



PERSPECTIVES OF THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY  
FROM BEAUTY INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

JULY 2009



## PERSPECTIVES OF THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY FROM BEAUTY INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

The beauty industry is aware of the need for robust and well structured national qualifications. There is increasing urgency to review national qualifications to ensure that they meet industry needs and reflect a clear and transparent career pathway for current and prospective beauty therapists.

The beauty industry is extremely dynamic and diverse. This report shows that there is considerable consistency and clarity about the way in which the industry sees itself both now, and in the future.

Engaging stakeholders input into the development and maintenance of national beauty qualifications and standards is a challenge that the Hair Dressing Industry Training Organisation (HITO) will meet through strong and consistent leadership skills and by emphasising the importance of qualifying the beauty industry workforce to a nationally agreed standard.

This report documents the second engagement by the HITO with beauty industry stakeholders to gain an overview of perceptions in the industry. This report highlights how self aware and upfront the industry is about the issues it faces in achieving agreed national standards of practice.

This report will be submitted to the HITO Board for consideration.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2008, feedback HITO sought from the beauty industry confirmed a need for national beauty qualifications. In 2009 HITO, as the new standard setting body (SSB) for beauty, sought feedback from industry to commence its leadership role as the SSB for beauty; and to assist with the preparation for the review of national beauty qualifications and unit standards on the national qualifications framework.

For the purposes of this report:

- '*Industry*' refers to those who work directly in the beauty industry, and does not include accredited training providers.
- '*Workplace*' covers both salon and clinic.
- Qualifications such as CIDESCO are referred to as '*branded qualifications*'. Branded qualifications are not regulated by a government body or specific country.

## OVERVIEW

The beauty industry in New Zealand can be defined as a '*fractured and isolated*' industry. This is because regular national communication on topical issues is not implemented and many working in the industry do so without the support of quality controlled service industry standards (most significantly in hygiene).

Defining the boundaries of the beauty industry in terms of training needs will be an essential first step for the review of national qualifications. The beauty industry is not a static industry and as such the services it offers expands and contracts depending on market need. Managing stakeholder expectations will be an important aspect of the leadership role that HITO provides.

There are two predominant associations in the industry. The first is the Association of Beauty Therapists of New Zealand Inc based in Auckland that has nominated regional members appointed to represent sectors of New Zealand. The second is the Cosmetic Toiletry and Fragrance Association Inc.

The beauty industry collectively has limited understanding of the structure and content of national beauty qualifications. This was evident in forum discussions and will be an opportunity for HITO in terms of promoting awareness of how qualifications are developed and structured to meet the needs of industry.

Many beauty therapy services are now combining with hair salons to provide a one-stop-shop service. This doesn't suggest that the training could be integrated for the two industries but rather is a reminder that the two industries have strong synergies from a general public perspective.

The significant lack of life skill experience evident in many graduates is highlighting the need for more pre-graduate experience in the workplace.

It is considered the norm in the industry to employ new graduates and retrain them in basic beauty practice tasks as graduates are not demonstrating a high proficiency in the basic skills needed to '*hit the ground running*'.

Employers are contributing time and effort of their own to developing graduates to assist them to become '*independently competent*'. That is, confident to work with a client without the need for an overseer (more experienced therapist).

Inconsistent and varied use of terminology is a risk to the industry and there will need to be agreed terminology for national beauty qualifications especially in the special notes sections of the qualifications where key terms are defined to ensure national consistency in assessment practice.

There will be a need to clearly identify levels seniority in the workplace to clarify career pathways within the national qualifications.

## WHERE WE ARE

- **Types of national qualifications currently on the NOF**

Number and type of national beauty qualifications:

1. National Certificate in Beauty Services (Beautician) (Level 4) DFR 2008
2. National Certificate in Beauty Services (Body Therapy) (Level 5) DFR 2008
3. National Certificate in Beauty Services (Cosmetology) (Level 3) DFR 2008
4. National Certificate in Beauty Services (Electrology) (Level 5) DFR 2008
5. National Certificate in Beauty Services (Nail Technology) (Level 4) DFR 2008

- **Unit standards**

Level Three: 19592, 19593, 19604.

