



# **National Qualifications Framework Levels 1–3, 2008**

## **Geography**

### **National Moderator's Report**

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### **General Guidance for Assessors of Achievement and Unit Standards**

The purpose of external moderation is to provide assurance that assessor judgments are at the national standard and are made on the basis of assessment materials that are fair and valid.

All assessment materials are expected to:

- give the learner the opportunity to meet the requirements of the standard
- have an assessment schedule that gives evidence of appropriate learner responses and clear judgments at all levels.

The Ministry of Education contracted subject experts to write assessment resources for achievement standards. These are not pre-moderated. The intention is that they are modified to suit teaching programmes and learner needs. They do not provide “rules” but suggest different ways of assessing to the nationally registered standard.

### **General Overall Comments**

As well as referring to the points in this report about internal assessment in geography, reference should also be made to Clarification of Internally Assessed Standards in Geography which can be found on the NZQA website subject-specific resources Geography page.

There are three features of successful assessment activities:

1. The tasks are presented in clear and unambiguous language and reflect requirements of the achievement criteria and explanatory notes of the standard.
2. The marking schedules contain evidence and exemplar answers that are helpful for informing the marking process.
3. Student work is marked in an accurate and consistent way that reflects the detailed requirements of the standard, and judges the quality/level of the answer presented correctly.

Candidates have more opportunity of showing understanding and answering successfully when tasks are presented in clear, simple language that reflect the requirements of the standard. A full range of answers, from the simple to the complex and sophisticated, are possible when task instructions are clear and easy to follow. Lengthy and complex task instructions often present candidates with challenges that are beyond them. Such instructions can make an activity not fit for the purpose for which it was intended.

Some TKI assessment activities could be a useful reference in providing examples of marking schedules that contain evidence and exemplar answers sufficient in detail for helping inform the marking process, and enabling judgements of the quality of candidate answers to be made in as an objective way as possible.

Assessment activities that work best for candidates are ones that reflect class teaching and learning programmes. There is scope for the development of distinctive school based teaching and learning programmes related to research, contemporary issues and global studies. Original internal assessment activities which mirror and complement these programmes are ones that result in the most successful, as well as interesting, assessments seen in moderation.

There are aspects of assessments worthy of comment that apply across all levels of the geography standards:

1. When tasks are well set (they match requirements of the standard and are easy to follow) teachers usually judge the quality of candidate answers correctly – judgements at the national standard are made. When there are disagreements in this situation, it is as likely the moderator will determine a higher grade as they will determine a lower grade to students. Moderators / teacher grade award disagreement occurs most frequently when tasks have been set that do not allow students to meet requirements of the Achievement Criterion of the standard. In this situation the teacher may have awarded Achieved or better to all candidates based on the tasks set and the matching schedule. The moderator however when judging answers against requirements of the standard, may disagree with all the judgements and results submitted by the teacher. This can result in a 0/8 being recorded for teacher judgements of student performance.
2. Setting ‘single’ tasks relating to each of the Achievement Criterion that provide the opportunity of meeting Achieved, Merit and Excellence standard, gives students the best chance of achieving well. Where a task is set for Achieved, with further discrete tasks set for M and E, students often fail to tackle the higher order tasks and hence are not even attempting answering at Merit and Excellence standard.
3. Presenting tasks at level 1 that promote good habits in students in the way they respond can help generate success when tackling similar standards at higher level. For example using geographic terminology and geographic ideas in answers can be established at level 1 (and help in the gaining of merit and excellence), and these understandings can be used and developed further when answering at levels 2 and 3. Comment 5 below illustrates this approach in relation to spatial patterns.
4. In research, contemporary issue and global studies there are no prescribed topics or contexts listed in the geography syllabus or geography standards. Standards vary in the way they address the geography angle/geographic nature of contexts in their explanatory notes. Careful context selection is essential to ensure there is a clear geography focus. A spatial (place/location/distribution) component ensures the context is geographic. Not all contexts that have effects on people and/or the environment are automatically geographic (eg. terrorism, child labour, the Olympic Games, lake pollution, wind power), it is the spatial dimension and spatial angle that make them so. Moderators want to encourage research and studies that give teachers and students scope and choice. ‘Pure physical geography’ and ‘pure human geography’ studies are both acceptable from the moderation angle providing they are geographic studies. This is where the spatial component ‘test and requirement’ comes into play in determining whether a context for research, a contemporary issue or a global topic is geographic.
5. Pattern analysis and pattern description (spatial patterns) form part of many internal assessments. Students who can recognise and describe patterns using terms like even/uneven, concentrated/dispersed, linear, nucleated and peripheral are using the language of geography and are at an advantage when

