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**Water Industry Training develops Environmental Monitoring qualifications**

New qualifications for those working in environmental monitoring are being designed at Water Industry Training.

“Environmental monitoring is the collection of environmental data for resource management and design purposes,” Annie Yeates, Water Industry Training manager, says. “Environmental data includes hydrological, meteorological, air quality and fresh water quality data. The first area that we are developing qualifications for is hydrology.”

The qualifications are being designed to meet the needs of key players in the environmental monitoring industry such as district and regional councils, research organisations, energy generating companies and the primary production industry.

“Industry based qualifications are going to have many benefits for the field,” Annie says. “It will allow the industry to own its own talent and provide a career pathway for school leavers and new science graduates. Graduates of the qualifications will have interdisciplinary skills and an industry recognised level of certification.”

Marlborough District Council’s Mike Ede agrees. Mike has 27 years’ experience in the industry and has had a key role in the development of the qualifications as Chair of the hydrology working group.

“The qualifications will allow those with an existing skill base and no formal qualification to be recognised for those skills,” he says. “It also gives those entering the industry something to work towards and attain.”

There will initially be two environment monitoring qualifications available, the working titles are: New Zealand Certificate in Environmental Monitoring (Core) (Level 3) and the New Zealand Certificate in Environmental Monitoring (Hydrology) (Level 4).

The Level 3 qualification will cover core skills and knowledge related to the wider environmental monitoring industry and graduates of this qualification will be able to collect environmental data under supervision. It is expected that holders of this certificate may be qualified to work as trainee technicians or in similar entry level roles in all sectors of the environmental monitoring industry.

The Level 4 qualification will allow specialisation in hydrology and will cover the application of skills in the field and the manipulation of data. Graduates of the Level 4 qualification will

be able to install and manage a hydrometric monitoring network, collect, measure, process and analyse hydrometric data and display knowledge of environmental concepts and principles.

The qualifications will ensure an industry standard is achieved throughout New Zealand.

“There are currently no quality standards or consistency for hydrology training across New Zealand. These qualifications will fill that vacuum and provide industry best practice training that will help vital hydrological data to be protected for future generations,” Annie says.

Hydrology is just the first of several environmental monitoring sectors to be developed into a qualification. The Environmental Monitoring qualifications are expected to be available in 2012. For more information about the new qualifications, please contact Water Industry Training on 0800 691 111.

### **Focusing on qualifications completions**

Water Industry Training has spent 2011 focusing on improving the way they assist their trainees to complete their qualifications.

“The world is changing which means we must change the way we do business,” Water Industry Training Manager, Annie Yeates, says. “Funding changes by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for industry training organisations have impacted our annual budget meaning we have had to reassess some areas of our training. We are making a number of positive changes that we anticipate will help trainees to complete their qualifications.

“We have been working hard to address barriers to completion, including making new resources available to assessors and looking at new approaches to assessments. We have also created useful reports for employers that help track their employees’ progress towards their qualifications,” Annie says.

There are four key areas to these changes that may influence someone’s training:

**Only 70 credits per trainee per year will be funded** – qualifications have varying lengths and numbers of credits, which means training may have to be prioritised each year. This also means trainees are able to focus on completing their qualifications without taking on too much.

**Every trainee must earn credits** – TEC may recover funding if no credits are earned by a trainee. Failure to demonstrate progress by achieving credits throughout the duration of the qualification will lead to termination of the training agreement. Water Industry Training is working with training providers and assessors to make sure unit standards are achieved more regularly.

**Qualifications must be completed within duration** – Every qualification has a timeframe in which it should be completed under normal learning conditions (duration). TEC funding may not continue past a qualification’s duration, meaning assessments must be completed inside duration or the training agreement may be terminated.

Durations for Water Industry Training qualifications are:

- National Certificate in Water Reticulation (Service Person) (Level 3) – 15 months
- National Certificate in Water Reticulation (Supervisor) (Level 4) – 22 months
- National Certificate in Water Treatment (Level 4) – 18 months
- National Certificate in Wastewater Treatment (Level 4) – 18 months
- National Diploma in Drinking-Water (Level 5) – 2 years
- National Diploma in Wastewater Treatment (Level 5) – 2 years
- National Certificate in Irrigation (Design) (Level 5) – 20 months

**More trainees must complete their qualifications** – at present around 40% of trainees are completing. If this does not improve TEC funding will reduce, meaning less training may be available.

“There is much that can be done by employers in the workplace to encourage and support trainees through their qualifications,” Annie says. “This includes helping them to practice and implement their learning on the job, which in turn helps to achieve better performance and motivation at work – and trainees benefit by achieving a sought after qualification.

“Our training advisers are available to support trainees and their employers through training – please don’t hesitate to contact us should you need any help,” Annie says. “We look forward to the positive effects these changes will have on our trainees’ ability to complete their qualifications and we will continue to work hard to ensure people are achieving.”

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**About Water Industry Training**

Water Industry Training is part of Agriculture ITO (AgITO). Water Industry Training provides leadership in education and training, develops national qualifications, maintains national standards and provides ongoing support for their trainees and employers. For more information about our qualifications, please visit [www.waterit.ac.nz](http://www.waterit.ac.nz).