Level Four: 508, 10389, 10390, 10392, 10393, 19589, 19590, 19599.

Level Five: 513, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 1096, 19591.

- **Concerns with current national qualifications**

The most significant concerns with the existing national qualifications are that they do not offer a transparent career pathway, and they do not accurately reflect up to date current industry practice. All five qualifications are up for review at the same time. Being able to review all five qualifications simultaneously will ensure that they are more cohesive and appropriately structured to address industry needs robustly. The challenge for the IAG will be to establish a structure which reflects current industry needs but also allows for future needs to be embedded quickly as and when required.

## NATIONAL FORUMS

National forums were established in the following regions: Nelson, Wellington, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Christchurch, Timaru and Invercargill. Regions that chose not to participate were New Plymouth and Dunedin.

Surveys were distributed to regions who did not wish to participate. A separate section of this report is provided in appendix three for the feedback received through the surveys.

The structure of each forum included a welcome to attendees with a brief outline of the role of an Industry Training Organisation (to develop qualifications and manage training relationships, and provide leadership in terms of identifying current and future needs). ITO's were also defined in terms of legislation that restricted them from providing training.

General discussion concepts for the forums included:

- A. Why is the beauty industry a viable career choice?
- B. What career pathways are there for workers in the beauty industry?
- C. What is working well or isn't working well in the industry?
- D. What are the key skills the industry needs now?
- E. What are the key skill needs for industry in the future?
- F. What risks does the beauty industry face?
- G. What is likely to change in the beauty industry in the next five to ten years?

## **THE WORKFORCE**

Entry into beauty industry training is currently *open* in the sense that there is little restriction for a person who enrolls to train to become a beauty therapist. The open entry into training was considered to attract persons with limited life skills, lower levels of education and poor perceptions about what the beauty industry was about. A common comment across the forums was that the beauty industry is perceived by the public and possible future workers as an easy industry to work in because it was mostly about glamour and makeup.

The consequences of attracting trainees with poor understanding of what their training will involve results in lower completion rates of qualifications because these trainees leave the programme when they find the reality of the beauty industry is not as glamorous as they thought it was.

Employers commented that young people may not bring sufficient life skills with them into the workplace and this can be shown by their lack of confidence in communicating with clients and poor general administration and sales skills. Overall poor life skills meant that young graduates were not able to manage their relationships with clients as effectively as they could and should be.

The ability to attract a competent trainee, who is likely to complete their training and go on to work in the industry, could be maximised with agreed industry definitions (for) and clarification (of) the roles of a beauty therapist and a beautician. Promotional materials about what training involved and more proactive relationships with schools, such as the Gateway programme, could promote the industry as dynamic and exciting but also as an intelligent career choice.

Forum attendees were able to identify the important characteristics required of a beauty therapist. The table below summarises the qualities expected of a prospective beauty therapist, and a qualified beauty therapist.

Prospective beauty therapist	Qualified beauty therapist
<p>Understands that the industry is not about glamour. The industry is predominantly about caring for people.</p> <p>Brings life skills such as effective communication and compassion and caring.</p> <p>Is aware that the industry demands long and varied work hours.</p> <p>Is aware that the industry requires a broad technical skill base which is always developing and expanding.</p> <p>Is aware that people come in all shapes and sizes and a willingness to touch different body shapes is required.</p> <p>Is aware that that the public come to their workplace with a keen awareness of products and services and therefore will require a high calibre of graduate to meet their needs/expectations.</p>	<p>Holds national or local qualifications and all applicable branded qualifications.</p> <p>Commits to ensuring high levels of hygiene are achieved.</p> <p>Will not offer services where they are not competent (sufficiently trained and experienced) to offer them.</p> <p>Will not purchase equipment which is unsafe and can harm the public.</p> <p>Commits to ongoing professional development to ensure skills that are not used regularly are kept up to date with current practice.</p> <p>Is prepared to support recent graduates by sharing experiences and technical skills.</p>

- **Employer perspectives**

Employers are consistent in their approach to employing new staff. The recruitment process typically involves an interview to assess general interest in the industry, a willingness to learn, and general knowledge. This would be followed by a trade test which could involve demonstrating a facial, wax, massage and manicure and pedicure.

