in the country of award. In addition, mapping the SQF level of the foreign qualification assures stakeholders of the level of the qualification compared to other officially recognised qualifications.

3. Value of the Service

This service is provided for people with overseas qualifications who want to work and study in Samoa, as well as their potential employers and PSET providers. While it is not mandatory for employment or study in Samoa to have SQA-recognised qualifications, this service offers assistance in the following ways:

For employers – SQA can verify that qualifications possessed by your potential/current employees are authentic and recognised in the country of award. We also identify in the same process the Samoa Qualification Framework level of the qualification which lets you know what level it is according to international standards.

For providers – SQA can verify that the qualifications possessed by your current/potential students, teachers and lecturers are authentic, and recognised in the country of award. We also identify in the same process the SQF level of the qualification, which will assist you with making decisions regarding recognition of prior learning and enrolment.

For learners/job-seekers – SQA provides you with information on whether your qualification is officially recognised, based on information from the awarding provider, country and qualifications

framework. Recognition of your foreign qualification by SQA supports you when you apply for jobs or admission into a programme of education and training.

For government bodies – SQA can assist where necessary by verifying that qualifications possessed by individuals seeking to work or study in Samoa are authentic and recognised in the country of award.

4. Scope of the Service

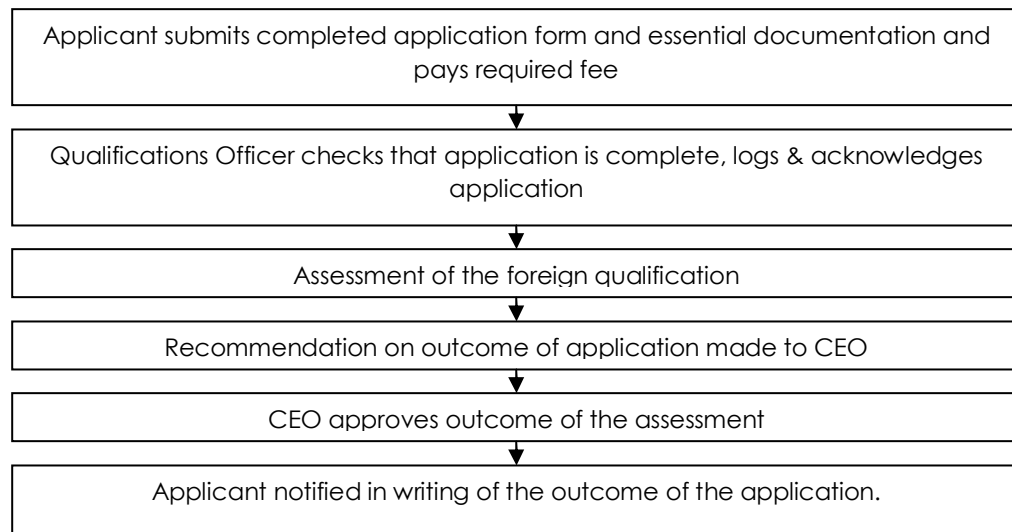
We conduct assessment of all qualifications and certification from any country of the world.

Please note that the qualification recognition service does not:

- Grant entry to a programme of study - the applicant must apply directly to the provider for admission
- Grant permission to practice in a professional occupation - the applicant must apply directly to the relevant licensing body
- Grant salary increases – the applicant must contact the employer or agency responsible for salary matters.

5. Process of Recognition of a Foreign Qualification

5.1 Overview of process



The entire process may take from one month to six months. The process varies in duration with individual cases because it involves liaising with overseas agencies and organisations. The time it takes for an overseas agency to reply to our communication is beyond our control and therefore requires patience on the part of the applicant. However we will keep the applicant regularly updated.

