



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

# **National Qualifications Framework Levels 1–3, 2005**

## **Geography**

### **National Moderator's Report**

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### **General Guidance for Assessors of Achievement and Unit Standards**

The purpose of external moderation is to provide reassurance that assessor judgements are at the national standard and are made on the basis of assessment materials that are fair and valid.

All assessment materials are expected to:

- give the learner the opportunity to meet the requirements of the standard
- have an assessment schedule that gives evidence of appropriate learner responses and clear judgements at all levels.

The Ministry of Education contracted subject experts to write assessment resources for achievement standards. These are not pre-moderated. The intention is that they are modified to suit teaching programmes and learner needs. They do not provide 'rules' but suggest different ways of assessing to the nationally registered standard.

### **General Overall Comment**

Moderation of internally assessed achievement standards and unit standards in Geography continues to be effective in promoting nationally consistent judgements of assessment materials and assessor judgements. Many schools continue to use activities from the TKI website, although an increasing number are writing their own assessment activities.

Assessors are responsible for ensuring assessment activities, regardless of their source, meet the requirements of the current registered standard. Some activities devised for earlier versions of achievement standards may need to be modified. Similarly, buying a commercial activity does not automatically guarantee its validity. Activities still need to face the school's internal moderation system before being submitted for national moderation.

Some teachers are having difficulty differentiating between Merit and Excellence levels in judgement statements. There are alternative pathways for learners to achieve Merit through either breadth or depth of an answer. If they have both, then the answer is at Excellent level. This is the pattern for all achievement standards and the judgement statements need to reflect this. Some learners are being disadvantaged, particularly at Merit level, as the alternative is not being offered. As a result, some learners are missing out on Merit.

Despite the comments in the 2004 National Moderator's Report about the problems in combining standards, schools are still leaving out instructions in the activities for one of the achievement criteria in one of the combined standards, making it impossible for learners to achieve. Teachers need to ensure all criteria of both standards are included in the instructions given to learners.

Further problems arise when the research standard (AS 90705: Carry out geographic research with consultation) is combined with planning (AS 90703: Analyse the role of geography in planning and decision-making). Teachers need to be aware that the instructions for AS 90703 need to be self-explanatory, and allow learners to complete it without further guidance or instruction. However, for AS 90705, consultation between the teacher and the learner is ongoing and, when initiated by the learner, may continue until the research is completed. This makes it difficult for teachers when combining these two activities as consultation is not part of AS 90703, once learners have started the assessment. Care needs to be exercised when consultation is carried out that this does not

involve explanation of AS 90703. This is another reason for caution when combining AS 90705 with another achievement standard in an assessment activity.

### **Level 1**

#### **AS 90206: Carry out and present directed geographic research**

This standard appears to have caused little concern for most providers. However, providers need to note that the evaluation of the research needs to have at least two strengths and two weaknesses to meet the criterion for Merit or Excellence.

#### **AS 90207: Examine a contemporary geographic issue and evaluate courses of action**

The third criterion, “*Evaluate courses of action*”, requires learners to make judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of various courses of action. Where assessment material does not offer alternative courses for learners to evaluate, they may be disadvantaged.

#### **AS 90208: Examine a global geographic topic**

Providers are generally offering valid assessments for this standard. However, some learners are being disadvantaged where the global nature of the criteria is not emphasised in the task instructions.

### **Level 2**

#### **AS 90335: Carry out and present guided geographic research**

There continues to be major difficulty with some learners choosing topics of a questionable geographic nature. Teachers need to be more proactive in guiding learners to make suitable topic selections to ensure the topic is geography. Information is to be collected from the field, but increasingly, opportunities for using the Internet technologies are valid if the type of material collected is of a similar nature to that collected from the field and not merely from an Internet site. The evaluation of the research needs to include at least two strengths and weaknesses to meet the third criterion requirement.

