Education Report: New Zealand Qualifications Authority performance – Quarter 3 2020/21

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	30 June 2021	**Priority:**	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	**METIS No:**	1257555
Drafter:	Katherine Fahey	**DDI:**	9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Fiona O'Leary	**DDI:**	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	**Round Robin:**	No

Purpose of Report

This paper provides our assessment of the Quarter 3 2020/21 performance of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

Summary

- NZQA has returned to its more usual "pre-COVID-19" approach to support internal assessment practice, with some modifications.
- Those students who have accessed NCEA Online have found the online experience positive. NZQA is considering how it can accelerate online uptake, noting there are many interdependencies that are needed to support acceleration, e.g. connectivity issues to varying degrees in and outside of the school, and the extent of device access.
- The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) and NZQA are working well together to ensure effective implementation of the NCEA Change Package. As we have previously noted, this is a large, complex, and demanding programme of work that will put pressure on NZQA, the Ministry and the sector. We will continue to engage with NZQA on this and any capacity or other challenges moving forward.
- NZQA is continuing to develop its capacity in assessment design for priority students. This will be further expanded through the work NZQA and the Ministry are doing on innovative assessment as part of implementing the NCEA Change package. As we have said in earlier reports, this will be key to improving equity for all students.
- NZQA has learnt from last year's changes to quality assurance processes (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and is streamlining its processes going forward.
- The Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) will all be in place by the end of June 2021. There is a lot of work for NZQA to do to manage the transition of NZQA staff, support the implementation and to ensure its own systems are prepared.
- Formal monitoring under the Interim Domestic Code began in this quarter. It is going well, as is the work NZQA is doing to help with the design of the next code.
- In this quarter, NZQA provided information about its enterprise portfolio management processes and how it manages cyber security.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. **note** our assessment of NZQA's performance in Quarter 3 2020/21

Noted

b. **sign and send** the attached letter on NZQA's Q3 performance to Neil Quigley, Acting Chair of the NZQA Board (Annex 1)

Agree / Disagree

c. **agree** that this Education Report is proactively released as part of the next publication

Release / Not release

Emily Fabling
Deputy Secretary
Strategy, Planning and Governance
28 / 06 /2021

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

__/__/____

Proactive Release

It is intended that this Education Report is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

Annex 1:   Letter to the Acting Board Chair

Monitoring overview for Q3

Focus of this report

- The return to usual assessment and assurance practices in 2021, after the changes made last year to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- progress updates on the key change projects e.g. implementing the NCEA change package and the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE)
- NZQA's portfolio and project management processes, and
- how NZQA is managing the security of its data

Priority areas for upcoming quarters

In the next quarter, we will provide analysis over NZQA's performance during the 2020/21 year in our advice on its annual report. We will also:

- comment on NZQA's self-assessment against the Digital and Data Monitoring Plan which will be reported to us this quarter
- provide an update on how NZQA is progressing key system strategies, such as Ka Hikitia, the Statement of National Education Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)
- report back on the joint work which NZQA and the Ministry are developing on innovative assessment design and to increase the uptake of Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) for learners who need them
- follow up with NZQA on how assessors have used the new online learning modules it has developed, and whether NZQA can see improved assessment practices as a result, and
- continue our focus on monitoring NZQA's key change programmes, such as:
  - Implementing the NCEA Change Package, including:
    - how changes to its programme structure and operational readiness (designed in April 2021) are working in practice
    - how customer feedback is being incorporated into product design
  - The implementation of RoVE. This will include NZQA's:
    - work with the WDCs to design skill standards and operationalise their functions, and
    - development of systems for it to be able to quality assure WDCs when they are stood up
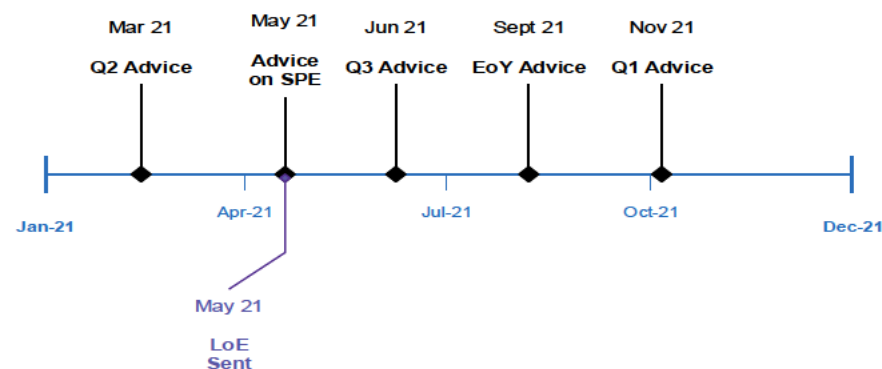
Financial performance

