



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

# **National Qualifications Framework Levels 1–3, 2006**

## **Languages**

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

## **NATIONAL MODERATOR'S REPORT**

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

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

All assessment activities 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 judgments at all levels.

The assessment resources available on TKI were provided by the Ministry of Education with the intention they be modified to suit teaching programme and learners needs. They do not provide 'rules' but suggest different ways of assessing to the nationally registered standard. It is unwise for teachers to simply download them and expect to use them as is. All tasks taken from the Web should be checked against the current version of the Standard and Assessment Schedule.

### **General Overall Comment**

At the beginning of each year it is advisable for teachers to check all standards on the NZQA website. At the end of 2005 Level 3 was reviewed. All three levels are now on version 2 of the standard. No standard was reviewed in 2006. Teachers are reminded that the version refers to the standard not the task.

The majority of schools used or modified the activities from the TKI website. Some activities need adjusting to fit the requirements of moderation and should be checked for language at the required level. It is pleasing to see that some teachers are creating their own tasks. Remember that it is very important that the task is pre moderated by a colleague in the same school or in another school to ensure that it meets the requirements of the standard and that it is administered under assessment conditions that will not disadvantage the student. New tasks and exemplars in Japanese, French, Spanish, German and possibly Chinese, covering Level 1 to 3, will appear on the website sometime during 2007. As these tasks will include recent changes, updates, new assessment practices and CD audio, they will be invaluable to many teachers.

It is important to remember the "Assessment Triangle" when writing tasks. The Assessment Triangle consists of the Standard (appropriate version), the Task (familiar, less familiar, requiring the use of complex language, opinion, and/or point of view) and the Assessment Schedule (appropriate for the Standard and the Task). The Achievement Objectives of the new curriculum document must be considered. It is worth remembering that the Assessment Schedule is not the same as a Student Feedback Sheet. This is the combination of the Standard, the Task and the Assessment Schedule and must be clear and transparent. It needs to show the requirements of the Standard (i.e. time, word/ character count), the terms of the Assessment Schedule (variety of language, development of relevant information, organisation and point of view if required, seeking of information if required) and the

overall communication (significant errors hindering, no errors hindering) have been met and ultimately how the final judgement has been reached.

The assessment tasks must be appropriate to the level being assessed and allow the student to easily show evidence of the appropriate achievement objectives. The following definitions from the explanatory notes of the achievement standards clarify the relationship between language complexity and curriculum levels.

**simple language** refers to communication functions, language structures, vocabulary and socio-cultural aspects will be consistent with levels up to and including Level 6 of the French curriculum guidelines, or equivalent.

**appropriate language** refers to the use and/or comprehension of language corresponding to the strands and achievement objectives up to and including Level 7 of the French curriculum guidelines, or equivalent

**complex language** refers to the use and/or comprehension of language corresponding to communication functions, language structures, vocabulary and socio-cultural aspects in accordance with the strands and achievement objectives up to and including Level 8 of the French curriculum, or equivalent

All levels, structures / achievement objectives used by the student in their learning, which may be outside the level being assessed provide valid evidence and should be considered when assessing. When students are required to give a variety or wide variety of language, this language may come from any level, not just the level being assessed. However a vocabulary item, from a particular level, on its own, is not considered to be evidence that a curriculum level requirement has been met.

**90073, 90079, 90085, 90091, 90097,  
90103, 90109, 90120, 90126**

Although the requirements of vocabulary and structures at CL6 are now generally made clear to candidates in the activity, they must also be expressed in the assessment schedule. In French and German however, where the curriculum may not be so strictly defined as other languages, the Achievement Objectives for that level of the curriculum should be consulted to assist in the assessment of student work and should also be part of the wording of the activity.

Examples of learner response are required in the assessment schedule. These were often misplaced. Candidates may be given examples in the target language in the activity. However if the examples relate to the activity being assessed then students need to be reminded that all work must be their own and any examples of language taken from the assessment activity need to be significantly manipulated to show that it is indeed their own work.

