



**Guidelines for listing assessment standards
on the Directory of Assessment and Skill
Standards**

NZQA

Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority



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Introduction

This document supports Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs) to list assessment standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards (DASS).

To list an assessment standard on the DASS an application must meet the requirements of the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022.

[Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022](#)

These guidelines outline NZQA's expectations for the content of an assessment standard and explain the application process.

This guide is for developers of assessment standards (achievement and unit standards).

A separate guide is available for skill standards (see below).

Changes made since October 2016

This document replaces the assessment standard section in the *Guidelines for listing assessment standards and consent and moderation requirements on the Directory of Assessment Standards*.

It has also been updated to take account of the introduction of skill standards.

Related Rules and Guidelines

Skill standards:

In January 2023 the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022 were updated to include skills standards. Interim guidelines were published in May 2023.

[Interim guidelines for approval and listing of skill standards](#)

Consent to assess:

Education organisations require consent to assess in order to assess learners against standards on the DASS and report their achievement to NZQA.

[Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022](#)

Standards on the DASS

Standards-based assessment is about recognising learner achievement. A standard describes what a learner who has achieved the standard knows and can do. Standards are used to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities against quality assured criteria.

All standards have a unique ID and are assigned a level, credits, and a classification.

There are three types of standards:

- skill standards
- unit standards
- achievement standards.

Skill standards:

Skill standards are the newest type on the DASS. Progressively, skill standards will replace unit standards. Skill standards might be set out in a qualification or listed in a micro-credential; a common building block to support portability of learning and consistency of outcomes.

All standards can be found on the DASS page of the NZQA website.

[Search standards](#)

Assessment standards: achievement and unit standards

Assessment standards specify the knowledge, skills, and attributes (the outcomes) and the performance criteria (level and sufficiency of the assessment evidence) required to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes.

Assessment standards may be used to inform the design of assessment practice in education and training but do not specify programme content, modes of delivery and assessment activity.

Assessment standards are used in a range of education and training including the National Certificates in Educational Achievement (NCEAs), micro-credentials, and programmes leading to New Zealand Certificates Levels 1-6 and New Zealand Diplomas Levels 5-7 on the NZQCF.

Like skill standards, unit standards are developed by SSBs for use across the secondary and tertiary sectors.

Achievement standards are developed by the Ministry of Education primarily for use by secondary schools and kura.

Any education organisation with a relevant consent to assess may use assessment standards. For more information on consent to assess:

[Guidelines for applying for consent to assess standards listed on the DASS](#)

Quality Assurance

NZQA quality assures applications for approval of assessment standards developed by SSBs.

SSBs lead the collaborative development of assessment standards for their industries/sectors. Only SSBs can apply to NZQA to list standards.

Currently the SSBs are:

- Workforce Development Councils

- Ngā Poutoko Aromatawai Māori (NZQA Māori Qualifications Services (MQS) and NZQA National Qualifications Services (NQS))
- The Ministry of Education.

Workforce development councils with gazetted coverage as defined in section 10(1) of the Act have responsibility for setting standards for a specific industry or area of industry identified by Orders in Council (OIC).

[Establishment of WDCs](#)

NZQA Māori Qualifications Services (MQS) and NZQA National Qualifications Services (NQS) are responsible for standards based on Mātauranga Māori, and generic standards in areas not covered by a WDC.

[NZQA as a standard setting body](#)

The Ministry of Education is the SSB for achievement standards related to the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

[Changes to the New Zealand curriculum](#)

Evaluation

NZQA's decision to list is based on the quality and sufficiency of evidence provided. Key evaluation questions enable consistent and reliable decisions (see [Listing approval](#).)

In the evaluation process, NZQA will be clear about the information and evidence on which decisions have been made. An evaluation outcome of approved, not approved, or request for information (RFI) will be provided to the SSB, based on the overall quality of the application.

The application process is detailed in [Error! Reference source not found.](#)

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi is a whare ako framework and methodology NZQA uses for quality assurance in the non-university sector.

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi is the framework used for the Mātauranga Māori quality assurance approach for developing and listing standards that are distinctively based on ngā kaupapa Māori principles.

See Appendix Te [Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance](#)

More information:

[Te Hono o Te Kahurangi - Quality assurance Māori](#)

[Guidelines for Te Hono o Te Kahurangi evaluative quality assurance \[PDF, 1.5 MB\]](#)

Te reo Māori

An individual assessment standard can be listed in both English and te reo Māori. In this situation both versions will be considered as the one standard and allocated a single, common identifier.

