



The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed standards in 2023. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for Education for Sustainability.

Insights

90810: Undertake a personal action, with reflection, that contributes to a sustainable future

This standard requires students to plan and undertake a personal action that contributes in some way to a sustainable future. It involves choosing an issue to address and linking it to an aspect of sustainability, collecting data, and reflecting on the plan's effectiveness and how the action contributed to at least one aspect of a sustainable future.

The four aspects of sustainability give a wide scope of contexts for this standard and thus the range of assessment activities and student responses is wide. Identifying the aspect of sustainability being primarily addressed is an important step in building convincing evidence of meeting the standard. With clarity of that choice and an effort to develop the students' basic understanding of the sustainable future concept, many providers have stimulated thoughtful planning, meaningful action and good evidence of reflection on the plan's effectiveness.

In some cases, it is clear the choice of action has already been made for students before the assessment started. This makes it difficult for students to develop their sense of agency and involvement. Even where the context is narrowed, by for example, being based on an on-going school project, scope needs to be given for the student to develop their unique plan and action.

Data gathering is an important step in an evidence-based approach to an issue, and where providers support thoughtfulness about this before it is undertaken, the data collection is more likely to be effective. The volume of data is less important than its relevance to the issue. Good practice has included simple counts, opinion surveys, behaviour diaries and photos or video. All of which can give a firm basis for the drawing of conclusions.

Poor outcomes on this assessment are often because insufficient time has been allocated. Each stage from planning, to action, to reflection has separate requirements. In rich learning contexts complications will arise, and while that requires readiness to modify the approach it also stimulates better reflection.

Higher levels of achievement for this standard are seen where students are reflecting on their own attitudes and behaviours, specifically in relation to the sustainability issue they have chosen.

90828: Evaluate a personal action that contributes towards a sustainable future

This standard requires students to evaluate aspects of a personal action that they have planned and undertaken, focusing on the ways the action contributed for at least two aspects of sustainability (environmental/social/cultural/economic), and linking these to the concept of a sustainable future.

Evidence of thoughtful investigation of an issue, possible solutions and the effectiveness of an action is the basis for this standard, and in most cases, students provide this along with discussion of their process for choosing an action and how they have measured its effectiveness.

A clear understanding of the aspects of sustainability, including the sustainable future concept, will support students in the decision-making process. Clearly identifying the aspects of sustainability being used in the evaluation sharpens the conclusions section and should also be addressed in the planning section. Too often this is assumed to be taken as read, but the standard requires the aspect of sustainability to be a focus when drawing conclusions.

Problems can also arise where insufficient time has been allocated to this standard, which carries six Level 3 credits. It requires several weeks to realistically investigate a range of possible actions through the lens of a sustainable future, as students must work through a decision-making process before conducting and evaluating an action.

Another issue can arise when an established school project such as an on-going riparian planting project may unduly limit the actions students can plan for and evaluate effectively. If this is the case, there needs to be an opportunity for deviations to an existing plan and/or fresh ideas/solutions need to be developed.

90832: Develop a strategy for an organisation that will contribute to a sustainable future

This standard requires students to carry out research and/or a practical inquiry to inform development of a strategy to address a sustainability issue.

Good evidence of meeting the standard has included records of on-going communication with stakeholders in the organisation, identifying a sustainability issue, then proposing a range of possible strategies, naming the strategy chosen and weighing up its possible advantages for sustainability. Even if a strategy is not implemented, there should be evidence that students have taken the proposal back to the organisation for co-construction.

In recent years, few students have gone beyond using their school as the chosen organisation. This is still within the scope of the standard, but misses opportunities for more varied experiences that would broaden their horizons and bring new issues to their attention. Nonetheless, schools are large organisations with genuine sustainability issues and the peer group are among the readily consultable stakeholders.

Evidence of authentic conversations with all manner of school employees enables students to come to grips with real issues and be creative in engaging with their hierarchies to promote worthwhile change. In some cases, the initial communication and research 'peters out' before a strategy can be said to have been co-constructed. Persistence is required to complete the task.