Again, the quality of the tapes supplied from schools with their submission materials was of concern to moderators. This should no longer be a problem, as from 2007 evidence should be recorded digitally, as notified by *A2006/034 - 25 August 2006*, which can be found on the NZQA website at:  
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/publications/circulars/matters/a2006-034.html>

NCEA assessment is not about counting. It is disturbing to the words “ some, most and all” used when referring to relevant information and structures. The instructions in the task (“you could mention”, “write about”) are to guide the students, not to restrict them. What is important is relevant information which relates to the topic and in what way that information has been developed and expressed, up to and including the required curriculum level. This, along with how successfully the communication has been achieved is the criteria that teachers should use in order to reach a final judgement.

The updated assessment guidelines for NCEA Learning languages notes that “ The standard involves preparing and giving a talk/ presentation / speech. The grade comes from the talk but the process of preparation is important. An effective task involves the application and the interpretation of the learning.....”. The standard at all levels requires the student to speak to an audience and so in the delivery there needs to be interaction i.e. eye contact. but this is not assessed. A speech cannot just be read. In the past it has been traditional for students to use a set number of cue cards with no more than 10 words (Level 1) or 20 words (Level 2, 3) in either English or the target language. The new Assessment Guidelines state “ the use of cue cards .... will depend on context. The decisions made about these matters will be guided by the fact that the assessor must be clear that there is enough evidence that the student can do what the title of the standard describes. If the student READS a speech entirely from cue cards, that student has not provided evidence of giving a speech.”

QUALITY is far more important than QUANTITY. Excellence in a speech does not mean that the time requirement (at least one minute for Level 1, at least 2 minutes for Level 2,3) has to be vastly exceeded. In fact it is often to the student’s detriment for him / her to do so. Substantial development DOES NOT mean that every point needs to be developed SUBSTANTIALLY but that overall the evidence provided by the student shows development. For level one, one and half to two minutes should be sufficient for Excellence, three to three and half should be adequate for levels 2 and 3.

The variety or wide variety of language is what the student uses to develop or substantially develop relevant information, give an opinion or point of view. While it is acknowledged that the student needs to give evidence of a CL 6,7 or 8, the student may spiral up or down the levels and be given credit for doing so. It may be appropriate that there is evidence of more than one specific curriculum level structure, but the teacher should not necessarily demand that there is.

Teachers are cautioned about providing lengthy examples at A, M and E in the assessment schedule. There is the danger of denying the student the opportunity to provide their own evidence of variety of language and development of relevant information.

**90074, 90080, 90086, 90092, 90098,  
90104, 90110, 90121, 90127**

As in the speaking assessment, at least one instance of level 6 language must form part of the criteria of the assessment schedule. French teachers especially should see notes above.

The conversation standards give the most concern. The task needs to be set and administered in such a way that candidates have the chance to speak for the required length of time and also add (substantial) development. Sometimes in an attempt to have “natural” conversations teachers allow candidates to give very brief answers which do not contain enough language even for achievement. Some teachers give too much help by re-phrasing questions or prompting candidates to seek information. Teachers should not be tempted to dominate the conversation but simply contribute in a way that allows students to continue to speak.

Cue cards may NOT be used.

For 1.3 students are required to give relevant information using simple vocabulary and language structures. They do not need to seek information. The student contribution to the conversation is a minimum of one minute.

**90077, 90089, 90095, 90101, 90107,  
90113, 90130**

The purpose of this standard is to assess the ability to draft, rework and write text(s) with the support of resources, which gives relevant information on a familiar topic, using straightforward language. It is therefore important that the task reflects these requirements of drafting and crafting to produce a final piece for assessment. Writing an email, postcard or letter is less likely to be suitable, especially if they are being sent to friends. If they are to be sent to an organisation or are a formal communication then perhaps they are more likely to be suitable.