Assessment standards containing Māori content, and all standards listed and consistent with the principles within field Māori, can be identified with a matau. The matau indicates the standard clearly contributes to:

- Māori well-being
- Māori educational performance
- the recognition of Māori skills and knowledge.

Examples of matau domains:

	Mau Rākau
	Ngā Mahi ā te Rēhia
	Ngā Mahi a te Whare Pora
	Reo Māori

Listing approval

NZQA evaluates the assessment standards against the criteria in Rules 4 and 8 of the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022 and considers the application using the following evaluation question:

How well does the assessment standard meet the requirements for listing on the Directory of Assessment Standards?

To be approved, all of the following must apply:

- The purpose of the standard matches the needs of stakeholders.
- The outcomes and performance criteria in the standard reflect the needs of stakeholders.
- The standard can be readily understood and enables multiple assessors to consistently assess the outcomes to the required performance level.
- The standard adequately meets the technical listing requirements.

If any of the above are not evident the standard will not be approved.

Details to be listed

The details for all assessment and skill standards listed on the Directory are:

- a. a title that reflects the outcomes of the standard:
- b. a classification, credit value and level (consistent with the level descriptors):
- c. a purpose statement:
- d. the outcomes and criteria to be achieved (including learning outcomes for skill standards):
- e. grades that can be awarded on achievement of the standard:
- f. learner prerequisites:
- g. guidance information directly relevant to the assessment or performance of the standard:
- h. the name and contact details of the standard-setting body:
- i. the intended period for ongoing review, being no longer than 5 years from listing:
- j. the referenced consent and moderation requirements:
- k. a status assigned to each standard in accordance with rule 5.

Standards will not be listed at levels 7 to 10 for qualifications that are degrees or post-graduate qualifications.

Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022 Rule 4

Title

A title that reflects the outcomes of the standard

The title of the standard describes a meaningful outcome attributable to an individual and reflects the outcomes within it. Titles do not normally include

options.

Names of trademarked products, training and assessment material, tertiary education organisations, or commercial organisations must not be used as part of the title.

Titles must not be more than 120 characters in length including punctuation and spacing.

Classification

A classification, credit value and level (consistent with the level descriptors)

Assessment standards must be classified in a domain listed on the [Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards \(DASS\)](#). The classification system for the DASS comprises three tiers: fields, subfields, and domains. The content of an assessment standard must be consistent with the domain in which it is classified.

Levels

The assessment standards must be assigned one of the levels of the NZQCF. The level assigned to the standard must provide a best match between the level descriptors and the outcomes and performance criteria or achievement criteria of the standard.

[Level descriptors for the NZQCF](#)

Credits

A standard must be assigned a credit value that reflects the notional learning time it is expected to take the learner to meet the outcomes of the standard.

One credit represents a notional 10 hours of learning, practice, and assessment time. This includes time taken to gather the evidence for assessment purposes. Credits allocated must be consistent with assessment standards of comparable outcomes and similar contexts.

Purpose

A purpose statement

The purpose statement describes why this standard is needed i.e., the use and relevance of the standard to learners, employers, and communities in a context. This may be done by restating or paraphrasing the outcomes.

Outcomes may be applicable or relevant to more than one industry, community, or sector. The SSB can use the purpose statement to clearly outline the context/s in which the standard may be used. This is to encourage use by more than one SSB, avoiding duplication in the development and design of standards assessing the same knowledge and skills but only in different contexts.

Outcomes

The outcomes to be achieved

The outcomes clearly identify the specific knowledge, skills, and attributes or abilities a learner has demonstrated, and the context within which these have been assessed.

The outcomes:

- describe performance that can be demonstrated
- can be assessed against specific fit-for-purpose criteria
- are consistent with the title, level and purpose of the standard
- are clear, specific, coherent, achievable and measurable
- must not be optional

If there is only one outcome, it should be the same as the title of the assessment standard.

Performance criteria

The criteria to be achieved

Performance criteria show what is needed to demonstrate the outcomes have been achieved, i.e., they specify the quality of the critical evidence required to meet the outcomes. These performance criteria must be clearly described and:

- must be expressions of evidence that relate to each outcome to be achieved
- collectively indicate the level or quality of performance required
- provide sufficient detail for valid and consistent assessments to be made.