Financial performance summary

$'000	YTD FY21	YTD Budget	YTD FY20	FY21F
Revenue	83,244	82,771	83,603	103,890
Expenditure	(76,711)	(80,858)	(76,902)	(101,125)
Net surplus/(deficit)	6,533	1,914	6,701	2,765

Financial position summary

$'000	As at 31 March 2021	As at 30 June 2020	As at 30 June 2021 (Budget)
Cash and investments	45,721	28,147	20,889
Equity	32,840	26,308	24,284
Working capital ratio	2.53	2.19	2.41

Recent and Upcoming reports

Mar 21	May 21	Jun 21	Sept 21	Nov 21
Q2 Advice	Advice on SPE	Q3 Advice	EoY Advice	Q1 Advice

Jan-21   Apr-21   Jul-21   Oct-21   Dec-21

May 21

LoE Sent

Monitoring focus areas

Assessment

Finalised attainment data from 2020 shows attainment of NCEA and University Entrance (UE) increased despite disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic. In announcing these results, NZQA attributed this to "the extraordinary efforts of students, teachers, schools and whānau …alongside the interventions put in place by government – help[ing] students [to] keep studying and hav[ing] their learning recognised".

This is a positive result for the year, given the unprecedented level of disruption ākonga, teachers and schools needed to cope with. It is testimony not just to those whom NZQA credits (above), but also to the work it did to provide support to the sector and ensure services were maintained and internal and external assessment ran as smoothly as possible through the year.

NZQA's analysis indicates that had the modifications to the qualification and UE not been in place, attainment would have fallen well below 2019 levels for all demographics. In particular, there would have been a large reduction in the number of students achieving UE. Based on historical trends, approximately 3,700 students would not have achieved UE who would have been expected to do so.

We met with NZQA to close out last year's external assessment process, check in on assessment processes that had been impacted by COVID-19, understand progress with NCEA Online, and discuss access to SAC. In summary:

- external moderation has resumed this year, after it was made optional in the 2020 academic year
- managing National Assessment reviews have also recommended and have been reprioritised to ensure timely monitoring and support is provided. As part of this reprioritisation exercise, NZQA contacted every secondary school, and visited most of them to ensure it understood their needs, and
- through Term One 2021, NZQA ran its Leading National Assessment seminars (28 of them) with this year's focus being on

providing information and guidance to help school leaders lead the assessment changes planned for 2021 and beyond.

Along with this, NZQA is resuming its face-to-face and online Best Practice workshops and anticipates delivering approximately 100 of these this year. These workshops share lessons from external moderation and are designed to improve assessor confidence and accuracy when making assessment decisions.

Progress with NCEA Online

As you are aware, NZQA continues to expand its NCEA Online offerings. As the number of online subjects, examination sessions and centres increase, this will enable an increasing number of students to be able to participate in digital exams.

NZQA is currently considering what else it can do to increase digital uptake and whether it needs to continue with its plan or adjust it to accelerate further uptake. As it considers whether, and how, to modify its approach, it faces key challenges in the number of interdependencies there are in the system and the level of control it has on digital uptake. Interdependencies include:

- the extent of device uptake
- connectivity
- capability of and support for teachers in a digital world, and
- teacher capacity given the upcoming extent of change required of them.