It is more appropriate that the student be asked to produce a brochure, handbook or guidebook. While only the final piece of writing is assessed, the student needs to show evidence of drafting and crafting in their work.

The updated Assessment Guidelines note that:

- The most successful formal assessment tasks are developed with the students and come directly from the teaching and learning
- all resources should be decided by teachers and students together
- students may bring nothing in and take nothing out of the assessment room
- all student work stays in the assessment room
- previously marked work is not appropriate as a resource.

The criteria for Excellence requires that Language be used confidently. This can mean a number of things; for example in Japanese it can mean that kanji has been used where it is appropriate rather than just evidence of at least 1 required kanji at the appropriate curriculum level to meet the standard.

For moderation purposes there must be evidence of student crafting / drafting provided to the moderator, with the grade achieved based on the finished piece of writing.

Feedback may be given by the teacher at any stage before the final piece of work is produced. The feedback may be to an individual or to a group. If a teacher decides that further teaching is necessary before the assessment continues, this is acceptable as long as the integrity and security of the standard is maintained. Marking or correcting the drafted piece of work handed in is not feedback. Specific errors in a line or specific problems cannot be indicated. Feedback should only be of a general nature e.g. 'watch your tenses; check your particles; check your adjectival / verbal agreements; does this line / paragraph make sense to you?; are you sure this is what you really wanted to say?'

**90383, 90389, 90396, 90402, 90408, 90485, 90414, 90420, 90427**

Teacher feedback from the Level 2 Standards review supported the focus on "appropriate language." In practice this means that individual vocabulary items and structures should not be used as evidence to reach the standard. Student work should represent the culmination of communication functions which have been learned up to and including CL7.

At Level 2 tasks need to be "less familiar" which means that the knowledge required to complete the task needs to be outside the every day or more familiar experiences of the student.

Assessment tasks need to give students clear opportunities to provide evidence of "appropriate" level 2 language. Activities should clearly indicate language at A, M and E. (Be aware that language resources on the Ministry of Education's NCEA website have not been modified to show the change to "appropriate" language.)

When making judgments, the whole piece of the student's work needs to reflect clear evidence of the level being assessed. Individual vocabulary items and structures should not be considered solely to reach the required standard.

According to explanatory note 6 the spoken presentation must be *of a minimum length of two minutes*. This is different to the conversation standard. However the emphasis should lie on the quality of the presentation. The wording of the title for the task needs care, as it is not a "talk" but a "presentation".

At merit and excellence, it is important that the spoken presentation is *organised*. Candidates need to be told this in the instructions to their activity. *Delivery is confident and fluent* is a criterion of excellence only.

**90384, 90390, 90397, 90403, 90409, 90486, 90415, 90421, 90428**

The candidate's contribution to the conversation may be *about two minutes* and he/she should be given direction about this in the instructions. However the final decision regarding the time requirement must be "has the student met the standard." Quality is always more important than quantity. It is important that the activity is set very carefully for the conversations to sound natural and yet still offer candidates an opportunity for *substantial development* and enable them to use a *wide variety of vocabulary and structures*.

When creating a task, "unfamiliar" refers to situations outside the everyday experiences of the student.

Note that the word *simple*, which appears in Level 1, has been removed from the language criterion at Level 2. For Level 2 the language needs to be appropriate.

The requirement for the student to convey and seek information should not be just a prepared speech with the teacher asking questions at what seem to be pre ordained places or simply allowing the student to give a prepared speech to a variety of questions and then at the end asking the student if he / she would like to ask a question. The conversation should be as natural as possible.