There was general agreement that a new graduate would still require training for a minimum of a year to get them up to speed with the basic core skills needed in the workplace.

Although this was disappointing for many business owners, they accepted that this was the norm and managed it within internal adhoc training programmes. Business owners commented that a great attitude and willingness to learn would often be the deciding factor in offering employment, ahead of the skill or qualification of the prospective employee.

Business owners observed that some of the techniques used by recent graduates would not be current practice or methodology and they would show their new employees more appropriate and less time consuming methods of practice.

Business owners who would not employ recent graduates explained that this was because they did not see their role as having to correct poor methods of practice which should have been addressed during training.

- **Graduate perspectives**

Although only a few recent graduates attended the forums the comments they raised were consistent. The key points were:

- A. The expectations of performance (in terms of technical standards) between the training environment and workplace are often significantly different and bridging this gap is difficult. Having to receive additional training on the basics skills can be demoralising.
- B. Equipment in the workplace is often different from that used in training.
- C. The length of training seems short for the amount of technical competency required in the workplace. Trainees feel pressure to learn a lot and often feel some subjects are '*skimmed over*'. The depth of learning can often come down to the tutor's interest in the subject.
- D. Lack of experience in the workplace makes the reality of dealing with paying customers for the first time a sometimes scary ordeal.
- E. Workplace services are behind closed doors and the risk is greater because the job must be done without immediate backup, or room for error.
- F. Generally it takes a year in the workplace for a graduate to start to feel confident in working independently.
- G. A recent graduate felt lucky if they found employment with an employer who supported them and understood their perspective as a new therapist. Pity was by graduates when their peers' first employer was not considerate in this regard.

## TRAINING

- **Training prior to entering the workforce.**

*“One of the reasons recent graduates may struggle is because training is open and around a lot of people and the salon involves closing doors and being [alone] with a client. It can be quite isolating and scary until you get used to it.”*

Training issues prior to gaining employment centred largely on the tensions between new techniques in the workplace and old qualifications (national and branded). Branded qualifications had not been reviewed for some time and there was still a requirement for some out of date practices to be acquired. Likewise with existing national qualifications there were concerns that the training requirements for the workplace had distanced themselves from the qualifications.

Concern was expressed that tutors at some private training establishments and polytechnics were only required to have two years experience (including training time). This two year minimum was considered to be too short.

The emerging trends in the market are often introduced with little support by way of training, legislative or local body (Council) standards. Emerging trends often sit on the ‘fringe’ of more specialised appearance services, such as teeth whitening. It was questioned whether it was appropriate for a beauty therapist to provide services which were provided by more specialised areas of appearance practitioners.

Reliance on product developers and suppliers for training can make business owners left feeling vulnerable (in terms of liability) because the training is for a product that often does not come with an agreed or approved national standard for its use. In the areas of IPL and Electrolysis this was of significant concern.

Some services which were considered to have moved from being the latest trend’ (to a standard service in the workplace) included spray tans and personalised /intimate waxing. Waxing as a trade skill is an example how quickly emerging trends can become both popular culture and highly specialised.

Training on nutritional health, skin analysis, product content analysis and effective communication was also considered an important training need for both under graduate and post graduate beauty therapists.

To address the lack of workplace experience it was considered that a trainee ship (as part of the formal training process) was worth consideration. Trainees could observe therapies in the workplace and observe effective forms of communication amongst staff and between staff and customers.

Any opportunity for workplace experience would have to be carefully managed to ensure clients and business owners were happy with the trainee observing day to day workplace functions.

When asked what components should be included in a basic beauty therapists qualification it was suggested that anatomy, physiology, electrolysis, biology, waxing, facials, tinting, skin analysis (consultation), massage, manicure, pedicure, were the standard skills that should be covered. Spray tanning was considered a skill that should be part of a national qualification although it was not considered a core skill.