5.2 Essential documentation

- Completed application form for Recognition of a Foreign Qualification (p.7)
- A certified photocopy of the qualification

- A certified translation of the qualification into English (if the qualification is in a language other than Samoan or English)
- A certified photocopy of transcript/list of subjects passed
- A certified translation of the transcript/list of subjects passed into English (if in a language other than English)
- Documentation in support of name change (if applicable) e.g. marriage certificate, etc...
- ID (driver's license or passport)
- Payment of fee

5.3 Assessment for Recognition of a Foreign Qualification

When SQA conducts assessment for recognition of a foreign qualification, there are three things that must be established:

a) Authenticity of the qualification

This is done by contacting the awarding provider to verify that the certificate is authentic. This establishes that such a provider and qualification exist/existed, and that the qualification was awarded to the applicant.

b) Recognition status of the qualification in the awarding country

This is done by contacting the relevant agency in the awarding country to verify whether the organisation that awarded the qualification was quality assured by a recognised quality assurance agency to deliver the programme leading to the qualification. In the absence of a national QA agency responsible for education and training, some providers are quality assured by agencies outside of their national borders. SQA will liaise with those agencies.

This step establishes that a qualification was recognised by a quality assurance agency as meeting internationally comparable standards for all aspects of development and delivery.

c) The comparable Samoa Qualification Framework level of the qualification

SQA verifies that the qualification is registered on the qualifications framework in the awarding country by contacting the relevant agency in the awarding country. The level outcome descriptors of the overseas qualification framework can then be compared with those for the SQF to find out the comparable level of the overseas qualification on the Samoa Qualifications Framework.

This step establishes the comparable level of the foreign qualification on the SQF which is set out according to internationally comparable benchmarks for qualifications.

If necessary, SQA will establish the comparable SQF level of the qualification by comparing the component outcomes of the qualification with the SQF level descriptors. Usually, wording of the component titles on the qualification transcript is a clear indication of the component outcome/s (especially for standards-based qualifications). If there is insufficient information on component outcomes, it is necessary to contact the awarding organisation for information on the outcomes of qualification components.

As further confirmation of the level and therefore the title of the qualification (e.g. Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's degree etc) we consider the level, length, structure and nature of the qualification programme to verify that this qualification is comparable to a such qualification on the

SQF. This ensures that the decision for recognition of the qualification is consistent with SQF qualification definitions.

5.4 Outcome of assessment

The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the application. A statement on SQA letterhead will clearly state SQA's findings with regards to a), b) and c) in the previous section (5.3).

Stakeholders can view this statement as official advice on the authenticity of the foreign qualification, its recognition status in the awarding country, and its comparable level on the Samoa Qualifications Framework. Clear reasons will be provided in the case of foreign qualifications that are not recognised by SQA.

Please refer to Annex II (p.9) for an example of an official letter detailing the outcome of an application for recognition of a foreign qualification.

Annex 1



APPLICATION FORM FOR RECOGNITION OF A FOREIGN QUALIFICATION


Please complete this application, attaching the required documents as listed below and return to: Samoa Qualifications Authority, Qualifications Division.

A. Required Documents Checklist		
1	Certified ¹ photocopy of the qualification in its original language	
2	A certified translation of the qualification into English (if the qualification is in a language other than Samoan or English)	
3	A certified photocopy of transcript/list of subjects/courses passed	
4	A certified translation of the transcript/list of subjects passed into English (if in a language other than English)	
5	Documentation in support of name change (if applicable) e.g. marriage certificate	
B. Personal Details		
First name		Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms)
Surname		
Previous name if changed		
Email address		
Postal address		Home phone
		Mobile phone
		Work phone
Date of Birth: (DD/MM/YYYY)		
Please specify the reason why you are requesting qualification recognition		
C. Information on the Awarding Body		
Name of Education or Training Institution/Organisation		
Web address	Email address	Phone
Postal address (street, city, country)		
Status of educational institution	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>

¹ A certified photocopy is a copy that has been signed and stamped by an authorised person such as a Justice of the Peace, a Notary Public, a lawyer or a solicitor etc. The authorised person needs to sign your copies stating that they are true and correct, print their name and position and if possible affix an official stamp.