NZQA reported an example of the work it is doing to influence uptake in its Q3 report. It has identified 94 schools that have no digital examination experience and is working with the Ministry and Network for Learning to address the specific challenges faced by these schools to participate in digital examinations.

NZQA has recently published its evaluation of 2020 digital exams (1 June 2021). In terms of results, statistics show there is no advantage or disadvantage as to whether exams are sat on paper or

online. However, 97% of student respondents to the NZQA survey question about their digital examination experiences agreed it was a positive experience and 93% agreed digital was preferable to paper based.

Increasing access to Special Assessment Conditions (SAC)

As highlighted in your Letter of Expectations, it will be important for NZQA to continue to focus on how to improve equitable access for all learners. This includes both innovative assessment design and encouraging schools to uptake SAC for learners who need them.

NZQA recognises it is important to incorporate disability voice into its assessment function and is actively working on this. As it reported in its Q3 report, NZQA ran a series of SAC seminars across New Zealand for Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and learning support staff as part of their proactive work to ensure that students who need the support of SAC, have access to it. In addition, NZQA said it will this year:
- engage with those schools which have a lower than expected uptake of SAC and support them to manage the SAC process for their students, and
- develop additional resources, based on feedback from the seminars, about the SAC application process for SENCOs and learning support staff.

It is pleasing that over this past quarter, the Ministry and NZQA have committed to further working together to expand access to SAC and develop a longer-term roadmap for developing an accessible and inclusive NCEA environment. We understand the first step for this work is a workshop to be held this quarter by the Ministry and NZQA, to further explore and develop a plan for how the entities can work together to achieve an accessible and inclusive NCEA environment. We will report back to you in the next quarter about this work, and how learners with disabilities are going to be further supported.

Change Programme – Implementing the NCEA Change Package and the Review of Achievement Standards

NZQA and the Ministry are well integrated on the implementation of the NCEA Change Package and the Review of Achievement Standards (RAS). Appropriate governance structures and working groups are in place, project plans have been developed and shared, and the agencies are working closely together.

At this stage, conversations between the agencies are about refinement of detail, role clarity and how the respective roles best work together. As implementation progresses, the amount and type of engagement each agency requires will become clearer.

There is ongoing planning work being undertaken between the Ministry and NZQA on running the critical pilots of NCEA subjects next year in schools. Given the complexities, and high workload involved, potential issues regarding capacity may arise.

Last quarter we reported NZQA was recruiting for key positions, including assessment expertise in mātauranga Māori. These positions are now filled. We will engage further on resourcing and recruitment now that funding has been confirmed through Budget 2021.

Outside of the RAS, NZQA completed extensive engagement in Q3 and early Q4 gaining school leader insights on how it delivers its services and undertakes its regulatory functions in schools. We will engage with NZQA in the next quarter to understand more about how NZQA will make use of these insights.

As noted in our previous report, this is a large complex and demanding programme of work which will put pressure on NZQA, the Ministry and the sector. We will need to continue to engage with NZQA on this and any capacity or other challenges moving forward. In addition, in Q4 we will engage on the operational readiness and forward design work which we previously report on in Q2.

Monitoring focus areas

Innovative Assessment

Our Q2 report highlighted the dependency of the new Achievement Standards being designed for inclusivity and the need for NZQA to continue to develop its capacity in assessment design to ensure assessment does not disadvantage priority students.

NZQA has said in its Q3 report it has developed two online learning modules to develop and support assessment practice, one in innovative assessment and another in integrated assessment. These were made available to all assessors from May 2021.

In subsequent quarters, in addition to engaging on the other work NZQA is doing to progress innovative assessment design, we will engage with NZQA on how the assessors have found these modules.

Assurance

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NZQA replaced site visits last year with online quality assurance in three areas:
- assuring consistency,
- panel visits for approvals, and
- external evaluation and reviews (EER).

