



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
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## Guidelines for listing assessment standards and consent and moderation requirements on the Directory of Assessment Standards

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**NZQA**  
**125 The Terrace**  
**PO Box 160**  
**Wellington 6140**

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# 1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on the quality assurance of assessment standards and consent and moderation requirements (CMR) before they are listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards (DAS).

In order for an assessment standard to be listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards, it must meet the relevant Directory of Assessment Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2021 available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/standards-and-assessment-rules/das-listing/>

## 2. Directory of Assessment Standards

The Directory of Assessment Standards lists all quality assured assessment standards, (including both unit and achievement standards), classified by fields, subfields and domains. It also references the equivalent Australian standards with a cover sheet.

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. They are used to inform the design of assessment practice in education and training but do not specify programme content, modes of delivery and assessment activity. Any education organisation with a relevant consent to assess may use assessment standards.

Assessment standards are developed and listed by standard setting bodies including:

- Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) having responsibility for setting standards for a specific industry or area of industry identified by Orders in Council (OiC)
- the Ministry of Education, as the standard setting body for all achievement standards
- the NZQA business unit responsible for standards based on Mātauranga Māori, and generic standards in areas not covered by an industry training organisation.

### 2.1 Standard setting body responsibilities relating to standards

Standard setting bodies have three key responsibilities in relation to the standards they develop and maintain. These are to:

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

Workforce Development Councils have additional responsibilities, they must:

- report annually to NZQA on the performance of the national external moderation system, in accordance with guidelines specified by NZQA each year
- report to NZQA the performance of participating education organisations, including where an organisation does not appropriately engage in national external moderation.

### Restrictions on assessment of standards

Standard setting bodies may not normally impose restrictions on assessment practices. There may be exceptional circumstances related to legislation or regulatory body requirements that restrict the conditions under which assessment of specified standards can take place.

## 3. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

NZQA is responsible for protecting the integrity of New Zealand qualifications listed on the NZQF and therefore assuring the quality of programmes, standards and education organisations to provide them.

Assessment standards are used to inform the design of assessment practice within a range of education and training including the National Certificates in Educational Achievement (NCEAs), training schemes, programmes leading to qualifications at Levels 1 to 6 and diplomas at Level 7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

The NZQF is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and its contribution to New Zealand's economic, social and cultural success.

The NZQF will list qualifications that:

- convey the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate has gained through completing a qualification
- are integrated and coherent
- enable and support the provision of high-quality education pathways
- enhance confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications
- contribute to Māori success in education by recognising and advancing Mātauranga Māori
- represent value for money, are sustainable and robust.

## 4. Quality Assurance

NZQA's quality assurance integrates 'front-end' quality assurance with the ongoing self-assessment activities an education organisation undertakes to assure itself of the quality of the outcomes it achieves for its learners and stakeholders. These quality assurance activities include approving and listing assessment standards, and consent and moderation requirements.

Quality assurance uses an evaluative approach to reach judgements on a transparent, robust and credible basis, underpinned by the following principles:

- strategic and needs based
- focused on outcomes
- quality as a dynamic concept – including ongoing improvement
- flexibility
- high trust and accountability.

### 4.1 Te Hono o Te Kahurangi

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 kaupapa Māori principles.

The following kaupapa are used for quality assurance using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi:

- Rangatiratanga
- Manaakitanga
- Whanaungatanga

- Kaitiakitanga
- Pukengatanga
- Te Reo Māori.

## 5. Evaluative approach

The decision to approve a standard or a consent and moderation requirements (CMR) is based on the quality and sufficiency of information, and evidence in the application in relation to the relevant outcomes, their performance criteria and to meet technical listing requirements of the standard.

Using an evaluative methodology enables decisions about quality, value and importance of assessment standards and CMRs to be reached on a consistent and reliable basis, and requires NZQA to:

- be explicit about the information and evidence on which judgements are made, as well as the logic of their interpretation
- write the decision clearly and concisely explaining the reasons for the final decision.

The decision to approve a standard or CMR is made by answering the relevant evaluation questions.

NZQA reviews the information and evidence provided in the application, and reaches the decision about whether or not to approve the standard or CMR.

The performance criteria for answering the evaluation questions are incorporated into the rubrics below. The rubrics set out the expected levels of performance and sufficiency of evidence in relation to the evaluation questions.

The technical requirements are set out in section 6 *Listing Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards*.

‘Good evidence’ is defined as evidence that is:

- relevant to answering the evaluation question and makes sense in the context of the question
- normally obtained from more than one source (i.e. is corroborated or triangulated) and is of more than type (e.g. quantitative and qualitative data).

