



National Qualifications Framework Levels 1–3, 2008

Languages

National Moderator's Report

National Moderator's Report for Languages other than French

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 student the opportunity to meet the requirements of the standard
- have an assessment schedule that gives evidence of appropriate student 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 student needs. They do not provide “rules” but suggest different ways of assessing to the nationally registered standard.

General Overall Comment

Tasks

There were some innovative and well designed tasks which catered well to the teaching and learning that had taken place and gave students room to personalise their responses. The most successful tasks were those that were personalised to suit the needs and learning of that particular group of students.

Assessment tasks downloaded from the TKI site need to be checked that they are for the latest version of the standard and include Language Curriculum achievement objectives for that level. Where a teacher is new to NCEA assessment it is advisable to seek support when designing the task from advisers and colleagues in other schools. For those wishing to check they have included all necessary information for moderation, there is a checklist on the particular language subject page at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/resources/languages/moderation-guidelines.html>.

‘Variety’ in language

For ‘variety’ of language used, incorrect language will only affect a grade if it hinders communication. However, incorrect language cannot count towards the language criteria.

Communicating curriculum achievement objectives

Tasks must allow students to communicate the relevant achievement objectives or communication functions as specified in the explanatory notes of the standards.

Relevant achievement objective/s must also be exemplified in the language samples and the student evidence. Some of the moderation, especially at level one, is not showing this consistency throughout the tasks. Level one expects the inclusion of curriculum level six achievement objectives (‘Up to and **including curriculum level 6...**’). It is important to note that, in German especially, single structures and/or vocabulary do not alone give evidence of language up to and including level 6. This needs to be interwoven with the successful communication of a level 6 achievement objective.

At all levels there is no need for more than one example of the required achievement objective to be present to gain an Achieved, Merit or Excellence grade. Students are

encouraged to use a wide range of the language they have learnt. There is no reason why students cannot use language from above their level; however this cannot be a requirement to achieve the standard. Language samples should reflect the achievement objectives and language level of the relevant standard being assessed.

Language samples

Language samples can be on any topic, however they must reflect both level and achievement objective/s or communication functions. Students should be informed that they may not use the language from the samples unless it has been significantly reworked.

Version of the standard

Since November 2007, the relevant version for all level 1 standards is version 3. For level 2 and 3 standards, it is version 2.

Recording Evidence

Student evidence should be recorded digitally. CDs should be clearly labelled using the same name/number/letter (of the student work) which appears on the Moderation Cover Sheet. Labelling with ‘track 1, track 2’ which does not match with a moderation sheet with student names makes for confusion. All evidence must be clearly labelled. For fairness in assessment, it is important that there is no background noise

Length of Assessment evidence

Students should be reminded that quality is more important than quantity. Some student evidence was very long and this did not correspond to achieving a better grade. Students who provided very long assessments invariably disadvantaged themselves.

Use of Portfolios

Gathering evidence through using portfolios is a valid assessment method in languages. Teachers gathering evidence in this way need to remember that the assessment criteria remain the same as for single assessments. For the assessment there should be evidence of:

- the requirements of the assessment schedule for A, M and E
- relevant information for the task/s (including the development/substantial development of the information)
- conveying and seeking or exchanging and supporting information (level 2 and 3 conversations)
- communication of achievement objectives and use of language up to and including the curriculum level of the standard being assessed
- fulfilling the overall time requirements

Inclusion of assessment schedules:

It would be useful if schools always provided their annotated marking schedules or assessment commentaries which clearly indicate how judgements were made for the individual student’s work. This would allow the moderators to be more specific in their comments.

Authenticity

For all standards students should be informed that all work must be their own and that if there is doubt the school’s authenticity policy will be called upon.

Comment on Specific Standards

Conversation standards Levels 1 to 3

Further to last years National Moderator's Report it is expected that conversation standards will reflect an element of spontaneity and interaction, especially at level 2 and 3. Explanatory note 4: 'Converse refers to an exchange of information that is not totally pre-learned. There must be some spontaneity'. For this reason, some tasks which set up an interview did not allow students to seek any information or where students were unable to initiate the conversation at any time. At level 2 and 3 there must be sufficient evidence of the student seeking/initiating the conversation. Simply asking one question at the end of a task does not provide sufficient evidence of this.