D. Information on the Qualification		
Title of qualification in original language (if other than English or Samoan)		
Title of qualification in English		
Specialisation/main field of study		
Dates started and completed		
Study Mode On-Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Distance/Online <input type="checkbox"/> Combined on-campus & distance/online <input type="checkbox"/>		
Length of Programme of Study		Year qualification was awarded
Contact details for the Programme of Study	Name & Address	Email address
		Phone number
E. Additional information regarding the qualification		
Did the programme of study include a research paper/thesis?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Title of the research paper/thesis		
Duration of research paper/thesis work		
Did the programme of study include a work component?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Duration of work component		
Contact details for where the work component took place	Name & Address	Email address
		Phone number
Any other relevant information		
F. Signature of the Holder of the Qualification		
<i>I certify that the information stated in this application is correct and that the attached documents are authentic</i>		
Date	Signature	
Data Protection		
In order to process your application accurately, it may be necessary to forward your details to a third party agency overseas.		
<i>I agree to my personal information being sent to another agency if necessary.</i>		
Signature		

Annex 2 Example of Outcome of Application for Recognition of a Foreign Qualification



SQA
SAMOA QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY

SAMOA QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

P O Box L851, Apia, SAMOA * Tel: (0685) 20976 * Fax: (0685) 26314
E mail: sqa@sqa.gov.ws Website: www.sqa.gov.ws

(Please address all correspondence to the Chief Executive Officer)

Mr. Talaifatu Okesene
P.O. Box 0000
Apia
SAMOA

1st July 2010

Dear Mr. Talaifatu,

Further to your application for recognition of a foreign qualification submitted to SQA on 1st June 2010, the Samoa Qualifications Authority has established the following:

1. Your Certificate 3 in Basic Electronics from Manuoka Polytechnic in New Zealand is an authentic qualification.
2. Manuoka Polytechnic in NZ has been quality assured by Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality to deliver and award the Certificate 3 in Basic Electronics.
3. The Certificate 3 in Basic Electronics awarded by Manuoka Polytechnic, NZ is comparable to a Certificate Level III on the Samoa Qualifications Framework.

In conclusion, the Samoa Qualifications Authority officially recognises the Certificate 3 in Basic Electronics awarded to Mr. Talaifatu Okesene by Manuoka Polytechnic in 2006, and states its comparable level on the Samoa Qualifications Framework to be Level III.

We wish you all the best in your career and further study prospects.

Sincerely

Fepuleai Sinapi Moli
Chief Executive Officer

Annex III Fee Proposal for Recognition of Foreign Qualification Service

Proposed Fee

Assessment of a foreign qualification requires liaising with international agencies and organisations using internet, fax and possibly telephone. The fee is as given below:

Standard Fee: \$250 – Outcome within maximum of 40 working days

Fast Track Fee: \$500 – Outcome within maximum of 20 working days

The fee will be waived for the first 6 months of operation of the qualification recognition service.

Fees comparison

The table below lists international fees for comparison.

Agency	Service	Standard fee	Fast track fee	Length of process	Forms & Guides
NZQA	International Qualifications Assessment	150NZD	450NZD	Standard: 35 working days Fast track: 20 working days	1. International qualification assessment application form 2. Application guide
SAQA	Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications	R 360	R 540 R 720	Standard: 40 working days Fast Track: 20 & 10 working days	1. SAQA Application for the Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications 2. Application Guide
VETASSESS (Aust)	Qualification assessment	385AUD	NA	Within 6 weeks unless	VETASSESS Application form for Qualification assessment
NOOSR (Aust)	Qualification assessment	450AUD (non citizen/resident) 295AUD for citizen/resident – for 1-2 qualifications	NA	About 3 months	Online form
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	Qualification recognition	Free	Free	2 months	Application form for recognition of a foreign qualification