### 5.1 Approving assessment standards

The decision to approve standards is made by using Rubric I to answer the evaluation question:

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

The decision to approve standards is made by using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi rubric to answer the evaluation question:

*Ka pēhea e hāngai ana ngā paetae aromatawai ki ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi?*

**Rubric 1: Performance criteria for rating answers to the evaluation question to list an assessment standard**

	Performance criteria
Approved	<p><b>ALL</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the standard matches the needs of stakeholders.</li> <li>• The outcomes and performance criteria in the standard reflect the needs of stakeholders.</li> <li>• The standard can be readily understood and enables multiple assessors to consistently assess the outcomes to the required performance level.</li> <li>• The standard adequately meets the technical listing requirements.</li> </ul>
Not approved	<p><b>ANY</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the standard does not convincingly demonstrate it matches the needs of stakeholders.</li> <li>• The outcomes and performance criteria in the standard do not match the needs of stakeholders.</li> <li>• The outcomes and performance criteria in the standard are not clear and able to be assessed.</li> <li>• The standard does not adequately meet the minimum technical listing requirements.</li> </ul>

**5.2 Approving consent and moderation requirements**

The decision to approve the consent and moderation requirements is made by using Rubric 2 to answer the evaluation question:

*How well do the consent and moderation requirements meet the requirements for listing on the Directory of Assessment Standards?*

The decision to approve consent and moderation requirements is made using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi rubric to answer the evaluation question:

*Kua ea katoa ngā herenga o ngā paerewa*

**Rubric 2: Performance criteria for answering the evaluation question to approve consent and moderation requirements**

	Performance criteria
Approved	<p><b>ALL</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The industry or sector-specific requirements are relevant, necessary and appropriate.</li> <li>• The national external moderation requirements are relevant and appropriate.</li> <li>• The consent and moderation requirements meet the listing requirements.</li> </ul>

Not approved

**ANY** of the following:

- The industry or sector-specific requirements are not relevant, necessary and appropriate.
- The national external moderation requirements are not relevant and appropriate.
- There are significant gaps or weaknesses in the consent and moderation requirements.

## 6. Approval and listing standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards

In order for an assessment standard to be listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards, it must meet the relevant *Directory of Assessment Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2021*.<sup>1</sup>

The following is essential guidance on how to meet the requirements for listing assessment standards on the Directory.

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

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

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

The process and templates for submitting applications to NZQA can be found on the NZQA website.

### 6.1 Assessment standards details to be listed on the Directory

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

- a title that reflects the outcomes of the standard
- a classification, credit value and level (consistent with the level descriptors)
- a purpose statement
- the outcomes and performance criteria to be achieved
- grades that can be awarded on achievement of the standard
- pre-requisites (if any)
- guidance information directly relevant to the assessment or performance of the standard, where this is necessary
- the name and contact details of the standard-setting body

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<sup>1</sup> The Rules are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/standards-and-assessment-rules/das-listing/>



- planned review period, no longer than five years from listing
- the referenced consent and moderation requirements
- a status assigned to each standard (*current, expiring or discontinued*).

### **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.

### **Australian units of competency**

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

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

### **Changes to assessment standards**

Each assessment standard is listed with a review period of a maximum of five years. Changes are normally made to assessment standards as a result of a review.

## **6.2 Information for applicants**

Applications for 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 standard setting body that justifies the relevance of the standard and its expected use, and includes an outline of consultation and endorsement from key stakeholders.

### **Title**

The title of the standard reflects the outcomes.

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

### **Classification**

Assessment standards must be classified in a domain listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards. 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 NZQF. 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.

Refer to *The New Zealand Qualifications Framework* available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Studying-in-NZ/New-Zealand-Qualification-Framework/requirements-nzqf.pdf>

## **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.

The credits allocated to the standard can vary depending on the level and complexity of the outcomes.

## **Pre-requisites**

Pre-requisites will normally be at the same or a lower level than the standards for which they are pre-requisites. They typically relate to health, safety, legislative requirements, and skills and knowledge.

## **Purpose**

The purpose statement succinctly describes why this standard is needed. In particular the use and relevance of the standard to learners, employers and communities in a context.

In many instances, the outcomes may be used in similar ways across more than one industry, community or sector. The standard must differentiate clearly between the outcomes the standard recognises and the context in which these may be used in order to encourage use by more than one standard setting body.

## **Outcomes**

The outcomes explain clearly to learners, whānau, employers, education organisations and others the specific knowledge, skills, and attributes a learner has demonstrated, and the context within which these have been assessed. Standards should reflect useful outcomes recognising the overall development and acquisition of skills and knowledge in the field.

The outcomes:

- describe performance that can be demonstrated
- can be assessed against specific fit-for-purpose criteria
- relate to the title, level and purpose of the standard
- are clear, specific, coherent, achievable and measurable.

