

# QUALIFICATIONS THAT MEET INDUSTRY NEEDS

**There are plenty of opportunities to start building a career straight from school and continue education throughout a career in the construction industry.**

By Rachel Winter, Marketing and Communications Manager, BCITO, Wellington

**T**he Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) is enhancing the already comprehensive suite of qualifications available in the sectors it covers. As well as developing new qualifications, a major focus of the BCITO workload is to ensure the current qualifications meet industry's needs.

## Keeping qualifications relevant

In 2006, the BCITO started a review of the National Certificate in Carpentry. It appraised all aspects of the qualification including its relevance to industry, whether there are areas that need to be added to or removed, the content and fit of the overall qualification, and the learning resources and assessment tools.

All areas of the industry were given the opportunity to share views and ideas at 15 forums across the country. Participants' views were collated, reviewed and incorporated into the review of the carpentry qualification. Feedback was mainly positive and the recommendations will leave the basic structure of the qualification unchanged.

Following on from the 2006 forums, 23 focus groups were held in April 2007 to look into the content of the unit standards that make up the carpentry qualification. Again, the feedback and comments were consolidated so that the Carpentry National Advisory Group could make decisions about the final form and content of the reviewed unit standards. This lengthy and thorough process has been important to ensure that the qualification is meeting the industry's future needs.

## Training the assessors

The BCITO is committed to making training attractive, accessible and achievable for

employers. In late 2006, the BCITO training and development team was established to provide guidance and training to new and existing BCITO workplace assessors. A 2-day workplace assessor training course was developed which is free for BCITO registered assessors. Completion leads to the achievement of unit standard 4098 *Use standards to assess candidate performance*.

The BCITO has identified the key role workplace assessors have in industry training. Achieving the unit standard will help assessors to gain an understanding of the assessment process, give them confidence in their role and work towards providing national consistency.

## Two new qualifications

For those in the industry wishing to further their education, there are two new qualifications – the National Certificate in Construction (Leading hand) (Level 4) and National Certificate in Construction (Supervisor) (Level 5). These qualifications address the technical, supervisory and communications skills required in the industry.

The leading hand qualification has been designed to suit a person who, in general, controls the work of three to four people on a construction site.

The supervisor's qualification is for individuals who oversee the work of a larger number of building and construction workers, which can include the work of contractors and subcontractors.

## Collaborative approach

The initiative to provide a consistent national approach to the delivery of the two new qualifications was started by the BCITO and nine polytechnics. The consortium has grown to embrace 15 polytechnics: Christchurch

## CONSTRUCTION TASTER IN SCHOOLS

After consultation with the education sector and industry, the BCITO established that there was a need in schools for a construction industry 'taster' course. As a result, the Building, Construction and Allied Trade Skills (BCATS) initiative has been developed – two new entry level qualifications being introduced by the BCITO and BETA Group (Built Environment Training Alliance) for year 11 and 12 students.

The qualifications give students an array of skills that can be applied across a broad spectrum of construction sector areas. On top of the newly developed BCATS unit standards that are construction specific, the qualifications will integrate with core areas of the school curriculum and NCEA. By providing construction-related examples in a number of core subjects, they will encourage maths (for example) to be taught in the classroom as well as being reinforced in the workshop.

The BCITO is working with schools throughout the country and aims to roll out the BCATS qualifications in 2008.

Providing an introduction at school to a career in the building and construction industry helps young people to make informed decisions about a career path. They can then enter an apprenticeship with a strong grounding – an attractive proposition for future employers. ◀

Polytechnic Institute of Technology, Manukau Institute of Technology, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, Otago Polytechnic, Southern Institute of Technology, The Open→



BCITO poster showing a building and construction industry career plan.

Polytechnic of New Zealand, Unversal College of Learning, Waikato Institute of Technology, Wellington Institute of Technology, Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, Tairawhiti Polytechnic, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Aoraki Polytechnic, Eastern Institute of Technology and Northland Polytechnic.

This is the first time that an ITO and tertiary providers have worked together to develop a training package and deliver qualifications in this way. BCITO Chief Executive Ruma Karaitiana believes the qualifications will meet the needs of those in the building and construction industry wishing to upskill, and hence add value to the industry as a whole. The way in which the qualifications will be delivered makes them accessible for people anywhere in New Zealand.

The role of the BCITO will continue to develop in the future and provide more proactive leadership when dealing with skills-related issues that affect the building and construction industry. ◀

## BCITO FACTS

There are over 4,500 employers and 9,000 trainees involved in industry training with the BCITO (see Table 1). The vast majority (88%) of apprentices are carpentry apprentices.

The youngest BCITO apprentice is 16 and the oldest is 69. The average age of current trainees is 28 but the majority (33%) of apprentices are under 21 (see Figure 1).

Ethnicity of current trainees is 79% European/Pakeha, 11% NZ Maori and 3% Pacific Islanders.

The BCITO is actively trying to increase the number of female apprentices as currently women are significantly under represented.

The average carpentry apprenticeship takes 3.5 to 4 years to complete and a 'specialist trade' qualification takes 1.5 years on average.

# AND FIGURES

There are BCITO apprentices working on almost every major construction project around the country. Recent projects include Wellington Hospital, Auckland War Memorial Museum and Wellington's inner city bypass.

Depending on the occupation, roles in the building industry command salaries of between \$30,000 and \$140,000 (see Table 1 on page 40). ◀

**Table 1: Number of registered BCITO trainees and qualifications achieved in 2006.**

	Trainees	Completions
Carpentry	7,710	866
Cement and concrete	299	19
Floor and wall tiling	118	22
Frame and truss manufacturing	143	3
Health, safety and injury prevention	75	25
Interior systems	170	27
Proprietary plaster and cladding systems	208	72
Solid plastering	58	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,781</b>	<b>1,048</b>

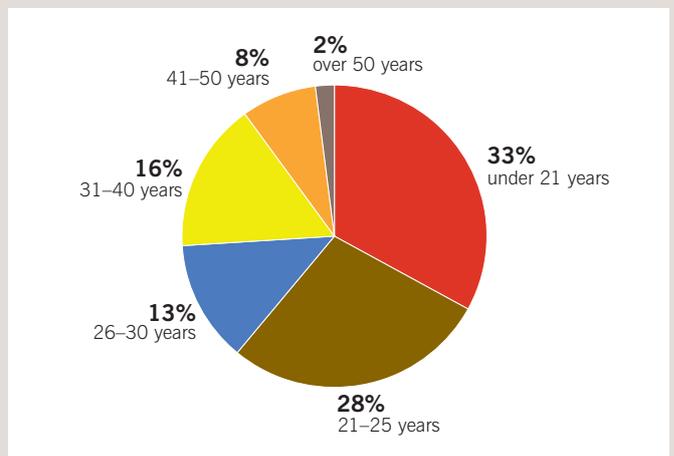


Figure 1: Ages of apprentices in training.