It is important that the performance criteria do not include assessment tasks, model answers or instructions to assessors about the way to conduct assessment. Performance criteria must not introduce new aspects of performance that are not already implied by the outcome.

Performance criteria should be written in clear, consistent language, using plain language and/or terminology specific to the industry. Consistent performance criteria structure will ensure consistent interpretation by all users. Performance criteria should avoid passive restatement of the outcome.

Performance criteria set out the standard for the active part of the outcome. For example, if the outcome states *mix and match inks*, the criterion must relate to how selection, mixing, and matching are performed; and the quality measure relating to the selecting, mixing, or matching.

Examples

Performance criteria may be written in the format *Noun + verb + qualitative statement* as shown in the following example.

<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Describe approaches for dealing with unwanted stress.</p> <p>Performance criteria</p> <p>1.1 Unwanted stress is defined.</p> <p>1.2 Physiological approaches for reducing unwanted stress are identified and explained in terms of their use.</p> <p>1.3 Psychological approaches for reducing unwanted stress are identified and explained in terms of their use.</p>
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Performance criteria may also be written as *Verb + noun* as shown in the following example.

<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Identify a major item or service for purchase.</p> <p>Performance criteria</p> <p>1.1 Identify features needed and desired in the major item or service.</p> <p>1.2 Identify factors influencing the purchase decision. These may include but are not limited to value for money, affordability, suitability.</p> <p>1.3 Justify the decision to purchase the major item or service based on the identified features and factors.</p>

Range statements

Range statements may be included to provide a common frame of reference to ensure that all candidates are assessed against the same set of applications and to clarify assessment conditions. They do not have a specific place in the assessment standard as this will depend on what part of the standard the range applies to. They can be used to:

- specify critical contexts
- specify critical knowledge
- specify evidence to be used in the context of assessment
- define and/or clarify the boundaries of the assessment standard, outcome or performance criteria
- provide clarification through the use of examples.

Range statements can apply to:

- all outcomes in the unit standard, written in the guidance information section
- individual outcomes, written immediately below the relevant outcome, or incorporated into the outcome text

- an individual performance criterion written immediately below the criterion or incorporated into the criterion text.

Range statements must clearly distinguish the items which need to be considered. If there is more than one category or focus use a stem to indicate what the range refers to.

Guidance information

Guidance information directly relevant to the assessment or performance of the standard

It is optional to include guidance information in a standard. When included it is used to ensure the assessment or skill standard can be interpreted in a consistent way, and to increase the likelihood of consistent assessment judgement.

Guidance information may be used to indicate any special assessment requirements or conditions, and can also include references and legislation, and relevant definitions.

References and legislation

The standard may provide a clear and accurate reference to specific publications, Acts, codes, regulations and other materials cited in the standard which are directly relevant to the outcomes. Where Acts, codes or regulations are included, the short title (formal name and date of enactment) must be shown.

References to publications should use a recognised convention and include the author, *title*, publisher and date of publication, as minimum information, and must be accessible (in the public domain) to learners, assessors and providers.

Definitions

Definitions or translations of terms must be included where the term is being used outside of normal usage or where definitions assist in clarifying the assessment standard.

Grades

Assessment standards may be awarded with the following grades in English or Māori:

- achieved / paetae
- merit / kaiaka
- excellence / kairangi.

Māori grades may be awarded where the standard is listed in field Māori or te reo.

All assessment standards have a minimum grade of achieved where the learner must meet the performance criteria for each of the outcomes specified in the standard.

Merit and excellence grades will be specified where there is a clear reason to recognise higher performance levels of the same outcomes.

The criteria for award of a grade must clearly describe the performance expected for each grade and ensure that performance at a higher grade includes the evidence of performance at lower grades. For example, they may refer to the:

- quality of performance at the appropriate level
- effectiveness of the ways to achieve the same performance level
- depth of understanding of concepts.

Pre-requisites

Prerequisites:

- may be included to provide guidance to providers and learners about underpinning knowledge and skills that are critical to health and safety, or legislated requirements
- refer to entry to assessment and not entry to a programme
- will normally be at the same or a lower level than the standards for which they are pre-requisites
- are mandatory or recommended.

Mandatory pre-requisite standards typically relate to health, safety, and legislative requirements.

