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**THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
IN PRIVATE TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS:
A Patch of Evaluation in the Seamless System**

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ABSTRACT

Education sectors have been grappling with the controversial National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for nearly a decade. Unlike other sectors, the majority of private training establishments (PTEs) have chosen to adopt the unit standards-based qualifications of the NQF. Although responsible for only a small percentage of all tertiary enrolments, PTEs have awarded more NQF qualifications than any other educational sector. This study sought to explain this remarkable record through evaluating the extent to which the NQF was compatible with the organisational context of PTEs.

Three PTEs situated in greater Auckland were selected for a collection of case studies evaluating compatibility of organisational context with the NQF. In each PTE administrators, tutors and students were interviewed and surveyed, and documents were reviewed. Following a framework developed by the researcher, compatibility of organisational context with the NQF was evaluated in terms of assumptions, objectives and approaches.

The study found there was general readiness for change in the PTEs studied, and that PTE organisational assumptions and objectives were highly compatible with assumptions and objectives of the NQF. However, investigation of approaches to curriculum, teaching and assessment revealed gaps between NZQA intentions for the NQF and the realities of implementation. Gaps were particularly apparent in the areas of curriculum and assessment. Concerns were expressed about the increase in tutor

workload caused by the lack of clarity in unit standards and by managing standards-based assessment, as well as by the difficulty of achieving reliable judgement.

The study concluded that compatibility of the organisational context of the three PTEs of the study with the NQF, enhanced by a general readiness for change, was highly likely to have been responsible for success in its implementation. It suggested that most concerns could be addressed by more effective internal and external moderation systems supported by NZQA. It further suggested, however, that NQF implementation might have less success in organisations that did not share significant features of the context of these three PTEs.

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