



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

National Qualifications Framework Levels 1–3, 2007

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

Moderation of geography internally assessed standards continues to reinforce the consistency of decisions and judgments made by the assessors. Many teachers appear to have corrected problems encountered in previous years but there are still some areas that are causing concern.

Most teachers continue to use TKI based activities with little modification, although a significant number are changing them to be more appropriate for their own contexts and learners.

There is also a trend for many teachers to use their own activities particularly with the research standards, but care must be taken to ensure that the task instructions allow learners to meet all the requirements outlined in the criteria of a standard. An encouraging number of teachers, who submitted their own research material for moderation, were able to write activities that allowed learners to demonstrate very good research techniques and fieldwork. Some commercial activities were less well constructed and placed a heavy emphasis on the use of secondary data.

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

There are a small number of Unit Standard assessments being submitted and most teachers are well aware of the requirements of these and appear to have little difficulty in using them.

Level One

90206: Carry out and present directed geographic research

The difference in the first criterion between achievement and merit is accuracy and this needs to be reflected in the assessment schedules. Many teachers submit assessment schedules requiring more detail for merit and but do not include the accuracy requirement. Geographic ideas need to have some relevance to the topic under study and where geographic ideas were integrated into the research the analysis of them was at a higher level. Assessors need to be aware that evaluation of the research process is a requirement at Merit and Excellence only and should not be part of the requirements for Achievement of the standard.

Setting up an aim is an important part of the process and gives meaning to the research. Many learners are not relating the results of the research back to the purpose of the study.

For example, some of the learners using the farming exemplar from TKI, lack a significant aim for their research and make some conclusions about the topic of farming rather than what they sought to research.

The second bullet point in Explanatory Note 4 requires the learners to *analyse* and *outline conclusions*, and this is more than writing a single conclusion. A number of activities submitted for moderation ask for conclusions to be written and assume that analysis will take place. This needs to be addressed in the activity and as part of the assessment.

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

There is a need to ensure that the issue is a contemporary one as required by the standard title. Teachers should be trying to use actual examples of issues where possible and move away from the simulated issues. It would make the geography more real to the learners if local issues were used.

Evaluate courses of action requires learners to make judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of the various courses of action. Making judgments of the strengths and weaknesses maybe as simple as prioritising the strengths or weaknesses of two or more courses of action.

90208: Examine a global geographic topic

Some learners are being disadvantaged where the global nature of the criteria is not being emphasised sufficiently in the task instructions. There is some confusion between a geographic topic and a geographic topic at a global scale. The standard defines a global scale as “*Global scale* relates to regions or nations across different continents or different hemispheres”. Many of the activities ask for the processes responsible for the geographic topic rather than the processes responsible for the global pattern. The criteria require that the global nature is described and, when this does not occur, learners are not meeting the requirements of the standard. While not mandatory the use of maps is advisable and should be used as part of the description of patterns wherever possible.

Level Two

90335: Carry out and present guided geographic research

Many teachers are now revising their field trip task sheets into more relevant activities, which will allow the learners the opportunity to meet the research requirements of this standard. Some topic choices however, continue to require assessor guidance to ensure that they cover the necessary requirements to meet all of the criteria. Assessors are reminded that the step up from achievement to merit is one of *accuracy* and the assessment schedules need to reflect this.

Information needs to be *collected from the field*; too much information in some research is collected directly from sites such as Google searches which does not constitute data from the field. The research topics provide the opportunity for learners to engage in some real field work to bring geography to life and this opportunity should be encouraged by teachers.

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

This standard appears to have relatively few difficulties and many assessors are writing their own activities based on the TKI website exemplars. It is important to ensure that the courses of action are supplied as the standard requires an evaluation of these. The courses of action must be responses to the issue that may bring about a resolution.

In the evaluation of the courses and the justification of the chosen course of action, it is important that the instructions ask for a comparison with the other options. This is often missed out in the instructions.

Many processes involved with the topics chosen by the assessors are beyond the understanding of learners and care needs to be taken to ensure that the topic selected does not disadvantage learners.

90337: Explain a geographic topic at a global scale

The standard defines a global scale as “*Global scale* refers to a theme or topic that relates to regions or nations across different continents or hemispheres”. As with the other equivalent global studies at other levels, there still appears to be a need to reinforce the idea that the topic must have global material from more than one region or hemisphere to meet the requirements. A number of learners are missing out when they do not include this requirement.

There are also a number of learners who are not able to distinguish pattern from process and this understanding is required in order to achieve this standard.

Level Three

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

This standard is about the analysis of planning and decision-making processes and explaining the contribution of geography in them. This standard requires learners to examine the procedures of a planning and decision making authority. Learners who investigate research are not meeting the standard.

Some assessors continue to develop tasks which can be used for assessment against more than one standard. This is acceptable but care needs to be taken to ensure that they have access to ALL criteria from all to the standards relevant to the activity.

Topic selection has a big influence on the learner’s opportunity to meet the requirements of the standard. Available resources must be clear and relate to the issue. Some difficulties arise when the issue had not progressed through to the final decision making process. Understanding of the contribution of geography to the planning and decision making process needs to be covered. This indicates a lack of understanding of the requirements of the second criterion for this standard.

90705 Carry out and present geographic research with consultation

Assessors can be pro-active and ensure that the topic selected is suitable and that primary data from the field is possible. Some learners used secondary data as the only data used in the topic. It is useful for the moderator to view all data (including raw data) upon which any decision is based.

Explanatory Note 4 states that “*Consultation* should involve the initial setting of parameters within which the research is to take place, and teacher guidance on ethical practice and methodology through milestone reporting or when a student initiates discussion”. Some learners are left to make decisions over their research methods with very little discussion apparent between assessors and learners. Consequently, the research is not completed to a satisfactory standard. More guidance from the assessors would ensure that the learners are carrying out sound research and will have satisfactory data to work from the outset when the plan is discussed with the assessor.

For excellence this standard requires the learner to critically evaluate. The whole idea of a genuinely different approach to the research ie inductive versus deductive, may be difficult for Year 13 learners but it is required for excellence at this level. Many of the excellence responses were merely offering different ways of collecting the data, or better ways to process the data.

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

Moderation indicated that most assessors demonstrated a good understanding of this standard and its requirements. However, some assessors are accepting evaluations that are not at sufficient depth for level 3.

90707: Analyse a geographic topic at a global scale

The standard defines a global scale as “*Global scale* refers to a theme or topic that relates to regions or nations across different hemispheres”. As with the other equivalent global studies at other levels, there still appears to be a need to reinforce the idea that the topic must have global material from more than one region or hemisphere to meet the requirements. A number of learners are missing out when they do not include this requirement.

UNIT STANDARDS

There were again, a 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. (US5084). There was an increase in standards that have an equivalent externally assessed achievement standard. Most teachers using them have a well-established practice and knowledge of them and have few difficulties.