Recommended standards typically do not relate to health, safety, legislative requirements, only to skills and knowledge that will support the learner.

Recommended standards can be listed in the Guidance Information section.

Review period

The intended period for ongoing review, being no longer than five years from listing.

Assessment standards are normally registered for a period of five years, although factors such as the extent and type of industry change, legislative requirements, and moderation feedback will also drive how often reviews take place.

Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR)

The CMR must be specified for each standard.

The SSB's responsibilities in relation to the CMR are to:

- undertake national external moderation in accordance with the moderation requirements
- keep the consent and moderation requirements current and review them within their review period.

Status

Current (Registered)

When first listed, a standard is assigned a status of *current*. Standards with current status can be used for assessment of learners by education organisations

in accordance with the Education and Training Act 2020.

Expiring

Standards with expiring status are those which are being:

- replaced with a new standard
- discontinued (normally as a result of a review or due to lack of use of the standard for an extended period of time).

A last assessment date will be applied to each expiring standard. Once the assessment standard reaches its last assessment date it will have a discontinued status.

Learners may be assessed against standards with expiring status only if the assessment is complete before the last date for assessment.

Discontinued (Expired)

Standards with discontinued status may no longer be used for assessment of learners, and organisations can no longer award credits for the standard. Credit for standards achieved before the last date for assessment can continue to be reported up to three months after this date.

How to Apply

Applications to list standards on the Directory may be made by standard-setting bodies, and must contain:

- a. the details listed in rule 4.1: (see Details to be listed)
- b. evidence that the standard is acceptable to the relevant sector (this may include the education sector) or industry and to providers that will be using them in study or training;
- c. an explanation of the intended use of the standard.

A standard will not be listed on the Directory if it:

- a. unnecessarily duplicates a standard that is listed, except where that listed standard is being replaced; or
- b. creates unreasonable restrictions on the mode of assessment; or
- c. creates unreasonable barriers to access in terms of gender, ethnicity, or cultural background.

Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022 Rule 8

Applications to list assessment standards must include evidence of how the standards match the needs of key stakeholders.

This can be in the form of a summary statement from the SSB that justifies the relevance of the standard and its expected use, and includes an outline of consultation and endorsement from key stakeholders.

The process and templates for submitting applications to NZQA, including the

checklist outlining the technical requirements for the evaluation of standards, can be found on here:

[Listing standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards](#)

Australian units of competency

A cover sheet for Australian units of competency may be listed on the DASS where the details for listing are available and the standard does not duplicate an existing standard listed on the DASS.

The application must reference the relevant arrangements agreed between the applicant SSB and the appropriate Australian body.

Reviewed standards

All standards must be periodically reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. A review involves wide stakeholder consultation.

Before the review, request a review support package.

The review support package contains the following reports and documents:

- Report R0072 Subfields/domains of the standards to be reviewed
- Word copies of the standards to be reviewed
- Report R0096 Usage of the standards to be reviewed
- Report R0277 Organisations with consent to assess
- Report R0170 Provider Impact Report
- a Blank Change Report,

[Request a review support package](#)

Review outcomes

There are three outcomes for review:

Minimal or No change

No change was made to the content or classification of the unit standard, or some minor changes were made. The outcomes and required evidence are substantially unchanged, and the standard setting body is confident that people credited with the new or old version are comparable in terms of competence.

The unit standard (Category B) is published as a new version and displays new status, published and planned review dates.

Significant changes

Significant changes were made to the unit standard that materially changed the outcomes being recognised. The standard setting body views people with credit for the new and old version as being different in terms of competence.

A new ID number is assigned to the replacement unit standard. The replacement unit standard includes a reference to the title and ID of the replaced unit standard

under 'Replacement information'. An expiry date for the replaced unit standard (Category C) must be specified in the change report.

Expire and not be replaced

The unit standard will expire and will not be replaced. The expiry date of unit standards must be specified in the review summary report.

If the status of a standard following a review is changed to expiring (Category D), the expiry date must take into account the extent of use of the standard and allow sufficient time for providers with consent to assess to update their delivery.

Providers may need to:

- review and update programmes or micro-credentials that include the standard
- update impacted products, and develop new or revised assessment materials
- put in place arrangements for learners to complete replaced programmes or micro-credentials.

Change report

Following a review of standard(s) the SSB completes a Change Report using the template below to explain the process and outcome of the review, including:

- the rationale for the review
- an outline of who has been consulted, how and when
- the changes made as a result of the review
- any impact on providers with consent to assess
- information about transition to the new versions of the standards
- any change of CMR.

