



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 Social Studies.

Insights

92048: Demonstrate understanding of findings from a social inquiry

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to communicate their findings from a social inquiry, using primary and secondary evidence.

Successful responses tended to focus on providing depth, as opposed to breadth, in relation to the inquiry focus. In most instances, students were supported to do this when they only focused on a single rich and challenging inquiry question (as opposed to three or more smaller questions). Merit and Excellence became more accessible when careful consideration had been given to crafting the inquiry question to ensure it allowed for an 'evaluation of findings' and provided suitable scope for making judgements by critically connecting ideas and drawing well-reasoned conclusions.

This often required high familiarity with the inquiry context. As such, many of the successful inquiries had a question that had been developed by the teacher, or by students in close collaboration with the teacher.

When formulating a question, teachers should consider the types of critical connections and well-reasoned conclusions they would expect students to be making at Excellence in order to make certain the question is challenging enough. Care should also be taken to ensure that the inquiry question is pitched at curriculum level 6 and is accessible for all students.

For example, the inquiry question "What human rights abuses have occurred at Gloriavale?" would likely limit students to an Achieved or Merit, as the question does not naturally encourage students to evaluate findings. However, a question such as "Why have human rights abuses been able to occur at Gloriavale?" more readily allows students to explore different social studies concepts, perspectives, and the interactions between them – increasing the opportunity for them to evaluate their findings by making judgements, critically connecting ideas, and drawing well-reasoned conclusions.

Other examples of questions that have provided students the opportunity to evaluate findings, while still being accessible at curriculum level 6, include:

- Is social media the main contributor to the rise in fast fashion?
- To what extent should FIFA be doing more to promote and protect human rights?
- How is over-tourism impacting Venice?
- Why has the Treaty Principles Bill been so controversial?

Practices that need strengthening:

To achieve the standard, both primary and secondary evidence must be used.

A primary source is first-hand information of an event, issue, or narrative, transmitted orally, visually, or in a written form. A secondary source is oral, visual, or written information based on the interpretation of primary sources. These must be explicitly used as part of the communication of findings. For example, if the student has presented a speech and slideshow, then it is expected that any visual evidence is directly discussed. Similarly, in a written report, secondary sources should be evidenced beyond just appearing in the final reference list.

Assessors should consider the types of primary and secondary sources that would be appropriate in supporting the inquiry context prior to beginning the assessment. It should be noted that what is considered a 'primary' or 'secondary' source may vary slightly depending on the inquiry focus.

The focus of the inquiry must also be aligned to the themes outlined in Explanatory Note 3. These include:

- the impacts of a global flow
- diversity and inclusion in society
- the views on and application of human rights
- the dynamic nature of identity and culture.

Through 2024, we have seen the successful use of this standard for other subjects such as Media Studies, Psychology, and Classical Studies. The standard was most successfully used in these courses when the focus clearly aligned to the themes above. Some examples of questions which are grounded in other subjects, but align to the expectations of the standard, are:

- How has the media influenced New Zealand's views on masculinity? (Media Studies)
- To what extent does unconscious bias influence New Zealand's justice system? (Psychology)
- How did the philosophy of Socrates influence the identity and culture of the Ancient Greeks (Classical Studies)

Insights

92049: Demonstrate understanding of perspectives on a contemporary social issue

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to describe a contemporary social issue and different 'broad category' perspectives that have influenced viewpoints on the issue. They must also consider different responses in relation to the perspectives and explain the impact and implications of the various responses.

Students were most likely to achieve success when the selected contemporary issue had been carefully chosen with the expected criteria required for the standard in mind. This involved being able to clearly identify the following in relation to the contemporary social issue:

- Two broad category perspectives (e.g. te āo Māori, right-wing, social justice).
- Identifiable individuals and/or groups who hold a view on the issue that can be logically and convincingly connected to the selected broad category perspectives.
- That selected individuals and/or groups had taken an action in relation to the issue, and this action aligned with the selected broad category perspectives.

Practices that need strengthening:

To achieve the standard, students need to consider the four separate but connected elements that make up a full 'perspective', as stated by the standard title. The term 'perspective' is defined in Explanatory Note 2 and comprises the following elements:

- A broad category perspective. These are often also referred to as worldviews. Examples include indigenous, social justice, conservative, environmental, liberal.
- The values and beliefs which sit within these 'broad category' perspectives. For example, environmentalists frequently value sustainability and believe that human well-being is connected to the health of the environment and that humans have a responsibility to take actions that benefit the environment and future generations.
- Viewpoints held by individuals or groups who align with the values and beliefs of the 'broad category' perspective. For example, the Green Party are opposed to the reversal of the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration as they believe it is a step backwards in Aotearoa's climate response.
- Responses – the actions taken by the individual/groups whose viewpoint has been described. For example, the Green Party have made a public statement against the reversal of the policy and stated that if elected to government next election cycle, they would reinstate the ban and revoke any permits granted under the current government.

The extent to which students can articulate the relationship between these four elements reflects part of the step-up between Achieved and Merit.

