

## Qualification Level Descriptors

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### Key Words

qualification, level, credit, descriptor

## National Qualification Framework Level Descriptors

The level descriptor matrix explains the level, processes, learning demand and application of standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The descriptor is a guide to determine the level of a standard and how the standard applies to the learning skill or knowledge competency.

### Credits and Levels

Credits are a numerical value assigned to a unit standard that represents the estimated time (about 10 hours) needed for a typical learner to demonstrate that all specified outcomes, (assuming no previous knowledge or skills) have been met.

Levels have been agreed as fitting the following categories

Level	Qualification
1-4	Certificates
5-6	Diplomas
7	Bachelor Degrees
8	Postgraduate Diploma and Certificates, Bachelors Degrees with Honours
9	Masters Degrees
10	Doctorates

Level	Process	Learning Demand	Responsibility
1	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are limited in range</li> <li>Are repetitive and familiar</li> <li>Are employed within closely defined contexts</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recall</li> <li>A narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills</li> <li>No generation of new ideas</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In directed activity</li> <li>Under close supervision</li> <li>With no responsibility for the work or learning of others</li> </ul>
2	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are moderate in range</li> <li>Are established and familiar</li> <li>Offer a clear choice of routine responses</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic operational knowledge</li> <li>Readily available information</li> <li>Known solutions to familiar problems</li> <li>Little generation of new ideas</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In directed activity</li> <li>Under general supervision and quality control</li> <li>With some responsibility for quantity and quality</li> <li>With possible responsibility for guiding others</li> </ul>

Level	Process	Learning Demand	Responsibility
3	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require a range of well developed skills</li> <li>Offer a significant choice of procedures</li> <li>Are employed within a range familiar contexts</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some relevant theoretical knowledge</li> <li>Interpretation of available information</li> <li>Discretion and judgement</li> <li>A range of known responses to familiar problems</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In directed activity with some autonomy</li> <li>Under general supervision and quality checking</li> <li>With significant responsibility for the quantity and quality of output</li> <li>With possible responsibility for the output of others</li> </ul>
4	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require a wide range of technical or scholastic skills</li> <li>Offer a considerable choice of procedures</li> <li>Are employed in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts</li> <li>Analytical interpretation of information</li> <li>Informed judgement</li> <li>A range of sometimes innovative responses to concrete but sometimes unfamiliar problems</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In self- directed activity</li> <li>Under broad guidance and evaluation</li> <li>With complete responsibility for the quantity and quality of output</li> <li>With possible responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others</li> </ul>
5	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require a wide range of specialised technical or scholastic skills</li> <li>Involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures</li> <li>Are employed in a variety of routine and non-routine procedures</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas</li> <li>Analytical interpretation of a wide range of data</li> <li>The determination of appropriate methods and procedures in response to a range of concrete problems with some theoretical elements</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In self- directed and sometimes directive activity</li> <li>Within broad general guidelines or functions</li> <li>With full responsibility for the nature, quantity and quality of outcomes</li> <li>With possible responsibility for the achievement of group outcome</li> </ul>
6	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require a command of wide ranging highly specialised technical or scholastic skills</li> <li>Involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures, often in non-standard combinations</li> <li>Are employed in highly variable routine and non-routine contexts</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialised knowledge with depth in more than one area</li> <li>The analysis, reformatting and evaluation of a wide range of information</li> <li>The formulation of appropriate responses to resolve both concrete and abstract problems</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In managing process</li> <li>Within broad parameters for defined activities</li> <li>With complete accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes</li> </ul>
7	<b>Carry out processes that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require a command of highly specialised technical or scholastic and basic research skills across a major discipline</li> <li>Involve the full range of procedures in a major discipline</li> </ul>	<b>Employing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of a major discipline with areas of specialisation in depth</li> <li>The analysis, transformation and evaluation of abstract data and concepts</li> <li>The creation of appropriate responses to resolve given or contextual abstract</li> </ul>	<b>Applied:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In planning, resourcing and managing process</li> <li>Within broad parameters and functions</li> <li>With complete accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and/or group outcomes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are applied in complex, variable and specialised contexts</li> </ul>	problems	
8	<b>Involves skills and knowledge that enable a learner to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a systematic and coherent account of the key principles of a subject area and;</li> <li>Undertake self directed study, research and scholarship in a subject area, demonstrating intellectual independence, analytical rigour and sound communication</li> </ul>		
9	<b>Involves knowledge and skills that enable a learner to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate mastery of a subject area and;</li> <li>Plan and carry out – to internationally recognised standards- an original scholarship or research project; Demonstrated by;</li> <li>The completion of a substantial research paper or dissertation or in some cases a series of papers</li> </ul>		
10	<b>Involves knowledge and skills that enable a learner to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an original contribution to knowledge through research or scholarship, as judged by independent experts applying international standards</li> </ul>		