Non technical skills should include: effective communication, general sales techniques and approaches for recovering from a mistake when providing a treatment.

Attendees at this forum emphasised the need for encouraging home care for clients, including wellbeing advice and suggestions for treatments to be used at home to maintain or support workplace treatment results.

- **Training once employed in the workplace**

It was agreed that across the industry there was a need to provide ongoing professional development for beauty therapists including refresher training for skills not frequently used.

It was also agreed that suppliers and product owners currently provide the majority of post graduate training in New Zealand.

The career pathways for an experienced beauty therapist were not very clear and general thoughts on *what came next* for an experienced practitioner was to typically open their own business.

It was suggested that Electrolysis training should be provided within a post graduate course only. It was explained that the level of professionalism and skill required to provide electrolysis services safely, combined with the high risk associated with use of electricity, meant it should only be applied by a senior technician.

New areas where training was required included: Vichy showers, wraps, scrubs, IPL, electrolysis, dealing with product suppliers, equipment purchasing and HIV/AIDS.

- **Future training needs**

The future of the beauty industry was seen to be in holistic/wellness treatments.

In terms of future technical competencies it was considered that IPL, intimate waxing, and laser treatments will become more common treatments offered in the workplace.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

It was agreed that national beauty qualifications had the potential to be developed to a standard which would be considered above (or at least the same as) that of a branded qualification.

Branded qualifications were considered important to the industry because they were recognisable for employers as a brand and standard. Further comments around branded qualifications included:

- Branded qualifications are of a higher standard because unit standards based assessment allows for reassessment where branded qualifications do not. This could give the perception that branded qualifications are more difficult.
- CIDESCO and ITEC are important branded qualifications. CIDESCO is considered to focus on consistency of service, quality, dress standards, timing and working in the real world.

It was suggested that national qualifications should reflect unique New Zealand training needs and avoid replicating branded qualifications.

Post graduates qualifications were suggested for advanced technical training.

It was noted that in New Zealand training can be as short as 6 months whereas in the United Kingdom and South Africa training is up to 4 years. The suggestion being that graduates in New Zealand are rushed and do not have an opportunity to sufficiently practice their skills.

The New Zealand Qualification Authority is the quality controller of national qualifications. For this reason national qualifications could in time become more highly regarded and relevant to the industry than branded qualifications.

The industry might be more accepting of national qualifications if there was an examination at the end of the training or a trade test.

## RISKS

Risks in the industry were classified as those that damaged the reputation of the industry and those which damaged the future of the industry in terms of quality workforce.

Damage to the reputation of the industry was possible through:

- Risk to the safety of the public through the use of poor equipment sold by unqualified retailers.
- Risk to the safety of the public due to services being offered by people who advertise as therapists who are not qualified or who are qualified but have insufficient experience with the technology they are using.
- Risk to the safety of the public in terms of lack of hygiene standards with no national policy or legislation concerning hygiene practice in the workplace.
- Inconsistent use of terminology, such as beauty therapist versus beautician, clinic versus salon creates confusion for the public.
- Expansion too quickly into fringe areas (without appropriate standards of practice).

Damage to the future of the industry in terms of quality workforce was possible through:

- Graduates going straight out into solo careers and owning their own workplace before gaining workplace experience.
- Lack of hierarchy in the industry in terms of skill and specialisation.
- Low training entry levels into the industry.
- Employers increasing frustration in taking on graduates with poor skills.
- Qualifications which were not meeting industry needs (branded, local, or national).
- Inexperienced tutors being employed to train future workers. Comments about tutor training included a need for specialist tutors to be called in for highly technical skilled training.
- Unit standards based assessment does not restrict candidates from being re-assessed a number of times to achieve competency. Employers would prefer to employ a graduate who achieved competency in their first attempt rather than after many attempts.
- Due to the way in which results of unit standards based assessment are recorded employers are not able to distinguish the more highly competent graduates from others. Prospective employees are not able to show that they were the most competent in their class.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

It is recommended that the Industry Advisory Group is comprised of:

- One representative for each of the five current national qualifications.
- A representative who brings knowledge of the emerging wellness/holistic aspect of beauty therapy (which could in time translate into a new national qualification or optional strands within existing qualifications).
- A nominated representative/s for the both the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Sector and the Private Training Sector.