Additionally, to achieve the standard, when students are describing the responses taken by individuals or groups in relation to the contemporary social actions, this should include a discussion of the actions (or inaction) taken. For this standard, the term 'responses' is different to 'viewpoint' and should be addressed separately to ensure both criteria can be satisfied. Depending on the selected context, there may be occasions where the response by an individual is to share their viewpoint publicly through various media outlets in the hope of influencing others. In this instance, it is still required that the sharing of the viewpoint is treated separately from the viewpoint itself.

Insights

91597: Conduct a critical social inquiry

Performance overview:

The standard requires students to undertake a critical inquiry. This involves developing focus questions and reporting their findings. This would include people's points of view, values and perspectives underpinning both their participation and/or action in society and relating to the focus of the student's inquiry. Students are also required to evaluate their findings and their research process.

Students were successful in meeting the expectations of the standard when different perspectives and ideologies were clearly integrated into the focus question(s). This helped to ensure that their report on findings clearly included a description of people's points of view, values and perspectives that underpinned their participation and/or action in society as required for Achieved. Doing so helped provide appropriate scaffolding towards meeting the Merit and Excellence criteria.

Inquiry focus – Housing affordability

Inquiry questions:

- How has the libertarian perspective of the ACT party influenced their proposed solutions and policies to housing affordability in New Zealand?
- How has a social justice perspective of the Green party influenced their proposed solutions and policies to housing affordability in New Zealand?

This further helped to reduce the volume of evidence, as students were only reporting on findings that directly supported them to meet the standard criteria.

Practices that need strengthening:

To achieve the standard, the description of people's points of view, values and perspectives that underpin their participation and/or action in society must clearly include all four aspects outlined in the criteria.

For the purposes of all Social Studies standards, the terms 'points of view' and 'perspectives' have different meanings and must be addressed separately. Points of view are what people think about something (their opinion or attitude towards an issue, action or event), whereas perspectives are often the ideologies or 'big umbrellas' under which they think a particular way about something – e.g. conservative, feminist, te āo Māori, nationalist.

It is expected that at Level 3 students will be able to distinguish between points of view, values and perspectives and explain the connection between them and how they influence the actions taken by different individuals or groups.

Further support on an approach to scaffolding students to ensure they cover all three aspects can be found in the points of view, values and perspectives clarification document, and in the short online course 'Points of View' available on Pūtake.

For Merit, students are required to explain and compare and contrast points of view, values and perspectives. To successfully meet these criteria, the comparison of the viewpoints must be explicit and go beyond merely presenting two contrasting viewpoints on an issue. This is successfully achieved when students are supported through task design to dedicate a separate section of their response towards a comparison. For example, after articulating the different perspectives, values and viewpoints of Zelensky and Putin towards the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a student would explicitly compare the two viewpoints and may identify that while Zelensky's and Putin's views towards the Russian invasion are shaped by a nationalist perspective/ideology, the response of Zelensky and the Ukrainian people has also been strongly shaped by a perspective/ideology of patriotism.

Insights

91599: Examine personal involvement in a social action(s) that aims to influence policy change(s)

Performance overview:

The standard requires students to carry out and report on personal involvement in social action that aims to influence policy. To achieve the standard, the student must develop a plan for social action which is justified by considering the points of view, values and perspectives of themselves and others. Students are required to provide evidence of their own participation in the planning and carrying out of the social action. To achieve at higher levels, students need to evaluate their actions by considering strengths, weaknesses, and the effectiveness of their actions, as well as considering real and potential consequences of their actions.

Students were successful if they selected an issue and policy that they had real potential to tangibly influence. While often these were national/global issues, the policy students were aiming to influence would frequently be centred at a regional or local level. Focusing on regional/local policy was successful by enabling students to be highly specific and considered in their planning of the social action, and their selection and justification of the issue would frequently involve them having to find out the points of view, values and perspectives through talking to people in their community who were genuinely affected by the issue and/or policy. Therefore, a clearer link was made between the issues and policy, the viewpoints of self and others, and the selection of appropriate social actions.

Some successful examples included the following:

- Addressing road safety issues around school pick up times near a local primary school.
- Introduction of civics education within the school's Yr 13 careers programme.
- Safe staffing numbers at local health services.

Practices that need strengthening:

Ensuring that the social action is targeted at a specific policy will help ensure that students have the appropriate scope to meet the requirements of this standard. The social action should have an explicit and clearly identifiable policy focus, as opposed to being aimed at a broad social issue.

A policy is a rule, a law, a strategy, a procedure or a plan. The selected policy may be international, national, regional or local (i.e. school/sports club, etc).

For example, if a student is passionate about changing the minimum wage to a living wage, suitable policies that would meet the standard could be influencing the government to increase the minimum wage to a living wage or lobbying a local business to adopt a living wage policy. The planning and carrying out of the social action should reflect an understanding of the type of policy they are aiming to influence.

As such, while raising awareness for an issue may be part of the student plan to influence a policy, it should not form the entirety of a social action. At curriculum level 8 it is expected that students select social actions that reflect a more sophisticated understanding of how to influence policy. If raising awareness is part of the overall social action campaign, students should be able to articulate how increased awareness will support their ability to influence their selected policy. For example, the student may explain how a social media account highlighting the importance of a living wage could address a lack of awareness that people have around the issue, and therefore help gain support for the petition that they would like to present to some local business owners.

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 for more information or to lodge a request for support.

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