

FNU partners with SPC to deliver accredited micro-qualifications



FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey and SPC Deputy Director General Dr Audrey Aumua during the signing of the MoU.

Short courses being offered by the Fiji National University (FNU) will soon have regional recognition as it will undergo an accreditation process through the Educational Quality Assessment Programme (EQAP).

FNU signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) this afternoon with The Pacific Community (SPC) which will provide a platform for formal recognition of short courses as micro-qualifications.

FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Healey said while the University is ensuring that all award programmes are recorded on the Fiji Qualification Framework with the Fiji Higher Education Commission to meet national standards, it is mindful of its responsibility to ensure that our micro-qualifications are also recognised nationally and internationally.

According to Prof Healey FNU has over 100 Certificates of Attainment programmes that are likely to meet the requirements of accreditation with EQAP.

“For decades our micro-qualifications, formerly more commonly known as Short Courses (Certificates of Attainment), at FNU have remained unrecognized qualifications by overseas accreditation agencies,” said VC Healey.

“This training has been the main source of qualifications for the industry and tradesmen, but seldom used as evidence for the purpose of promotion, mobility, or subsequent entry to award programmes.”

“Micro-qualifications provide very intense training and are often mandated for certain professions and trades. Trainees have to spend a substantial amount of their time and income to attain the certificate and later learn that the courses are not formally

recognised locally and internationally.”

Professor Healey said the local regulator for higher education in Fiji, the Higher Education Commission, currently only records universities full award programmes and that EQAP under the Pacific Community is now providing the opportunity for higher education institutions in Fiji and the region to get their Micro Qualifications accredited and be recognised regionally.

Similar sentiments were shared by the SPC Deputy Director General, Dr Audrey Aumua.

“The Pacific region has a large number of short courses offered by various organisations. Whilst these trainings use up precious time and limited financial resources, they do not always receive the deserved level of recognition and do not contribute to the qualification of the learners,” said Dr Aumua.

“Whilst qualifications are generic and cover a wide range of skills, micro-qualifications are narrow in focus and cover few specific skills.”

She said such qualifications exist to meet the needs of learners, industry, society and the economy, thus, they need to be current and relevant.

“The SPC’s initiative on accreditation of short courses as micro-qualifications fills an important gap in the enhancement of the quality of education and training because national quality assurance agencies do not provide for this.”

“The accreditation of short courses as micro-qualifications is added value to these trainings. Overall, it means those who finance such trainings can be confident of gaining value from their investment,” Dr Aumua added.