In past years the teacher has been required to more or less ask the same and the same number of questions to each candidate in order to ensure a "level playing field". If the student asked at least one question, then the standard was met. Under the new assessment guidelines for NCEA this is no longer the case. "*Task need to give autonomy and choice to students as well as the opportunity to show how well they can converse and interact.*" The idea of a student learning a conversation in advance is no longer appropriate. Obviously students will still be given the task in advance and will have some idea of the type of questions to ask or answer, but they will need to take more control of the conversation (its direction and flow) so that it is as natural as possible. Students do not need to show the same development in a conversation as they do in a prepared speech. In the conversation standards, development and variety may involve interaction, referring back to what has already been said; clarifying the intent or using formulaic expressions. Communication will be achieved when the meaning / direction of the conversation has been successful and where both parties have understood what each other wanted to communicate. Pronunciation, pausing and intonation will help to achieve effective communication.

At level 2 and 3 the student contribution is " about two minutes". This refers to the student contribution, not the length of the conversation as a whole. Teachers avoid dominating the conversation. Students have to be given a chance to show what they can say without being cut off by the assessor. Quality is more important than quantity. The conversational task

should be linked directly to the Achievement objectives relevant to the level being assessed so that the student is easily able to achieve the standard, using language at an appropriate level.

**90387, 90400, 90406, 90412, 90489, 90418, 90431**

Version 2 of the standard created a difference between the error statements for achieved and merit. The emphasis is on *crafted writing* and this applies to each of the levels, achievement, merit and excellence.

The required minimum word length (see Explanatory Note 6) must be given to the candidates in their instructions and also form part of the criteria of the assessment schedule. It should be noted that *extensive development* in excellence should cover depth as well as the number of points developed.

**90547, 90553, 90559, 90565, 90672, 90571, 90577, 90583, 90589**

Level 3 Standards were reviewed in 2005 and in 2006 version 2 was available. Check the NZQA website to ensure you thoroughly understand all changes.

Speaking time is a minimum of 2 minutes. However, as with all speaking assessments, the emphasis should be on the quality and breadth of the speech, especially when awarding merit and excellence. At merit and excellence the candidate must give a speech which *(substantially) develops relevant information and/or ideas*.

There was confusion over the criterion *a variety of complex language*. (Complex refers to CL 8 of the curriculum, not to the variety of language). Explanatory Note 4 defines and makes clear *complex* as involving language *up to and including Level 8 of the curriculum or equivalent*. The achievement criteria for achievement and merit both require this *variety of complex language*.

Because of this it was appreciably hard for teachers to assess candidates in situations where they did not make errors that significantly hindered communication but did develop ideas, had some vocabulary and structures at the appropriate level, but did not really have a variety. Despite this difficulty assessor judgments were in the main correct.

Candidates must express a point of view, but this does not have to be developed for merit and excellence. However a point of view must be clearly expressed and should not have to be inferred. Many topics chosen by teachers are not really conducive to the expression of a point of view. Candidates should be encouraged to use phrases that clearly express a point of view.

**90548, 90554, 90560, 90566, 90673, 90572, 90578, 90584, 90590**

The criteria for achievement and merit both require a *variety of complex language* to be used. It is important that there is 'exchange' at all levels. In a conversation this is just as important as "development". Some topics lend themselves better to providing opportunities for the candidates to add (substantial) development.

The candidate is expected to seek information, but it is preferable that the teacher says as little as possible. They should not feel obliged to share too much information via responses and feedback.

The exchange of information can no longer be just a prepared speech with the teacher asking questions at appropriate places. The conversation time from the student is *a minimum of two minutes*. The emphasis should lie on the quality and breadth of the contribution, especially when awarding merit and excellence.

For excellence there is no longer the need for interaction to be confident and fluent, it is enough that the conversation is fluent. *Fluent* does not mean that the student should be speaking with the speed and flow of a native speaker. Pauses can certainly be present and as long as they are natural and do not interfere with the gist of the conversation and do not hinder communication, then the candidate should not be penalised.

**90551, 90563, 90569, 90749, 90575, 90581, 90593**

Under version two of the standard there is no longer the requirement for extensive development of relevant information to award excellence.

Despite the availability of resources, as allowed in these standards, it was difficult for some candidates to gain achievement. Learners need a lot of training and preparation in the classroom to be able to use resources effectively and independently.