answering. The TKI exemplar Geo/1/7-E3 Global Earthquakes and Plate Tectonics has a useful set of simple pattern diagrams on page 8 in its resource section. These could be applied to other topics. Pattern description and pattern language are also covered in ‘Social Science Skills’ Stella Bond (NewHouse publishers) page 17, and ‘My Skills Book The Social Studies geography Tool Kit’ Ruth Naumann (NewHouse publishers) page 62.

6. Students have difficulty showing understanding of processes. The global topic standards have specific process requirements that have to be met within them. Reference to processes may feature in other internally assessed standards and they also form part of teaching and learning related to externally assessed parts of the geography syllabus. The geography syllabus (pages 22-23) defines processes as ‘sequences of related actions which modify or maintain the environment’. The syllabus goes on to state that processes vary in time and space and in magnitude and frequency. In relation to the global topic standards, candidates need to be prepared for providing answers which describe at level 1, and describe and explain at levels 2 and 3, how one or more processes (related to the selected global study) operate. Understanding of the way the process operates, or processes operate, as a sequence with outcomes must be shown by students. A flow diagram is one way of providing this sequence focus. Reference to one process in detail (rather than several covered briefly), would also help ensure candidates have the opportunity of showing how that process operates (the sequence). Providing candidates with specific and clear processes to select from and use in answers would also help them – processes like migration, industrialisation, urbanisation, globalisation and deforestation are appropriate examples to use. Other ‘processes’, for example global warming, development and technology change, need careful treatment to ensure that a sequence can be established within the answer, and that they are not just used and treated as factors as opposed to processes.
7. Interaction is another area where students show weaknesses in the way they answer. Interaction involves things (elements) affecting each other (syllabus page 23). It is the two way idea – how A influences B and how B influences A – for which students need to show an understanding. Interaction frequently comes up in natural environment / natural process studies, and where candidates choose to use ‘interaction’ as a geographic idea within an answer related to the research standard. Not all components of an environment or all processes operating do interact. Careful selection (and prior teaching and learning) on the part of students is required if they are writing about interaction in answers.
8. When assessing standards other than the Geographic Research achievement standards and the Geographic Inquiry unit standards, presentation and use of conventions in visual presentations (maps, graphs, sketches, diagrams etc) should not be used to judge the level of achievement or to distinguish between N, A, M or E standard of work.
9. Combining the assessment of two standards through the one activity or within one context occurs almost exclusively at level 3 and usually involves the research standard being combined with assessment of another standard. Combining assessment in this way is acceptable practice providing all of the Achievement Criterion of both standards are addressed by students in the work

they present. Two points are worth making from student work sighted when moderating:

- i. students have greater success when they present work associated with each standard separately rather than in one combined package
- ii. combining assessment of standard 90703 with any other standard needs very careful context selection and task planning for it to be successful. The combining of the assessment of the level 3 research and contemporary issues standards (90705 and 90706) seems to be a combination that works.

10. The current registered version of the level 1 standards is version 3. This latest version has ‘Description’ as the focus in each standard. For excellence ‘comprehensively examine’ is referred to in the Achievement Criteria. The Explanatory Notes of the standard state that ‘comprehensively examine’ relates to the application of skills, geographic ideas and supporting evidence. ‘Explanation’ is not a requirement in the current versions of the level 1 standards. Tasks set that assess level 1 should not require students to explain. To ask for explanation is to ask for more of students than is required by the standard. To allow for answers of excellence standard to be presented, students should be instructed when answering to:

- i. include reference to relevant geographic ideas (and a relevant named idea could be provided for students to include. The 2008 geography external exam papers provide an example of this approach)
- ii. make use and show the use of geographic skills when answering
- iii. incorporate supporting evidence (eg. specific examples, facts, place names and case studies) in answers.

Use of any one of these three approaches when answering would be deemed sufficient for excellence to be gained. To be fair to candidates ‘explanation’ would be accepted as ‘supporting evidence’ – it would be unfair on candidates if they were penalised for doing more than was required by the standard.

