

HE Policy Audit Toolkit for NZ TEOs

Purpose

This toolkit enables TEOs to audit whether their policy suite is current, controlled, implemented, evidence-based and aligned to NZ regulatory expectations. It supports self-assurance, governance reporting, NZQA engagement, programme approval, learner wellbeing, assessment quality and continuous improvement.




Regulatory Alignment

Core alignment should include:

Regulatory Area	Audit Focus
NZQA iQAF	Provider ownership of quality, quality improvement, verification and system assurance
Quality Assurance of Tertiary Education Providers Rules 2026	Entry, ongoing registration, programme approval, accreditation, monitoring and quality assurance
Education and Training Act 2020	Provider obligations, governance and regulatory compliance
Education Code of Practice 2021	Learner wellbeing, safety, student voice, complaints, support and international learner obligations
NZQF / NZQCF	Qualification level, credits, outcomes and programme coherence
TEC requirements	Funding conditions, learner outcomes and performance monitoring where applicable
Privacy Act 2020	Student records, data protection, privacy and information handling
Health and Safety at Work Act 2015	Safe learning environments and critical incident response

Audit Method

Use a three-level RAG rating:

Rating	Meaning
 Strong	Policy is current, approved, implemented, monitored and supported by evidence
 Partial	Policy exists but needs updating, stronger implementation evidence or clearer governance oversight
 Weak	Policy is missing, outdated, not approved, not implemented or not evidenced

Policy Audit Evidence Folders

Folder 1. Governance, Registration and Institutional Quality

Policies to audit

- Governance Charter
- Delegations of Authority Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Compliance Management Policy
- Quality Assurance Framework
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Policy Development and Review Policy
- Business Continuity Policy
- Financial Viability / Tuition Fee Protection Policy

Key audit questions

- Are governance and management responsibilities clearly separated?
- Are policies approved by the correct authority?
- Is there a current policy register with review dates?
- Are risks, compliance obligations and improvement actions reported to governance bodies?
- Is there evidence of policy implementation through minutes, registers and reports?

Required evidence

- Approved policy suite
- Delegations register
- Policy register

- Risk register
 - Compliance calendar
 - Board and committee Terms of Reference
 - Governance minutes
 - Continuous improvement register
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Folder 2. Programme Approval, Accreditation and Change Control

Policies to audit

- Programme Development and Approval Policy
- Programme Review Policy
- Course / Unit Outline Policy
- Assessment Design Policy
- Moderation Policy
- Benchmarking and External Referencing Policy
- Industry and Stakeholder Engagement Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Programme Change Control Policy

Key audit questions

- Are programme approvals mapped to NZQF level, credits, outcomes and learner need?
- Are external expert reviews and stakeholder consultation required?
- Are changes controlled, approved and versioned?
- Is assessment design aligned to graduate profile outcomes?
- Are programme reviews reported to Academic Board?

Required evidence

- Approved programme documents
 - NZQF mapping
 - Graduate profile outcome mapping
 - Assessment plans
 - Moderation records
 - Programme Advisory Committee minutes
 - Academic Board approvals
 - External review reports
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Folder 3. Assessment, Moderation and Learner Achievement

Policies to audit

- Assessment Policy
- Moderation and Validation Procedure
- Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy
- Student Progression Policy
- Student at Risk / Early Intervention Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning / Credit Transfer Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Learner Achievement Monitoring Procedure

Key audit questions

- Are assessments valid, reliable, fair and transparent?
- Is moderation conducted before and after assessment?
- Are learner outcomes monitored by cohort, mode and demographic group?
- Are at-risk learners identified early and supported?
- Is academic integrity monitored and reported?

Required evidence

- Assessment samples
 - Moderation reports
 - Grade distribution reports
 - Learner progression dashboards
 - At-risk intervention records
 - Academic misconduct register
 - Appeals register
 - Academic Board reporting
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Folder 4. NZQA Engagement, Self-Review and Continuous Improvement

Policies to audit

- Self-Review Policy
- NZQA Engagement Procedure
- Audit Readiness Policy
- Evidence Management Policy
- Data Governance Policy
- Corrective Action Procedure
- Internal Audit Policy
- Thematic Review Procedure

Key audit questions

- Does the TEO maintain an annual self-review cycle?
- Are NZQA communications recorded and actioned?
- Are monitoring findings converted into improvement actions?
- Is evidence controlled, indexed and traceable?
- Are governance bodies receiving self-review and quality reports?

