



Industry Certification: Does it have any place in our established programmes?

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Abstract

There has been a recent proliferation of advertising for product specific courses in the private provider sector of Information Technology education. Prospective students are being urged to study intensively, and usually expensively, in order to achieve certification that will almost surely “guarantee” a job in the computing industry. These qualifications will apparently “prove” that the person has the necessary industry know-how and experience to step immediately into useful employment. Many of the courses are available on-line and there are supplies of practice tests ready for the keen and studious to tackle. Programme Leaders and information staff at Polytechnics throughout the country fielded numerous enquiries regarding the Microsoft certification courses in the 1999/2000 period. Many of the enquirers expressed genuine concern and interest in their local Polytechnic’s position on the courses and wanted to know whether they really were considered of value to New Zealand employers. Enquirers also wanted to know whether our courses would cover the equivalent material.

In an attempt to answer some of the questions, we have examined the objectives stated for a selection of industry certification courses. This paper identifies issues concerning articulation pathways between individual NDBC modules and certification qualifications. We suggest how industry certification could be included in our programmes. It includes comments from industry employers regarding their perception of the value of these qualifications and discusses issues relating to the place of such specific training in NACCQ programmes.