## Specific Standards

### ***Geographic Research: level 1 90206, level 2 90335, level 3 90705***

Much candidate work in relation to these standards is interesting to moderate and some high quality research is being undertaken. At level 1 most research is based on and around the TKI exemplars: where students live and how they travel to school, traffic survey work, and farm based research. At levels 2 and 3 a wider range of more original research is carried out. At levels 2 and 3 research themes are often selected to complement studies being undertaken in relation to topics that are externally assessed. For example, urban research at level 2 and natural environment based research at level 3. Having research that is field work based either locally or further afield is ideal. This not only meets the requirement of the standard for having primary data gathered and used, but also encourages good geographic practice and engages the students in carrying out enjoyable geography.

Research that focuses on topics and themes that enhance the geographic understanding of students, and/or contexts that show how geography can be of value in helping provide understanding and resolution of real world issues and concerns often engage student interest.

- At all three levels, having a research purpose/research aim clearly stated, with a question(s) to be answered or a hypothesis to test, presented at the start of the research (as part of the

title, on the cover page or in the introduction as step 1) is a hallmark of successful research. Research that is able to gain more than achieved is research that has a clear focus. Where aims are clearly stated at the outset, success usually follows in later answers.

- Students should be encouraged to include maps as part of their research presentation, as this gives emphasis to the geographic nature of the research. The inclusion of a map helps fulfil the requirement for a spatial component to the research and is therefore highly desirable as part of the presentation.
- It is desirable that students present their research (maps, graphs, diagrams, photos etc.) neatly, imaginatively and follow conventions as they are more likely to be successful. Use of electronically created maps, graphs and other visuals are ideal but geographic presentation conventions still need to be followed.
- Having conclusions that relate findings back to the stated aim(s) of the research is also a feature of the best work presented. These conclusions form the end point of meeting requirements of the first bullet point of the Achievement Criteria to ‘carry out and present geographic research’.
- Geographic Ideas (the second bullet point of the Achievement Criteria) need to have more prominence attached to them when research is presented. Being able to choose and relate appropriate ideas to the research is often the thing that distinguishes the top students from the others. Excellence requires the application and discussion of ideas in relation to the research topic and the research findings (reference to two ideas in detail is sufficient). To be successful here students need to have a good understanding of geographic ideas and the meaning of them. Providing candidates with a list of ideas and their meanings is helpful (see TKI Geo1/5-K6 Back to School page 7, and TKI Geo/3/5-C1 Geographic Research Generic page 8). Merit and Excellence work is frequently distinguished from Achieved by the way geographic ideas are incorporated into the work. The best students show understanding of ideas they select and relate to their research. Considering what ideas might be appropriate to use in relation to the actual research being undertaken at the planning stage, is a way of keeping a focus on ideas as the research proceeds. Location, patterns, change and culture/perception are ideas students handle the best.
- In the evaluation of the research process, the best students refer to specific examples and detail from the research they have carried out. They should make the answer one that is clearly linked to ‘their research’. For example commenting that some members of a group did not turn up on time and this made the results unreliable might be true, but commenting that the ‘sheer number and speed of vehicles passing a traffic count point made an accurate count difficult’ is more valuable as an evaluation.
- At level 3 for Excellence, there is a need for students to consider alternative methods and approaches to their research. As past national moderator reports have stated, this does not mean doing more or improving what has already been done. It requires consideration of alternative approaches. Survey work, with students measuring and counting what is there and what is seen, is a common research approach used in the field. Other approaches need to be considered; setting up and carrying out an experiment, observation, photographing, interviewing people for their stories or recollection, sourcing old maps and documents – are examples. The context will help determine other approaches that could have been used. To do this successfully requires prior teaching and learning about alternative approaches and methodologies to have taken place. If the research topic seems to have no alternative approaches, the topic is not appropriate to use and a different one should be selected.

***Contemporary Issue: level 1 90207, level 2 90336, level 3 90706***

In the assessment of these standards a wide range of issues are selected as the context for the assessment. These range from the local (eg. location of a wind farm) to the national (eg. migrants coming to NZ) to the international (eg. fair trade issues). All of these ‘scales’ are valid. Although the standard states that a simulated issue may be used, use of a real world

example is desirable and engages candidates more readily, and also allows them to see the value of geography in helping provide understanding and resolution of real world issues. An issue is something that involves debate or a point of dispute. It can involve a problem that needs to be tackled or a question that awaits a decision. The standard sets the parameters that their need to be a range of viewpoints that relate to the issue (three or four viewpoints work best) and that there are different courses of action possible for resolving or addressing the issue chosen (three courses of action for consideration and evaluation are ideal).