Where a standard will be used in a programme leading to a New Zealand qualification, it is unlikely that a single assessment standard would be sufficient to recognise a graduate profile outcome.

## **Performance criteria**

The performance criteria show what is needed to demonstrate the outcomes have been achieved. These performance criteria must be clearly described and:

- relate to each outcome to be achieved
- indicate the standard 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.

## Examples

### Outcome 1

Maintain natural gas filtration equipment.

#### Performance criteria

1.1 Intended work activities are clearly communicated to the appropriate personnel before work begins.

Range may include – customer, control operator, area technician.

1.2 Filter system is isolated from service without disrupting the gas supply in accordance with workplace procedures.

1.3 Filter elements are inspected and replaced in accordance with workplace procedures

Range includes – differential pressure, valve position.

### Outcome 1

Trim meat products in a meat processing operation under close supervision.

#### Performance criteria

1.1 Use personal protective equipment (PPE) while trimming meat products. PPE includes gloves, footwear, safety glasses.

1.2 Use trimming equipment provided safely and effectively in accordance with workplace procedures.

1.3 Trim meat products and deposit in designated place. This must include the trimming of three meat products.

1.4 Clean and store trimming equipment after use in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and workplace procedures.

## 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.

## Status of assessment standards

### *Current (Registered)*

A standard when first listed 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).

An expiry date will be applied to each expiring standard. Once the assessment standard reaches its expiry 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.

## Guidance information

It is optional to include guidance information in a standard. When it is included it is used to ensure the assessment standard can be interpreted in a consistent way.

The outcomes and performance criteria should be clear enough for assessment of the standard to be undertaken consistently without further explanation.

Guidance information can 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 standard outcomes.

References to publications should use a recognised convention and include the author, title, publisher and date of publication, as minimum information.

### *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.

## Reviewing standards

All assessment standards must be periodically reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Factors such as the extent and type of industry change, legislative requirements, and moderation feedback will drive how often standards are reviewed.

As a result of a review there may be:

- No or no substantial changes to the standard or the outcomes and performance criteria. The standard setting body considers that people credited with either the new or old version of the

standard are comparable in terms of competence. The result is either a category A or B change. Minor changes include:

- correcting wording
  - updating legislation or pre-requisites
  - improving assessability
  - amending classification.
- There is significant change needed to the standard as it is no longer fit for purpose. There are two options:
    - a new standard may be developed to replace the existing one, so the status of the existing standard is changed to expiring and a last date for assessment recorded. The standard setting body considers that people credited with the new and old versions are different in terms of competence. The result is a category C change.
    - the standard is no longer required or being used and the status is changed to discontinued. The result is a Category D change.

If the status of a standard following a review is changed to either expiring or discontinued, the expiry date must take into account the extent of use of the standard and allow sufficient time for:

- qualification developers, programme owners and organisations with consent to assess against the assessment standard to update qualifications and programmes, and develop new or revised assessment materials
- candidates to complete current programmes or transition to new ones.

Following a review of standard(s) the standard setting body completes a Change Report to explain the:

- rationale for the review
- changes made as a result of the review
- impact on organisations with consent to assess
- information about transition to the new versions of unit standards.

## 7. Approval and listing of Consent and Moderation Requirements

Standard setting bodies may specify industry or sector specific requirements for a tertiary education organisation or school seeking consent to assess against standards. They are also responsible for establishing national external moderation requirements. These are described in the listed Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMRs).

Where a standard setting body shares responsibility for a standard, the consent and moderation requirements will need to include the arrangements made in relation to the standards.

The process and templates for submitting applications to NZQA can be found on the NZQA website.

### 7.1 Approval of consent and moderation requirements

Applications by standard setting bodies for approval of consent and moderation requirements must include the following information and evidence.

#### Consent to assess

##### *Industry or sector specific requirements for consent to assess*

Where there are specific requirements, the CMR may specify:

- the particular skills and knowledge of teachers and assessors
- a description of the skills, knowledge and experience of relevant teachers and assessors
- special resources required for assessing against the standards. This includes specialised equipment required for both learning and assessment of specific standards
- learner access to resources
- practical or workplace experience the learner needs to undertake.

##### *Role of standard setting body in an application for consent to assess*

The standard setting body must confirm the process and rationale for the education organisation to demonstrate how it will meet the industry or sector specific requirements.

The standard setting body will review and report on the application from the education organisation seeking consent to assess.

A clear justification is required if the requirements include site approval of the education organisation.

#### *Fees*

A standard setting body may charge fees for its role in assessing the industry or sector-specific requirements for consent to assess applications and/or national external moderation. Any fees must be specified and published on the standard setting body website.