Online has proven to be robust and effective, as well as very cost-effective.

NZQA has been pleased to realise not only how effective online has been for quality assurance, but also that providers seem to have adapted well this change. Lessons from moving online last year are being considered across all NZQA's assurance activities moving forward and it will carry out a mixture of online and site assurance activity in the future. NZQA is also using this learning to inform its approach to RoVE-driven changes to its quality assurance role.

We understand NZQA is working to ensure these processes better reflect mātauranga Māori and whole-of-provider systems, and that learner voice comes through with respect to wellbeing and safety, which is good to see.

In addition to this, NZQA is currently assessing the quality assurance systems in other jurisdictions and interviewing stakeholders about their experiences and the changes they would like to see in future.

Data collection use and measuring performance

NZQA is thinking through its data needs so that it is capturing the right information, both to be able to assess its own performance (e.g. to measure the impact of its activities on the sector) and to have confidence in the health of the system it regulates.

To date, similar data is collected regardless of mode of assurance activity (online or on site), but there can be gaps and NZQA is considering what it stores and uses. NZQA is replacing FileNet with a 365 SharePoint system which is easier to use and extract data from.

NZQA is connected into the Data Exchange Platform work (formally known as Data 2020) at both governance and working group levels, with NZQA having provider data and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) having the learner data. These connections points are very important going forward, particularly regarding careers.

We are keen to follow up on this and will continue to engage with NZQA on this in future monitoring.

Code of Pastoral Care

Formal monitoring of providers' performance under the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019 (the Code) began in this quarter. All non-university TEOs were required to attest to NZQA by 1 March 2021 that they had completed a self-review of their performance against the outcomes and requirements of the Code.

Monitoring focus areas

Attestations have been received from all but eight providers. NZQA continues to work with these providers to obtain assurance they are meeting the requirements of the Code. It considers providers have taken a thoughtful approach to this assessment and have applied scrutiny and care. The information provided is not only useful for monitoring for this year, it will be useful for thinking about any changes required in the future development of the Code.

As part of NZQA's approach to include student voice into consultation processes for future development of the Code, NZQA has released a series of nine videos onto its website and social media sites. These videos talk about the importance of the Code and encourage people to participate in the consultation for the final Code. The videos feature students who have written their own scripts, describing what tertiary students can expect of their institutions in terms of pastoral care, where to get more information and asking students to have their say through consultation.

Change Programme – Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) review

Public consultation on simplifying NZ qualifications and other credentials began in late April. NZQA has:
- contacted nearly 900 organisations and bodies to advise them of the consultation,
- held face to face meetings with key stakeholders, and
- run a series of public webinars to provide information, answer questions and encourage submissions.

NZQA is also continuing to work with TEC on the establishment of the WDCs and preparing to transfer the appropriate qualifications and standards from the Transitional Industry Training Organisations (and NZQA) to the WDCs as they are established.
As mentioned earlier, NZQA has begun to think about and develop its processes to be able to quality assure the WDCs when they go live. The WDCs will be stood up by the end of June 2021. It is an ambitious work programme and there is a lot of work for NZQA to do to support

it and make sure their systems are ready. We will focus on this work programme in the next quarter.

While NZQA had initially thought consultation on both simplification for RoVE and the NZQF could occur concurrently, it realised this may miss an opportunity to introduce mātauranga Māori more comprehensively into the NZQF process. It has met with wānanga, the Māori network of the Tertiary Education Union and other key stakeholders on recognising mātauranga Māori as an equivalent knowledge system within the NZQF document. Once the basis of consultation has been agreed, NZQA will consult more widely and hopes to have this work complete by the end of the year. Equivalency means a requirement for huge capability building. This is not a light undertaking, but NZQA considers it is crucial to improve access to qualifications and equity for ākonga.

Other Areas of Focus

The Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO)

NZQA's EPMO was set up just over three years ago to further build the organisation's capability in project and programme management. NZQA considers its disciplines of project management, and supporting artifacts, are fit for purpose.