- The standard requires that the issue (to be geographic) has effects on both people and the environment (Achievement Criterion bullet point 1). Effects on the natural environment are preferable but cultural/human environment effects are also acceptable. This means that an issue like a river dam proposal is ideal. It will involve impacts on both the natural environment and on people. Such an example also allows for positive and beneficial effects to be considered as well as problem outcomes and negative effects. A human focussed issue is also acceptable. For example ‘child labour’ as an issue has obvious people impacts, but also impacts on the wider community and society (the human environment) and this would make it an acceptable as an issue for assessing this standard. It is good practice to incorporate some spatial component into the tasks set to ensure the issue is approached from a geography angle and ‘made geographic’.
- The level 3 standard 90706, unlike the standards at levels 1 and 2 has the location (spatial) dimension as a specific requirement. In assessing the level 3 standard this location (plus people and environment) aspects of the issue need to be addressed in the tasks set. To meet level 3 ‘analysis’ requirements for Achievement Criterion bullet point 1, the location task needs to have some substance to it – description of the location of the issue + some recognition of the significance or importance of the location to the issue. Unless students do provide some analysis of the location of the issue when answering in relation to the level 3 issue standard, they are not able to gain the standard. Tasks set without such a location component to them are invalid for assessing 90706.
- Achievement Criterion bullet point 2 relates to viewpoints about the issue. At levels 2 and 3 an explanation of viewpoints is required. In this situation it is appropriate to provide students with a statement describing the viewpoints of individuals or groups (for example : an outline of what views are held or a completed viewpoints continuum can be provided). It is the ability of the student to explain the viewpoints that is being assessed. Often the more successful students make reference to perspectives in their explanations, and thereby provide the ‘comprehensive explanation’ required for Excellence.
- To meet requirements of Achievement Criterion bullet point 3, evaluation of courses of action is required. The Explanatory Notes of the standard refer to this evaluation requiring that strengths and weaknesses (both plural) of the different courses of action are considered. To encourage depth of answer rather than just brief comment, one strength and one weakness covered in depth for each course of action is acceptable for A, M and E.
- To meet requirements of achievement criterion bullet point 3, students need to recommend and justify a course of action. Students are increasingly carrying out this justification by referring to the alternative courses of action, and weighing them up one against the other in the justification they give. This is good practice to follow.

***Global Topics: level 1 90208, level 2 90337, level 3 90707***

Successful assessment of these standards and student success in answering depends more than in other standards on the nature and detail of the assessment activity. The global topic selected and the way the tasks are presented impact greatly on candidate success. If the global topic does not allow for ready coverage of all parts of each of the Achievement Criterion, the topic itself may need to be reviewed and modified to make it suitable. The use of sporting events like the Olympic Games may be chosen to engage student interest. Global patterns of where the modern Games have been held can be readily described and analysed. The significance of the

Games for people lends itself for examination at different scales and through the eyes of different people. Processes that relate to the Games, for example host city selection, are not so easy to deal with. Providing candidates with a list of processes to choose from and then examine in terms of their influence on host city selection can be difficult. Influencing factors are easy to deal with but these cannot be substituted for processes. If the global topic selected does not have obvious process involvement and process connection then another topic may be a better one to use.

- Having two separate achievement criterion for patterns and process(es) in the level 1 standard seems to work better than the combination of the two in the level 2 and 3 standards. At level 1, candidates can usually identify and describe a global pattern with ease. To ensure process(es) are covered as required by the standard, having a two-part task i. describing how a process(es) works (covering the sequence idea) and ii. commenting on how this process(es) causes the global pattern, is an approach that helps the student answer successfully.
- Problems are often encountered in student answers of the level 2 and 3 global studies standards. In these two standards pattern(s) and process(es) are both referred to in the first Achievement Criterion of the standard. Candidate answers often focus much more on one of these two aspects than the other, resulting in answers that are mostly about patterns or mostly about processes. Setting separate tasks about patterns and processes when assessing the level 1 standard, would be one way of ensuring students did deal with both patterns and processes sufficiently to meet requirements of the standard. This ‘even coverage’ is especially important for gaining merit and excellence.
- In all global studies standards showing ‘significance for people’ of the topic selected is required by the final achievement criterion. The explanatory notes do not expand on the meaning of ‘significance for people’. Taking this to mean ‘how/why the global topic is important for people to know about’ and/or ‘how people are affected by the topic’ are ways of explaining to students what kind of answer they need to give about significance. It is not appropriate to ask a question about ‘significance’ that requires candidates to provide more information and more detail of the topic itself. Doing this tends to result in repetition of information used in the answers about patterns and processes.
- The global scale nature of the topic needs to be established in answers related to each of the achievement criterion of this standard. This global scale coverage can be taken to mean the use of examples/case studies/place references from different continents and/or different hemispheres in answers. Answers that apply across the whole globe are particularly appropriate. For example, the global topic of ‘rainfall amount variation’ works well.