The best conversations happened where the student clearly had a role in initiating the conversation. Spontaneity occurred when teachers listened to what the students were saying and questions, clarifications, etc. stem from what had been said and not from a predetermined list of questions. At level 2 and 3 good conversations showed the students also doing this.

It is not appropriate to give students a list of questions in advance, or have them write a script of the conversation that the teacher pre-marks. Hence it is inappropriate for students to hand in a draft of their 'conversation' for feedback and/or checking. However there are a number of ways in which students can prepare both in class and at home e.g. brainstorming the possible conversation as a class; role play between peers; general whole class questions/answers in the lessons leading up to the assessment. The teacher may not provide individual assistance or correct individual errors.

Cue cards may not be used.

Teachers are reminded that for this standard, terms like 'complex' and 'development' are defined within terms of a conversation and are different from the speech and writing standards. 'Development and variety in a conversation often involves interaction, referring back to things already said and clarifying and negotiating meaning' (*Assessment Guidelines for NCEA learning languages 2006*).

As most students are not native speakers, added spontaneity will possibly result in increased errors as students think creatively as they go. This is natural and acceptable and, unless they hinder communication, will not affect the overall grade.

Waiting time (giving students time to collect their thoughts) is appropriate. In real conversation sometimes there are pauses and this is the same in this assessment. A pause will only affect a grade if the length is so long that it is considered communication has been affected.

The prepared talk/ speech/ presentation standards Levels 1 to 3

The cue card word restriction has been lifted. While the teacher and students can still negotiate to have cue card word limits in order to ensure that the talk/presentation/speech is delivered and not simply read, it was obvious that some students were severely disadvantaged by having a 10/20/30 word restriction.

Students should not be awarded the standard if they simply read their speech. There should be shared understanding between teachers and students about what constitutes a speech that is read as opposed to delivered

Feedback and/or feed forward during in-class preparation of the speech/presentation/talk should be of a general nature and not pre-marked drafts. There can also be brainstorming in class; practicing the speech with a partner; peer review, etc., but the teacher may not provide individual assistance or correct individual speeches. A speech should not be a presentation of previously corrected work.

A pause will only affect a grade if the length is so long that it is considered communication has been affected.

‘Fluent’ means that the flow of the speech is easily followed and understood and is not marred by excessively long pauses which interrupt the flow. It does not mean a native speaker level of speaking or rapid delivery.

Crafted writing standards Levels 1 to 3

These standards require crafting and drafting. Task design will be more valid if it naturally calls for a piece of writing to be reworked. A diary entry or letter to a friend might not be appropriate whereas an email or letter to the language teacher might be.

It should be clear whether corrections are made by the student or made during the marking. For this reason it is preferable to send original copies and these should be a student’s good copy. There should be few, if any, changes on the final copy.

Feedback and feed forward during the drafting process should be general only and not indicating specific errors. Feedback can be written or oral but as already mentioned must be of a general nature only.

Drafts must be handed in with the final copy for verification purposes.

The assessor should ensure that the following are included:

- the task is given at the beginning of the first session
- all resources are available to all students
- previously marked work on the topic may not be used as a resource
- if text books (or other printed material) are used the student may not copy directly from them. They must significantly manipulate the text/s to show that it is their own work.
- if a computer is used during the assessment process the disk is handed in and stored by the assessor at the end of each session
- spell checkers play the same role as a dictionary
- students may not bring anything into nor take anything out of the assessment room
- all student produced work stays in the assessment room.

Unit standards:

When assessing unit standards there still needs to be a clear task, guidelines for assessment, an assessment schedule and judgement statements. As with achievement standards, assessments can only be validated when all components have been included.

Students need to be very clear about what they need to do to achieve the standard. They should be given definitions of terminology which will result in Achieved/Credit or Not Achieved/No Credit e.g. what constitutes a ‘minor’ or a ‘major’ error.

The procedures for Unit standard assessment should be similar to the achievement standards.

The language syllabi are no longer in use; therefore the references should be to the appropriate achievement objectives and level of language from Languages in the New Zealand Curriculum.