In preparation for the review of the national beauty qualifications the following ways forward are suggested:

- A. Promotion of IAG membership in NZBeauty magazine and the HITO website including roles and responsibilities.
- B. Establishment of a register of agreed terminology to be used in unit standards and national qualifications.
- C. Appointment of a national moderator for beauty.
- D. A review of the holistic career pathway embedded across all the national qualifications.
- E. A review of each national qualification and its contents to ensure that it is relevant to current industry needs.
- F. Classification of unit standards (by way of those that are no longer relevant to industry, those that are relevant but need revision, and new unit standards to be developed).
- G. Establishing of an online register for stakeholders who work in the industry to give feedback directly to IAG members.

Forums are a great opportunity for people to meet the CEO and identify with HITO staff in a face to face setting (as well as build on the connections made from the forums for 2009). Establishing national forum meetings once per year in the following regions: Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, Tauranga, and Hamilton would be a positive move for the HITO to affirm its leadership role. These regions were well attended at the 2009 forums.

In terms of keeping the industry up to date with the IAG and its progress, the HITO website should become the first medium for communication because it can reach the widest audience in a quality controlled environment.

Stakeholders considered that the following skills should be included in the newly revised national beauty qualifications:

- Nutritional health
- *IPL*
- Skin analysis
- Product analysis (contents, use, chemical content, organics, chemical symbols, risks to skin type, contraindications)
- Customer communication/interactions – sales, starting a conversation, professionalism between colleagues, building a rapport.
- Treatment recovery- managing treatments that are high risk, that go wrong, managing customer expectations.
- *Electrolysis*
- Vichy showers
- Wraps, rubs and scrubs
- Managing at risk clients with health issues
- Ethics
- Health and safety
- Intimate waxing (men's and women's); and
- Electricity – associated risks.

The services in italics are considered the highest risk to the public from poor technician training and are recommended as higher level unit standards. Although not listed as a key training need, stakeholders did discuss the importance of understanding how to communicate effectively with people that play an important role in the day to day operation of a workplace (such as product suppliers).

The Gateway programme managed by the Tertiary Education Commission may be an opportunity for school learners to learn about the realities of the beauty industry. Gateway supports students undertaking learning and assessment in the workplace. Schools are funded to coordinate this activity to ensure the educational and subsequent employment needs of students are met.

Suggestions for unit standards at levels one and two which could foster understanding about the industry include:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the beauty industry.
- B. Demonstrate knowledge of the role of a beauty therapist.
- C. Demonstrate basic administrative duties in the workplace
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of key terminology used in the beauty industry.
- E. Demonstrate knowledge of the stakeholders in the beauty industry.

There are no level one or two national qualifications offered and this, along with the Gateway programme, could be a significant way to attract new learners to the industry and ensure that those learners who demonstrate a natural aptitude for the industry are encouraged to go on to higher level qualifications.

Another area of potential development could be shorter, more specialised training to be provided for therapists who have an interest in a particular aspect of beauty therapy.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Due to the significant scale of the work involved in 2010 it is suggested that:

1. A scoping exercise is conducted to compare the existing unit standards on the NOF with the training needs identified from this report. Putting this information into a table format will give the IAG and industry more detail as to the scope of the work required in 2010. Stakeholders may be able to provide more specific feedback about the content of unit standards.
2. National beauty qualifications are benchmarked against branded qualifications to identify commonalities and differences in terms of overall contents, skills gaps and structure.
3. Agreed terminology to be used for the national qualifications is developed and approved before the IAG commence their reviews of the qualifications.
4. An agreed structure for the national qualifications to support the career pathway of a beauty therapist is agreed before the IAG commence their reviews of the national qualifications.

During the completion of this report HITO attended the New Zealand Beauty EXPO in Auckland in September 2009, and the results of the survey conducted are available in a separate report.