***The Contribution of Geography to Planning and Decision Making: level 3 90703***

This standard has features that make it distinctive from other geography standards. Careful task setting is required to provide students with the opportunity of meeting all requirements of this standard. Students need to be clear that this standard requires them to explain the process of planning and decision-making, not explain a geographic issue.

Providing information about a P and DM issue/example for students to work with is one way of approaching the assessment of this standard. Ideally however students would follow an example from their local area for which the process has just been completed, or that is currently underway through the local council/planning group P and DM process.

- Achievement Criterion bullet point 1: The focus is on the process involved in Planning and Decision Making, more than on the issue/proposal/development involved. There need to be tasks set that require students to focus on the ‘what happened’ / ‘how’ + ‘why’ parts of the process, more than to give information about the issue/proposal/development itself. For example, in determining the affected parties candidates need to be given the opportunity to

comment and explain:

- how the affected parties were determined
- how these parties were given voice and had their views heard (how they were consulted)
- the weight and significance given to the voice and views of the affected parties in the coming to a final decision.

- Candidates also needed to consider and explain how it was determined what data and information was required to help inform the P and DM process, and how it was obtained (eg. costing of options and environment information).

Terms specific to this standard such as 'legislative constraints', 'affected parties' and 'consultative process' need to be clearly understood by candidates.

In this way the standard has very distinct requirements that need to be met.

These 'official websites' provide information about actual P and DM consent processes - it is this type of process that needs to be covered in the context of the issue/proposal/development involved. The focus needs to be on the process that took place.

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/public/consent-say/consent-say.pdf>

<http://www.ew.govt.nz/Consents/Resource-consents/The-consent-process/>

<http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/cnlser/pl/landuse/notifycon/notifprocess.asp>

- To meet requirements of the second achievement criterion (the contribution of geography to the P and DM process), answers that meet requirements for merit and excellence come from candidates who place emphasis on including reference to, and examples from, the actual planning and decision making issue that has been the context for their answer for AC1. Generic answers that could apply to any context do not work so well. For Excellence, students have to evaluate the role of geography to the P and DM process. Again the best answers refer to explicit evidence from the P and DM context studied rather than giving a generic response. In evaluating the contribution of geography students could consider the contribution of geography to the process in relation to the contribution from other specialist areas/people (like economics or engineering or legal). Students could be judging the value of these, including geography, one against the other. Geography may play a major or minor role depending on the particular P and DM issue in question and students could comment about this. The contribution of Geography might be considered as one part of the jigsaw puzzle and it need not necessarily be seen as the most important part. All of this could form part of the evaluation.

### **Unit Standards**

Unit standards being used for assessment fall into three main categories; unit standards that offer an alternative to an achievement standard assessed externally are the ones most frequently used, smaller but significant numbers of assessments are made using the Work Of Fiction unit standards (especially at levels 1 and 2) and unit standard 5097 (level 3) related to planning and decision making which could possibly used instead of achievement standard 90703.

Teachers assessing using unit standards often set tasks that mirror the language of the performance criterion associated with the elements of the standard. In most instances this provides a good framework to help students answer successfully. The downside to this approach is where standards have many elements and multiple performance criterion resulting is a series of mini-tasks that all have to be completed correctly in order for the standard to be gained.

Unit standards are a valid form of assessment offering scope to assess teaching themes, topics and skills that are not readily assessed using existing achievement standards.

It should be noted that the standard of answer required to gain a unit standard, is no less than the standard required at the same curriculum level for an achievement standard. Problem areas in terms of candidate answers noted in achievement standards, relating to showing understanding of processes and interaction for example, are also a problem seen in candidate answers in unit standards.

Geography unit standards nor the NZQA exemplar assessments have been updated since 1999.