



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 2024. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for Education for Sustainability.

## **Insights**

### **90811: Explain how human activity in a biophysical environment has consequences for a sustainable future**

#### **Performance overview:**

This standard requires students to present information on a chosen environment, including the ecological aspect and at least one physical aspect of the ecosystem, then describe a human activity and how it is affecting sustainability of the environment, in order to draw conclusions on the consequences for a sustainable future.

Most evidence submitted is written reports or slide presentations based on visiting the environment and/or research from other sources. Collection of primary data from visiting the environment stimulates student engagement and more pertinent assessment responses. Examples include stream sampling above and below an area of human activity, and snorkelling in a marine reserve and outside it.

Increasing numbers of submissions deal with the consequences of human activities that are remedial or restorative, such as riparian planting or predator control. These can be linked to the Level 3 90810 personal action standard, but also the other internally assessed Level 2 Education for Sustainability standards.

Another trend is the incorporation of local kaitiakitanga knowledge and behaviour in developing the students' understanding.

#### **Practices that need strengthening:**

The description of the biophysical environment continues to require more attention in some cases. The ecological aspect can include naming some species present, their abundance, and relationships. Including plants as well as animals and noting the presence and impact of non-native species strengthens the evidence submitted.

Description of a physical aspect such as climate also needs to include some relevant detail beyond a one sentence remark. Similarly, a human activity such as farming requires some salient details about (for example), type, intensity, and change over time.

Students with a lack of background in discussing the sustainable future concept continue to find it difficult to go beyond Achieved level. Where the class has considered some definitions of sustainability and how they can be implemented, the achievement levels improve.

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

#### **Performance overview:**

This standard requires students to evaluate aspects of a personal action that they have planned and undertaken, focusing on the ways the action contributed to 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 wide range of contexts and actions are seen successfully meeting the requirements of this standard.

### **Practices that need strengthening:**

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.

### **Assessor Support**

NZQA offers online support for teachers as assessors of NZC achievement standards.

These include:

- Exemplars of student work for most standards\*
- National Moderator Reports\*
- Online learning modules (generic and subject-specific)\*\*
- Clarifications for some standards\*
- Assessor Practice Tool for many standards\*\*
- Webcasts\*

\*hosted on the NZC Subject pages on the NZQA website.

\*\*hosted on Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system. Accessed via Education Sector Login.

We also may provide a speaker to present at national conferences on requests from national subject associations. At the regional or local level, we may be able to provide online support.

Please contact [workshops@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:workshops@nzqa.govt.nz) for more information or to lodge a request for support.

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