#### National external moderation

National external moderation is undertaken to provide assurance to the standard setting body, learners, employers, communities and others that, regardless of where the learning has been assessed, learners have achieved the assessment standard outcomes to the required performance criteria.

The design of the national external moderation system takes into account the:

- type and nature of evidence gathered in assessment
- risks associated with inappropriate assessment practice and decisions
- cost effectiveness and operational manageability.

All education organisations with consent to assess must participate in the appropriate national external moderation system.

The national external moderation system must:

- ensure assessment practice is fair, valid and consistent
- be appropriate to the nature of the outcomes and assessment evidence collected
- provide confidence that learners have achieved the performance criteria
- provide confidence in the reliability and consistency of assessor judgements about learner performance
- be cost effective
- focus on improving assessment practice
- specify roles and responsibilities within the moderation system
- specify the requirements for collecting assessment samples and moderation activities
- state reporting requirements
- specify the reconsideration and dispute resolution process.

#### *Moderation system*

The moderation system must specify the moderation processes that will be used, including:

- selecting and communicating the standards to be moderated
- whether the standard setting body undertakes pre-assessment moderation
- assessment samples and evidence used for post-assessment moderation
- frequency and conduct of the post-assessment moderation (e.g. on-line, on-site moderation, moderation cluster reviews).

#### *Reporting*

This includes the following:

- feedback to the education organisations on moderation outcomes
- reviewing, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the moderation system
- annual report to NZQA on the performance of the moderation system, including individual education organisations.

#### *Standard setting body fees for moderation*

- The standard setting body may charge a fee for pre-assessment or on-site moderation.
- Fees must be transparent and based on recovering the costs of operating the system.

#### *Non-compliance with the consent and moderation requirements*

The standard setting body specifies the further actions it will undertake if an education organisation does not comply with the requirements of the moderation system. These actions include referring the education organisation to the appropriate quality assurance body for further follow-up or statutory action, and may lead to the withdrawal of consent to assess.

When referring an education organisation to the quality assurance body, the standard setting body will state the reasons for the referral along with any supporting evidence.

#### *Reconsiderations and dispute resolution*

The standard setting body specifies the resolution processes it will use when an education organisation with consent to assess:

- requests a reconsideration of the standard setting body moderation decisions
- seeks to resolve a dispute.

## **8. Rules and legislation for the Directory of Assessment Standards**

NZQA Rules are made under section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020, which gives NZQA the authority to make rules for the quality assurance processes for which it is responsible. Approval and accreditation is required under sections 439 and 441 of the Act.

*Directory of Assessment Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2021* are the NZQA rules covering the listing of standards and consent and moderation requirements. They can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/standards-and-assessment-rules/>



## 9. Glossary

Term	Description
<i>Achievement standard</i>	A coherent set of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria, together with technical and management information that supports delivery and assessment; achievement standards specify three different standards of performance and the method of assessment, which may include national external assessment.
<i>Assessment standard</i>	The collective term for unit standards and achievement standards listed on the NZQA Directory of Assessment Standards.
<i>Education organisation</i>	An education organisation is any of a tertiary education provider (as above), an transitional industry training organisation, or a New Zealand school.
<i>New Zealand certificate or diploma</i>	A qualification that meets the requirements for listing on the NZQF at Levels 1 to 6 and Level 7 diplomas
<i>Programme (approved)</i>	An approved programme is a coherent arrangement of learning or training that is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices, which leads to a qualification listed on the NZQF.
<i>Qualification</i>	Formal certification for a given purpose of the achievement of specified learning outcomes to a given standard.
<i>Quality assurance body</i>	NZQA or New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (also known as Universities New Zealand).
<i>Stakeholders</i>	Individuals, groups, or organisations with an interest (or "stake") in the outcome of a standard or qualification.
<i>Tertiary education provider</i>	All or any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a tertiary education institution</li> <li>• a registered establishment (i.e. private training establishment that has been granted registration by NZQA)</li> <li>• a government training establishment</li> <li>• any other person or body that provides, or proposes to provide, tertiary education and that is funded through non-departmental output classes from Vote Education (e.g. adult and community education providers).</li> </ul>
<i>Transitional industry training organisation</i>	A former industry training organisation having responsibility for arranging the delivery of industry training for a specific industry or area of industry identified in a Tertiary Education Commission gazette notice
<i>Unit standard</i>	A coherent set of outcomes and associated performance criteria, together with technical and management information used to inform assessment. Each standard has a defined credit value, and a level, reflecting the complexity of the skills and knowledge recognised by the standard.
<i>Workforce Development Council</i>	Six Workforce Development Councils are established by Orders in Council (OiC). Each WDC has specific industry coverage, set governance arrangements, standard setting responsibilities and additional functions.