



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

National Qualifications Framework Levels 1–3, 2006

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 judgments 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 judgments 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

The moderation of internally assessed achievement standards and unit standards in Geography continues to assist with the consistency of assessment materials and assessor judgements. Many schools continue to use unmodified activities from TKI website, although there has been an increasing number of schools writing their own assessment activities. Schools need to remember to check that any activity used for assessment, passes their own internal moderation system. This also applies to commercially produced activities purchased by the school.

Providers still need to be careful when producing assessment tasks that are used in the assessment of more than one standard. Providers need to ensure that all criteria of both standards are included in the instructions given out to learners.

Activities that are used to assess more than one achievement standard are mainly used at level 3 and usually are combined with 90703. Many providers assume that it covers similar ground to the research standard 90705. Many providers combine the geographic idea, as required for criteria two in 90705, with the role of geography required for criteria two in 90703 into one activity. Each criterion requires different responses however, and providers need to ensure that the learners are able to meet the requirements of both criteria in order to achieve the standards.

The global standards (90208, 90337, 90707) require that the learner demonstrate an understanding of the global nature of the topic. A number of activities moderated in 2006 related to only one region or one example. Providers need to ensure that the task requirements provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of a theme or topic that relates to more than one region or nation across hemispheres as required by the explanatory notes. The moderation indicated that in many cases the evidence presented for the research standards (90206, 90335, 90705) was not at the required standard. Providers need to take care that learners substantiate their evidence and statements, that the research is meaningful, and has relevance, and that there is substantial discussion regarding the validity of the research.

Level One

90206: Carry out and present directed geographic research

For this standard, providers need to note that the evaluation of the research (criteria 3) is required for merit or excellence. Learners are required to make judgements regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the research process. These should be of sufficient depth to justify a merit or excellence result.

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

The third criteria *Evaluate courses of action* requires learners to make judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of differing courses of action. Learners may be disadvantaged in situations where the task requirements constrain the learners to an evaluation of only one course of action. Providers need to ensure that the quality of the learner's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses is at a level appropriate for level 1.

90208: Examine a global geographic topic

Many providers are offering valid assessments for this standard. However some learners are being disadvantaged where the global nature of the criteria is not being emphasised sufficiently in the task instructions. A description of the global nature of the theme or topic is a requirement of this standard.

Level Two

90335: Conduct guided geographic research

This standard requires learners to undertake geographic research and this is defined in explanatory note 4. Guidance is required by teachers to ensure learners select an appropriate and relevant topic and that this topic is a geographic topic. Providers need to note that geographic research has a spatial component as a requirement Information can be collected from other sources such as the Internet, but information so gathered is only valid if the type of material collected is of a similar nature to that collected *from the field*

For some providers, the activities are unaltered field trip task sheets and these need to be altered to reflect the current achievement criteria so that the learners are able to meet the requirements of the standard.

Planning is an important aspect of the research but is specifically precluded from assessment (Explanatory Note 4). Providers including it in the assessment schedule, are advised to remove this requirement as it is not part of the achievement standard

Providers are also advised that convention errors may preclude a learner from reaching merit in criteria one. The difference of achievement and merit is one of accurately using procedures and conventions and failure to do so means that the learner may meet the requirement of achievement but not the requirement of merit.

90336: Examine a contemporary geographic issue

This achievement standard is generally well understood. The third criteria *Evaluate courses of action* require learners to make judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of different courses of action. Learners may be disadvantaged in situations where the task requirements constrain them to an evaluation of only one course of action – the standard requires an evaluation of different courses of action.

Providers need to ensure that the quality of the learner's judgements of the strengths and weaknesses is at a level appropriate for level 2.

The difference of a justified recommendation and a fully justified recommendation, necessary to differentiate between merit and excellence, needs to be reflected in the assessment schedule.

90337: Explain a geographic topic at a global scale

This standard requires the learner to demonstrate an understanding of the global nature of the topic and this should be reinforced in the task requirements.

Level Three

90703: Explain the contribution of geography to planning and decision-making process

The title indicates that the intent of the standard is on how geography assists with the planning process. Any detailed explanation of this will require the use of a local, regional or national example to illustrate how this has occurred.

This standard involves an analysis of the decision-making body and the process it will go through or has been through, in order to reach a decision. The learner's opinions, while important within the context of learning, are not part of the assessment of this standard. It is recommended the learner analyse a decision that has already been made so that the learner is in effect describing and explaining a process that has occurred rather than one that is about to happen. Evidence for the second criteria requires an understanding of people and their place in the environment and how the planning issue under analysis is an example of that. It is about the contribution of geography to this process and should be differentiated from an explanation of geographic ideas. Providers should also note that this standard requires learners to analyse the decision and not the decision making process.

In addition, many providers are still combining this achievement standard with other standards to develop an integrated assessment task. Providers need to note the differences between the standards and the differing requirements of each set of criteria and way in which each set of criteria relates to each title. An assessment task designed to provide evidence for more than one standard must provide opportunities for learners to meet all the criteria from all of the standards. Many such integrated activities moderated in 2006 omitted one or more aspects required for one or both of the standards.

90705 Carry out geographic research with consultation

Providers need to be more proactive during the consultation stages in guiding the learners to make suitable topic selections to ensure that the topic is geographical.

It is essential that learners can identify the difference of primary and secondary data in their research data so that the use of *data from the field* is appropriate. The intent of this standard is that the learners collect and process data collected from the field (explanatory note 3). In 2006 there were several instances where only secondary data sourced from Internet was used as the only source of data. This is not appropriate for this standard.

The use of secondary data is not mandatory in this achievement standard, and can be used to support the primary data, but care needs to be taken in requiring it for assessment purposes. Learners need to be able to identify the primary material that is used in the research. Sources such as Internet can be a source for acceptable primary data, but it is also a source for large amounts of unsubstantiated secondary material. Teachers need to assist learners in discerning the relevance or otherwise of such data.

Providers need to take care that learners substantiate their evidence and statements, that the research is meaningful and has relevance and that there is substantial discussion regarding the validity of the research. At this level, learners are expected to be able to evaluate not only the process of research but also question and make judgements about the validity and reliability of the data processed.

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

Providers are reminded that the third criteria *Evaluate courses of action and make a justified recommendation* requires learners to evaluate the responses to an issue and to make judgements on the relevant strengths and weaknesses. This evaluation must also include a recommended course of action and a justification for the recommendation. Some providers are still expecting learners to devise the various courses of action, rather than evaluate them. This goes beyond the standard.

90707: Analyse a geographic topic at a global scale

This standard requires the learner to demonstrate an understanding of the global nature of the topic and this should be reinforced in the task requirements.

UNIT STANDARDS

There were an increasing number of unit standards submitted for moderation. Many of the standards were at level 1 as an alternative to the externally assessed achievement standards particularly population. (5084). Providers using them have a well-established practice and knowledge of them and have few difficulties. For providers who are using them however, all performance criteria must be met in order to achieve, but unlike the achievement standards, individual elements can be reassessed using a different setting as the unit standards do not need to be met in the context of one setting.