[Change Report Template](#)

Changes in between reviews

- Rollover
- Revision
- Reinstatement
- Republication

Rollover

When a standard reaches its planned review date and there is insufficient information to inform a review, it may be rolled over for a period of time, consistent with the SSB's review schedule.

The standard is checked to ensure that all references, including legislation and prerequisites, are current. If standards require amendments before a full review, as well as an extension of their period of registration, the process is called 'revision and rollover'.

A rolled-over standard, or a standard that has been revised and rolled-over is

issued as a new version, and its planned review date is changed. The content and the unit standard ID remain the same. A last date of assessment for the superseded version is not required.

Revision

A standard may be revised to take account of new factors or omissions; changes to legislation; updating references to other unit standards; or assessment issues. Depending on the changes, consultation with stakeholders may be required. A revision is an interim measure to fix or correct things that can't wait until a full review.

A revised standard is issued as a new version. The unit standard ID and planned review date remain the same. A last date of assessment for the superseded version is not required.

Reinstatement

Reinstatement of standards should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. When standards are reviewed and designated expiring, this is usually because there is no need for the standard and/or the standard is considered not fit for purpose.

There are two types of reinstatements: the first is where the standard will be reinstated as **registered**; the second is where the standard will be reinstated temporarily but will still **expire**.

SSBs should consider before requesting a reinstatement whether the standard is a compulsory requirement of a qualification or whether there is a replacement (or similar) standard that could be used as part of an exemption.

Republication

The republication of standard(s) is not an official application type and the republication of standards should only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

The main reason for approving the republication of standards is where a version, or something in the version of a standard that has been published is incorrect.

Republications are only appropriate for the correction of errors where standards have been very recently published; this is because the standard is less likely to have been used, viewed, or downloaded by external users.

Summary

Process	Purpose
Review	<p>Standard has undergone review with full consultation. Changes may or may not be required.</p> <p>Standards are either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed (Category B),

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replaced (Category C) or expired (Category D).
Revision	Standard requires some changes between reviews. Full consultation not required.
Rollover	Maintain currency until a review can take place.
Reinstatement	Make standard available again (sometimes temporarily) after it has already expired.
Republication	Document is swapped to correct minor error(s).

Appendix Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance

This table outlines definitions and translations of ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi.

Ngā Kaupapa	Whakamāramatanga	
The Principles	Definitions	Active translation
Rangatiratanga	Ka hua te rangatiratanga mā te whakatinana i tā te Māori titiro ki te ao i te wā e uruparetia ana ngā tūmanako me ngā whakahihiritanga o te ākongā, o te whānau, o te hapū, o te iwi, o te hapori Māori, o te hapori whānui.	Autonomy realised through the enactment of a Māori world-view in response to the aspirations and driving motivators of ākongā, whānau, hapū, and where relevant, the Māori community and sector stakeholders.
Whanaungatanga	Ka tuia, ka kumanutia hoki ngā whanaungatanga kia mau tonu ai ngā hononga i runga i te kauanuanu, i te pono me te māramatanga, hei painga mō te katoa.	Connecting, fostering, and maintaining relationships based on respect, integrity and understanding for the benefit of all.
Manaakitanga	Te whakaatu i te hāpaitanga o te mana mā roto i ngā whanonga me ngā mahi manaaki i te ākongā, i te whānau, i te hapū, i te iwi, i te hapori hoki.	Manaakitanga realised by mana enhancing behaviour and practises for the care of ākongā, whānau, hapū, iwi, and community.
Pūkengatanga	E whakahua ana i te mātauranga me ngā pūkenga e mau tonu ai ngā mātāpono, ngā whakaponu, ngā hiahia matua me ngā tūmanako o te iwi.	Represents the knowledge and skills to ensure the principles, beliefs, needs and aspirations of the people are sustained.
Kaitiakitanga	Te rokirokitanga, te kaitiakitanga, te hāpaitanga hoki o te ao me ōna taonga hei painga mō te katoa.	Preservation, guardianship and enhancement of the world and its treasures for the benefit of all.
Te Reo Māori	E ora ana, e momoho ana, e matomato ana hoki te tipu o te kākano o te reo Māori.	The Māori language is alive, vibrant, and flourishing.