Not hugely resourced, the EPMO operates strategically. It currently maintains oversight of major projects underway, sits on key project governance groups, provides advice and quality assurance of key project documents, and reports on the portfolio to NZQA's Future State Steering Group (FSSG), drawing out lessons learnt and summarising benefits and risks.

Each project governance group signs off project plans and deliverables. Projects also contribute to a monthly risk report to FSSG to help it maintain oversight of overall programme (of change) risk. FSSG then reports up to the NZQA Board monthly.

Monitoring focus areas

The EPMO is integrated with finance through the costing models used. NZQA runs an annual prioritisation process (reviewed twice a year) which feeds into the Budget process.

In the next quarter, we will engage again with the EPMO to understand its approach to measuring and reporting on the impacts and benefits of NZQA's change programmes.

Cyber Security

As previously advised, NZQA is currently completing a self-assessment against the Digital and Data Monitoring Framework, which was co-designed with the education Crown entities. This is to provide you with a view on how they are managing digital and data responsibilities. We will report on this using NZQA's self-assessment, in our Q4 report.

While cyber security is part of the self-assessment, we asked NZQA to provide us with information about it this quarter, after the Cyber Security attack at Waikato District Health Board.

NZQA has provided an update on their approach to managing the security of its data and its preparedness for a potential cyber-attack. NZQA:
- has appropriate governance structures and uses sound management practices, review, and assurance frameworks to manage risks,
- makes use of third-party expertise to review its processes and maturity against security controls and assurance frameworks,
- undertakes a robust and tested cyber incident response process when incidents occur, and
- runs a security awareness training programme for all staff.

While NZQA appears to be well placed, no organisation is immune to cyber security attacks. We will continue to work with NZQA to suggest improvements where required.

We are also organising a seminar for our entities on cyber security with CertNZ.

Challenges, opportunities, and priorities for NZQA in Q4 and beyond

Challenges and opportunities highlighted in previous reports remain relevant. These are for NZQA to:

- continue its work to build an equity focus through its systems and processes and its work to build staff capability in this regard. NZQA could also consider what this means for its external workforce,
- continue to work closely with the Ministry to ensure effective implementation of the NCEA Change Package,
- through its work on operational readiness to implement the NCEA Change Package, consider how it works and what lift is needed in its capability for assessment innovation and the inclusion of diverse knowledges and perspectives like mātauranga Māori and Universal Design for Learning,
- further develop its capacity in assessment design for all priority students, including students with disabilities. Along with this, NZQA needs to develop its longer-term roadmap for an accessible and inclusive NCEA environment and what it needs to do to achieve this,
- develop further clarity on what changes are required in its operation to ensure RoVE is effectively implemented,
- continue its work to contribute to the recovery of international education and work with providers to ensure they have the support needed to manage any pastoral care matters for international students, and
- manage implementation of the Interim Domestic Code and continue to work with the Ministry on the next code.

Some of the following key challenges and opportunities have also been confirmed through engagement over the last quarter. NZQA needs to:

Monitoring focus areas

- work through the interdependencies which exist and do what it must to increase NCEA Online uptake (as well as increase NCEA Online offerings),
- co-design with the Ministry, as part of the longer-term roadmap discussed above, a way forward for how the entities can work together to achieve an accessible and inclusive NCEA environment,
- work closely with WDCs to design skill standards and operationalise WDC functions,
- develop quality assurance systems to support the RoVE changes, and
- consider its operational readiness to cope with the complexity and ambitious timeliness expected of both the NCEA Change Package and RoVE.

How we are planning to stay on top of NZQA's performance

We will continue to engage with NZQA on key aspects of its business-as-usual work and its change programme to understand progress and any risks that arise.

As outlined in our advice on its Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) [METIS 1257535], we are working with NZQA to understand and improve its intervention logic between outcome, impact, and output measures. This is a key piece of work which we hope will set the parameters of its SPEs from 2022/23 onwards and inform its new Statement of Intent (SOI).