Required evidence

- Annual self-review report
 - NZQA engagement register
 - NZQA correspondence log
 - Audit evidence checklist
 - Internal audit reports
 - Corrective action register
 - Quality dashboard
 - Governance minutes
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Folder 5. Learner Wellbeing, Safety and Code of Practice

Policies to audit

- Learner Wellbeing and Safety Policy
- Code of Practice Compliance Policy
- Student Support Framework
- Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Student Voice Policy
- International Student Policy
- Orientation and Transition Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Key audit questions

- Is the Code embedded in governance, risk and operations?
- Is there an annual Code self-review?
- Are complaints, incidents and support needs monitored?
- Are learners informed of rights, responsibilities and support pathways?
- Is student voice used to improve services?

Required evidence

- Code self-review report
- Student handbook

- Orientation records
- Complaints register
- Critical incident register
- Student support data
- Student Advisory Committee minutes
- Wellbeing reports
- Governance reporting

NZQA describes the Code as setting requirements providers must meet for the wellbeing and safety of tertiary and international learners.

Folder 6. Data, Records, Privacy and Digital Systems

Policies to audit

- Data Governance Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Student Records Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Learning Management System Policy
- Student Information System Procedure
- Evidence Retention and Archiving Policy

Key audit questions

- Are student records accurate, secure and complete?
- Are learner achievement and wellbeing data validated?
- Are privacy obligations embedded in systems and processes?
- Are dashboards used for governance reporting?
- Is evidence retained in a controlled repository?

Required evidence

- Data dictionary
 - Privacy notices
 - Records retention schedule
 - SIS / LMS screenshots
 - Data validation logs
 - Dashboard reports
 - Access control records
 - Evidence repository index
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Folder 7. Māori Success, Pacific Success and Equity

Policies to audit

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Māori Success Policy
- Pacific Learner Success Policy
- Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Learner Achievement Equity Monitoring Procedure
- Stakeholder and Community Engagement Policy
- Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustment Policy

Key audit questions

- Are Māori and Pacific learner outcomes monitored?
- Are equity actions linked to data and governance reporting?
- Are Māori, iwi, Pacific and community voices reflected in review processes?
- Are achievement gaps identified and acted on?
- Is equity embedded in programme design, teaching, assessment and support?

Required evidence

- Māori learner success data
- Pacific learner success data
- Equity action plan
- Community engagement records
- Advisory group minutes
- Achievement gap analysis
- Improvement action register

PRP-Ready AI Audit Prompt

Conduct a Higher Education Policy Audit for a New Zealand Tertiary Education Organisation. Assess the submitted policy suite against NZQA iQAF expectations, the Quality Assurance of Tertiary Education Providers Rules 2026, the Education and Training Act 2020, the Education Code of Practice 2021, NZQF/NZQCF requirements, TEC requirements where applicable, and relevant privacy, health and safety, and records obligations.

Base the audit only on the evidence submitted. Do not make assumptions.

For each policy area, identify:

WHAT IS WORKING — strengths and good practice

WHAT IS MISSING — gaps in policy coverage, currency, approval, implementation or evidence

WHAT TO FIX — practical improvement actions

RISK RATING — ● Strong, ● Partial or ● Weak

GOVERNANCE ACTION — committee or role responsible for review, approval or monitoring

Include a final overall judgement on whether the TEO has a coherent, current and evidence-based policy framework that supports regulatory compliance, learner outcomes, institutional self-assurance and continuous improvement.

Mandatory Disclaimer

This audit supports institutional self-assurance and governance decision-making. It is based solely on the evidence submitted. It is not legal advice, regulatory advice or a definitive compliance determination. Findings should be reviewed and validated by the appropriate governance body, delegated authority or external expert.