

Credits and Hours: How Comparable is the NACCQ Sector?

Alison Young

Unitec New Zealand
ayoung@unitec.ac.nz

Noel Bridgeman

Unitec New Zealand
nbridgeman@unitec.ac.nz

Michael Verhaart

Eastern Institute of Technology
mverhaart@eit.ac.nz

1 Introduction

When the National Advisory Committee on Computing Qualification (NACCQ) first qualification, the Certificate in Business Computing, was first introduced in 1988 the modules (also known as subjects, papers, courses) were of differing lengths of study and teaching hours and credits. In 1990 the certificate was restructured to have all the modules of the same length, 60 student learning hours and a student had to complete 18 modules. A further change was made in 1995 to align with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) guidelines and each module became seven credits with 70 student learning hours. The decision on the number of credits per module was arbitrary and was based primarily on the NZQA requirement to have a minimum of 120 credits equating to one year of full-time study. Since then many of the NACCQ sector institutions have developed and are teaching degree programmes and others have developed their own certificates and diplomas. These differ again in the number of credits per course, the number of academic staff contact hours for each course and the required amount of self directed student learning expected of each student per course.

The Research and Support Working Group decided that it was time to capture and collate the data from all the institutions to see if there was any commonality between the institutions to allow for ease of cross crediting and student transfer. This paper outlines the process of collecting the data and summarises the responses.

2 The Survey

A relatively simple survey form was sent to all 18 of the NACCQ member institutions and 13 replies were received, a 72% return rate. The form was designed to be easy to fill in with minimal investigation required by the recipients. It consisted of

- Name of Qualification
- Level of qualification
- Number of credits to complete the qualification
- Number of Courses required
- Credits per course
- Contact Hours per course
- Study hours per course

The major issue with the survey form was that the figures sometimes varied depending on the level of the course and it didn't make an allowance for a double course or the finals project which most degrees have.

3 Analysis

Only two institutions are teaching at postgraduate level. They both have 15 credit courses with one double credit course and a 60, 90 or 120 credit thesis. The contact and study hours differ slightly but not significantly.

Eleven of the 13 respondents teach an undergraduate degree, of these six have 15 credit courses, two have 18 credit courses, two have 20 credit courses and one has 10 credit courses. It is interesting to note that the two with 18 credit courses teach the same degree as do the two with 20 credit courses. The institutions with 18 credit courses, the institution with 10 credit courses and one of the institutions with 20 credit courses, have all indicated that they will change to 15 credit courses in 2008 which will alter the results to 91% of the respondents with degrees consisting of 15 credit courses.

Seven of the respondents teach a level five Diploma, six of which are the NACCQ Diploma in ICT with 7 credit modules. One institution teaches a level five diploma of 15 credit modules, which align with their degree programme. Five institutions teach a level six diploma four of which are the NACCQ DipICT L6.

At certificate level, five respondents indicated they taught a level four certificate, two aligning with the NACCQ qualification and the other three aligning with their degree programmes. Four respondents teach a level 3 certificate two of which are unit standard based.

4 Results

The results indicate that there is a strong preference nationally at both postgraduate and undergraduate degree programmes for 15 credit courses. For diplomas at level 5 and 6 the majority is for the NACCQ 7 credit course diplomas. If the preference at degree level is for 15 credit courses then this survey would indicate that it is time the NACCQ restructured the diplomas to 15 credit courses.