Overview

NZQA has performed better than budget in the period 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 (YTD FY21) and is now expecting performance to be ahead of budget for the full year with a forecast surplus of $2.765m.

NZQA remains in a stable financial position. It has sufficient reserves to meet any one-off unexpected business as usual costs but not medium to long term unfunded recurring expenditure.

NZQA was successful in three budget bids, one in relation to the ongoing cost of its specialist workforce and two for specific projects (RoVE and NCEA Review). This removes some financial risk for the coming financial years.

Quarterly financial performance

NZQA's financial performance in YTD FY21 was better than budget with a net surplus of $6.533m compared to the $1.914m budget. The improved financial performance was a result of lower expenditure as described below.

This is not a comparison against the published 2020/21 SPE budget, but against the revised budget which takes into account revenue and associated expenditure from successful Budget Bids announced after the SPE was prepared. It is therefore a more accurate budget to compare financial performance against.

The most material difference in operating expenditure in YTD FY21 is on the Digital Assessment and Transformation work programme, which was $2.389m behind budget. NZQA has advised this is primarily due to delays in the timing of when expenditure will be incurred and is not a permanent underspend on the programme. Most of this

underspend will now be incurred in the next financial year, which will result in a higher net surplus this year, offset with a deficit next year.

Other areas of expenditure reductions include significant savings on travel and secondary assessment and moderation costs. These are both COVID-19 related.

NZQA is now anticipating a net surplus for the year of $2.765m, which is much improved compared to budget. This is a result of a combination of permanent underspends and project delays pushing the timing of spending into the next financial year.

Table 1. Statement of financial performance

$'000	YTD FY21	YTD Budget	YTD FY20	FY21F
Revenue				
Government grants	60,662	60,731	56,529	75,605
Other	22,582	22,040	27,074	28,285
	83,244	**82,771**	**83,603**	**103,890**
Expenditure				
Personnel expenses	(52,287)	(53,154)	(51,023)	(67,328)
Other operating expenses	(21,869)	(25,064)	(23,665)	(30,283)
Depreciation & amortisation	(2,555)	(2,640)	(2,214)	(3,514)
	(76,711)	**(80,858)**	**(76,902)**	**(101,125)**
Net surplus/(deficit)	**6,533**	**1,914**	**6,701**	**2,765**

Figure 1. Financial Performance
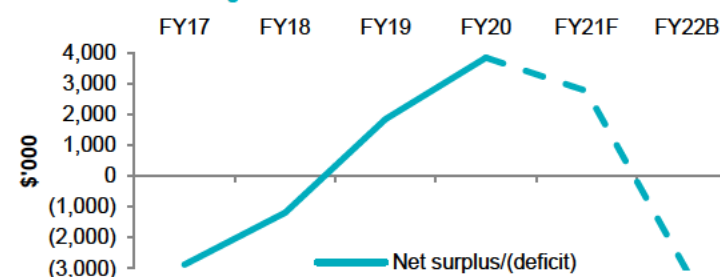
Financial sustainability

NZQA's equity position as at 31 March 2021 was $32.840m. This is an improvement on the position at the end of the previous financial year due to the net surplus generated in YTD FY21.

The equity balance will reduce as the year progresses and if the current forecast is accurate, will be around $29m by the end of FY21.

With the net surpluses generated in the last three financial years (including the current year), NZQA does have some financial flexibility with its balance sheet position. However, it is subject to significant financial uncertainty in the coming years and is currently retaining this financial flexibility to mitigate risk. These risks are broadly centred on, although are not exclusive to, the following:

- as the project to develop the NCEA Online tools and processes is still ongoing, its medium-term impact on the organisation, including how it integrates with existing processes, has not been fully established. There is a risk, especially in the first few years of operation when dual systems operate (paper and electronic), that costs will be higher than associated revenue,
- the merger of the existing ITPs into Te Pūkenga. This will change NZQA's third party revenue stream and the services provided to the ITP sector, and
- implementing the NCEA Change Package which not only has had cost implications on NZQA through the review period (for which it has been successful in receiving money to cover in Budget 2021), but the outcomes of which could have significant ongoing impacts, including potential large scale operational changes.