91735: Evaluate measures that may be taken to sustain and/or improve a biophysical environment

This standard requires students to research and/or conduct a practical inquiry into a chosen environment to analyse the relationship humans have with that environment, highlighting impacts on sustainability. They are also required to analyse and draw conclusions on the possible measures they believe would be most effective in addressing those sustainability issues.

Most students provide evidence from direct interaction with the chosen environment and thereby record useful primary data. When they also apply a good working understanding of what sustainability implies, they successfully report their evaluation of possible measures to improve sustainability. In some cases, research on a less accessible environment that is not visited is done in sufficient breadth and depth to provide the evidence to complete the standard.

Problems arise if the first step of investigation is superficial, and students struggle to link the second and third parts of the work to a good understanding of the relevant features of the environment. Another issue is convincingly analysing and prioritising potential measures, unless the concept of sustainability is understood to a level where it can be applied to the discussion. Successful evidence explains how a measure is effective for improving the biophysical environment and is connected to how it impacts on sustainability.

Assessor Support:

Online

NZQA's learning management system (Pūtake) offers 150+ easy to access courses, materials and products. These are designed to support teachers, as assessors, to improve their assessment of NCEA standards.

Online, subject-specific or generic, bite-sized learning modules and short courses are now available to complement the traditional face-to-face workshops that NZQA offers. These online courses can be accessed using your Education Sector Logon.

Online Making Assessor Judgements workshops are also available throughout the year. These workshops are structured to guide teachers to improve their understanding of each grade level by examining several full samples of student work. The following standards are available for enrolment in 2024:

- 90813: Demonstrate understanding of how different personal values have implications for a sustainable future
- 90832: Develop a strategy for an organisation that will contribute to a sustainable future

Feedback from teachers for these workshops indicates that more than 74% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the content in the module was beneficial:

"Although I was a bit sceptical that this was going to provide me with better understanding of the standard (and marking it), I found I've picked up more certainty about making judgements about the work my students might produce. I'm also more secure about guiding them through the selection of their topic and setting it up so that they are able to complete a successful investigation."

Exemplars of student evidence for all standards at each level of achievement are available on the NZQA subject page for Education for Sustainability.

NZQA will continue to provide generic modules and workshops designed to improve general assessment practice. The following modules and workshops will be available in 2024:

- Assessment Approaches, an online workshop exploring different methods of assessment
- Culturally Responsive Assessment
- Assessment Guidance – Reviewing Your Practice

- Tāku Reo, Tāku Mahi – My voice, My work, a guide to managing authenticity
- Why Less is More, a guide to reducing volumes of student evidence
- Integrated Assessment
- Modes of Assessment
- Alternative Assessment
- Acknowledging Sources

“This was great! I liked that I could choose from different scenarios, see how sources are used and the way the student answered the question.”

“Reassuring and very thorough. Easy to use/follow.”

We will also continue to offer the Transforming Assessment Praxis programme, an online workshop relevant to all subjects which helps assessors learn about re-contextualising assessment resources and collecting evidence in different ways, in order to better meet the needs of students.

Check the NCEA subject pages on the NZQA website regularly, as more online modules, workshops and courses will be added throughout 2024.

Assessor Practice Tool

The Assessor Practice Tool (APT) will be used to support assessors with the new NCEA standards from 2024 onwards. The purpose of the APT is to allow assessors to practice making assessment judgements and immediately receive feedback on their judgements from a moderation panel. The APT will initially have material for some existing Level 3 standards, with moderated samples for the new Level 1 NCEA standard subjects being added as material becomes available. Material for the new Level 2 and Level 3 standards will be added over time, and all material for the old NCEA standards will be archived.

Workshops and Presentations

The Best Practice Workshops offered by Assessment and Moderation continue to be viewed by the sector as significantly contributing to improved assessor practice:

“I thought the workshop was very clear and helpful, there were a lot of varied examples of ākongā work discussed and opportunity for participants to discuss and ask questions.”

We offer several options of online workshops and presentations for events to support assessors with the assessment of internally assessed standards. These can be subject-specific, or general assessment support, and tailored to the audience. Virtual presentation slots, online workshops or webinars can be requested to provide targeted support to local, regional or national audiences.

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