## APPENDIX ONE

### RELEVANT RESEARCH TO BE CONSIDERED

- **Ministry of Economic Development 2005**

Research conducted by the Ministry of Economic Development in October 2005 has looked at the use of information technology in a beauty services workplace. Their findings have relevance to this research report by way of providing insight into issues faced in the workplace:

*"Research conducted in the last five years has shown that customer loyalty is one of the key challenges for any beauty salon. Maintaining staff loyalty is vital, as clients tend to be loyal to individual technicians rather than the business, and will move if the technician moves to another business. The challenge for management is to keep clients loyal to the firm rather than to the individual technicians. Marketing plays a vital role within the industry. It is absolutely vital to retain current clients as well as attract new custom. The service element and the personal nature of the business means that direct marketing to the customer is usually the most effective - for example, loyalty reward discounts, encouraging rebooking after each visit, encouraging existing clients to try new or different products and services to increase the value of existing customers, and using word of mouth or recommendations from existing clients to encourage new clients to try services."*<sup>1</sup>

*"The industry workforce is predominantly female, and although skilled in administering their respective beauty treatments, not typically skilled in either computer use (e.g. keyboard skills) or general business management, including the understanding of how technology can assist the business. Lack of skills, the small size of the business and low capitalisation result in the businesses generally not being extensive users of ICTs (apart from the telephone). Larger salons are more common in the bigger cities, and virtually all of these salons use technology of some form to manage their businesses, even if it is just computer spreadsheets".*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of economic Development 2005 Case study on Planet Skin prepared by Bronwyn Howell, Lawrence Corbett, Veena Mishra and Lisa Ryan for the Ministry of Economic Development.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX TWO

### ASSOCIATIONS

Two Associations that exist in New Zealand that may provide support for the development of national beauty qualifications by way of feedback and promotion of consistent standards of practice are:

#### The Association of Beauty Therapists of New Zealand Inc

Established in 1968 as a not- for- profit organisation.

Purpose: The purpose of the Association of Beauty Therapists of New Zealand is to work towards the integration of all fields of the Beauty Therapy and related industries, providing support to, and the improvement of, professional beauty care.

Voluntary Membership: 600

#### Cosmetic Toiletry and Fragrance Association Inc

Established in 1972 the Association was formed by a core group of companies who were manufacturing most of their products in New Zealand.

Purpose: To promote, aid, foster and develop and protect the interests of the cosmetic toiletry and fragrance industry in New Zealand.

Membership: Significant membership of over 80 global companies. For the list visit: <http://www.ctfa.org.nz/ourmember>

## APPENDIX THREE

Additional feedback from industry came from surveys which were sent to stakeholders who were unable to attend forums. The key points raised from the survey are noted below.

Key points included:

- As an employer *how* a therapist touched a client was considered an important skill. Appropriateness of touch and ethical attitude and discretion were also important traits.
- Graduates do not come with enough hands on practical experience and this should be part of their training.
- Working with clients in a workplace was not the same as providing treatment on a classmate and the lack of realism by the latter is why many graduates become stressed when entering the workplace.
- Basic beauty treatments are now waxing and electrolysis which both have the potential to cause harm to both client and therapist.
- Retailing of beauty products on the internet has had considerable impact on the retailing of products in the salon. Clients may source the best price for a product rather than being loyal to a salon and clinic.
- It would be great to have more New Zealand made products to promote the clean green image New Zealand has with overseas tourists.
- The beauty industry has not reached its peak of expansion yet. It is only recently that New Zealand women have started becoming more active in the '*look good-feel good*' factor of salons.
- It was noted that makeup does not feature strongly in the salons (as a service) unless it is for a special event.
- One recent graduate felt that their training in no way prepared them for the workplace in terms of time pressure and client expectations and skill level (which they felt they had little). This graduate was lucky to have an employer who was prepared to make the effort with them to up skill.
- Another graduate commented that they felt their training was more than satisfactory to meet their needs as a new employee.

## **Thanks**

Thanks are given to employers and employees who gave their time to attend forums and contribute to this report through the surveys at the NZ Beauty EXPO. This report represents the first of many consultations with the beauty therapy industry.

**End of report.**