In addition to the above, NZQA has recognised its website needs redeveloping and has a Customer Experience Improvement

Programme underway to address this. This will have a substantial cost which will largely be funded from NZQA's balance sheet.

Once the impact, both operationally and financially, of these areas, and decisions on any associated funding are made, NZQA will be in a more certain position to understand if it is able to commit current reserves to other projects.

Table 2. Statement of financial position

$'000	As at 31 March 2021	As at 30 June 2020	As at 30 June 2021 (Budget)
Assets			
Current assets	40,779	33,594	25,165
Non-current assets	9,151	8,650	10,192
	49,930	**42,244**	**35,357**
Liabilities			
Current liabilities	16,118	15,306	10,448
Non-current liabilities	972	630	625
	17,090	**15,936**	**11,073**
Equity	**32,840**	**26,308**	**24,284**

Figure 2. Financial position
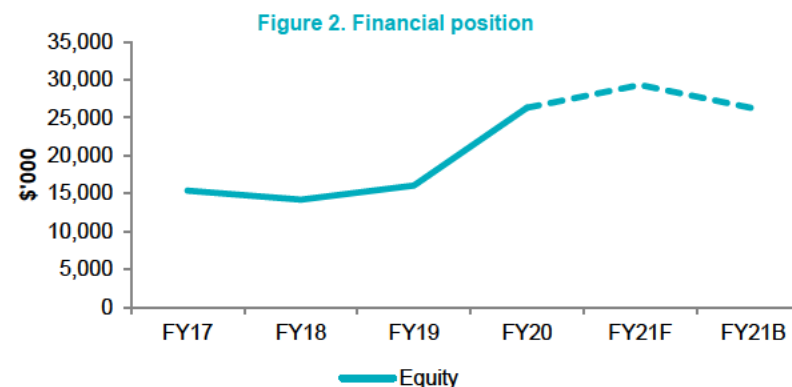
Annex 1: Letter to Acting Chair of the NZQA Board (next page)

Professor Neil Quigley
Deputy and Acting Chair
New Zealand Qualifications Authority
P.O. Box 160
Wellington 6140

Dear Neil

Thank you for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's (NZQA) Quarter 3 report for 2020/21. I have also received the Ministry of Education's (the Ministry) monitoring report for this period.

It is good to hear formal monitoring of the Interim Domestic Code for Pastoral Care (the Code) has begun, and of the work NZQA is doing to support the Ministry in future development of the Code. I am pleased NZQA has been able to return to external moderation, resume its work to support internal moderation and learn from last year's experiences to streamline both the assessment and assurance processes going forward.

NZQA will need to work closely with Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to design skill standards and operationalise WDC functions. NZQA has a significant leadership role as it makes rule changes and develops quality assurance systems to support the Reform of Vocational Education.

I note with interest the work NZQA is doing with the Ministry to develop capacity in assessment design for priority students, as part of its work to implement the NCEA Change package. I am keen to understand more about this work to ensure NCEA will be accessible and inclusive for all.

As noted in my letter from the previous quarter, it is important NZQA continues to work with other parts of the education sector to implement the National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP), the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and the Education Work Programme 2021. Additionally, I am interested in understanding the risks, challenges, and opportunities NZQA faces and how the complex and competing demands will be managed, to give me confidence that detailed implementation is on track and will meet my expected timeframes. I look forward to hearing more about the implementation of these large change programmes, particularly about NZQA's operational readiness for implementation.

I appreciate all you did, and are doing, to continue to provide services through the uncertainties with the COVID-19 pandemic, both in assessment and assurance. Please pass on my thanks to the Board members and NZQA staff for their efforts.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

cc   Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive, NZQA
cc   Emily Fabling, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Planning and Governance, Ministry of Education