#### **AS 90336: Explain a contemporary geographic issue and evaluate courses of action**

This achievement standard caused few difficulties. However, teachers are reminded that for assessing the third criterion, “*Evaluate in detail, courses of action and make a justified recommendation*”, the courses of action can be given to the learners as they are only required to evaluate them.

#### **AS 90337: Explain a geographic topic at a global scale**

Tasks for the first and second criteria, “*Explain the pattern(s) and process(es) within the geographic topic at a global scale*” and “*Explain how the geographic topic at a global scale is significant for people*” were frequently a combined activity. This tended to provide better opportunities for learners than activities that were specific to either patterns or processes. The global nature of this achievement standard needs to be emphasised in the task instructions. There are some providers still using Version 1 of the standard, which contains the extra criterion about characteristics. This should be removed from the activities.

### **Level 3**

#### **AS 90703: Analyse the role of geography in planning and decision-making**

Despite warnings in the 2004 National Moderator’s Report, this achievement standard was still unsuccessfully combined with AS 90705: Carry out geographic research with consultation, in

assessment activities. AS 90703 requires much more direction for learners, so all the criterion requirements are covered successfully, than is possible with AS 90705. All parts in the explanatory notes under terms for each of the criteria needed to be covered for the standard to be reached. Often, in combined activities, one or other of the parts was omitted completely. Geographic significance in the first criterion proved difficult for interpretation. A number of tasks asked learners to analyse the decision, not the decision-making process.

The third criterion, “*Analyse the contribution of geography to the planning and decision-making issue*” continues to be difficult but is the core of this achievement standard. It requires an understanding of people and their place in the environment and how the planning issue under analysis is an example of that.

Where schools assessed this achievement standard separately, not in conjunction with other achievement standards, there was greater successful completion of all criteria by learners.

### **AS 90705: Carry out geographic research with consultation**

As with the level 2 equivalent, there continues to be major difficulty with some learners choosing topics of a questionable geographic nature. Teachers need to be more proactive in guiding learners to make suitable topic selections to ensure the topic is geography. This can be done during the consultation stages. Consultation has been redefined in the latest version of the standard. Teachers are reminded to refer to the latest versions of the standard.

The use of secondary data is not mandatory in this achievement standard, yet a number of assessment schedules included its use in the judgement statements. The use of the Internet can be a source for acceptable primary data, but it is also a source for secondary material. The explanatory notes require the use of data from the field to be included. It is essential that learners can identify the difference between primary and secondary data in their research data so that the use of data from the field is appropriate.

The third criterion, “*Evaluate the research*”, varies from other levels as it requires both the process and the findings to be part of the evaluation. Many schools had instructions, which led to the processes only being evaluated. Schools may be advised to separate the two tasks so that learners cover both.

### **AS 90706: Analyse a contemporary geographic issue and evaluate courses of action**

Teachers are reminded that the third criterion, “*Evaluate courses of action and make a justified recommendation*”, allows learners to be given the courses of action as they are only required to evaluate them. “Evaluate” at level 3 is interpreted as two or more strengths or two or more weaknesses yet at other levels it is strengths **and** weaknesses. Teachers need to be aware of this difference at level 3. Some schools still expect learners to devise the various courses of action, rather than evaluate them. There are some changes in Version two of this standard and teachers are reminded to refer to the changes before carrying out any assessment in 2006.

For the third criterion, “*Evaluate courses of action and make a justified recommendation*”, learners need to show why the chosen course is the best, then why it is better than the other two.

### **AS 90707: Analyse a geographic topic at a global scale**

Tasks based on the third criterion, “*Analyse how the geographic topic on a global scale is significant for people*”, need to emphasise the global nature of the topic; a number were confined to one area or region. The explanatory note under terms states the need for more than one region or

nation across different hemispheres to be global. The task instructions need to reinforce this global nature.

**Unit Standards**

There were very few unit standards submitted for moderation. Generally, teachers using them have a well-established practice and knowledge of them.