

National external moderation guidelines for Tertiary Education Organisations



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National external moderation

These guidelines set out the requirements for participating in national external moderation for NZQA-managed standards.

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Overview of national external moderation

National external moderation provides assurance that assessment decisions for NZQA-managed standards are consistent nationally.

Every standard on the Directory of Assessment standards is attached to a CMR (*Consent and Moderation Requirements*). The Moderation Requirements section in the CMR sets out the national external moderation system for the standard.

If your tertiary education organisation (TEOs) has consent to assess, you must engage in the national external moderation system.

Who is responsible for moderation of assessment?

The TEO reporting the results is responsible for the moderation. It does not matter where an organisation sources the assessment material from, or who conducted the assessment.

What are the requirements for NZQA-managed standards?

To meet national external moderation requirements for NZQA-managed standards, TEOs must:

- provide NZQA with an accurate assessment plan for the year and update it during the year if required
- meet moderation deadlines
- provide assessment materials and evidence that assessor judgements are fair, valid and consistent nationally.



External moderation application

NZQA national external moderation is done online.

Log in to the secure extranet and click the 'External Moderation' link on the homepage. You will encounter a 'Welcome to NZQA Moderation' screen if you have the correct level of access.

If not, see the moderation liaison section for how to get the appropriate access.

In the external moderation application you will be able to:

- submit materials for moderation
- access your moderation reports and annual summary
- query a moderation report, or appeal a moderation result, and
- track progress of moderation submissions.

Where can I get more information on how to use the external moderation application?

Find detailed information, including quick reference guides and frequently asked questions, at:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/moderation-online/>



A Moderation Liaison for each TEO

Each TEO must nominate a person as their moderation liaison. They will be the key contact between NZQA's Monitoring and Assessment team and the TEO on all matters of national external moderation.

Please ensure the contact details of your moderation liaison are kept up to date. If there are changes please update these details by contacting Client Services by email qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz or phone (04) 463 3000.

Getting the right access to the online moderation system

The moderation liaison needs access to the NZQA secure extranet (the Provider Login page). To apply for access, your TEO's moderation liaison should complete the Tertiary Staff Access Request form available at [http://services.education.govt.nz/education-sector-logon/access/tertiary-sector/](http://services.education.govt.nz/education-sector/logon/access/tertiary-sector/)

Moderation Liaisons require the 'TEO Management Authoriser' and the 'TEO Management Representative' roles to have full access to the moderation functions of the digital moderation system.

What does the moderation liaison do?

The moderation liaison:

- completes the annual assessment plan and emails Client Services (qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz) with any changes
- accesses the moderation plan and arranges for assessment materials and samples of assessed learner work to be submitted by the submission date
- accesses moderation reports and co-ordinates internal communication on the results of moderation and any follow up actions required
- liaises with the Monitoring and Assessment Evaluator about the TEO's moderation results.



Assessment plan

In October each year, you will be asked for an assessment plan for the following year. Your assessment plan must list the NZQA-managed standards your TEO expects to assess and when these will be assessed.

Complete your annual assessment plan by the end of November.

Your TEO may enter a nil assessment plan if no NZQA-managed standards are to be assessed.

What's in an assessment plan?

The plan must include for the coming year:

- all NZQA-managed standards your TEO intends to assess (across all assessment sites)
- all NZQA-managed standards your TEO intends to report results for, including standards reported using your TEO provider code (for example under an outsourcing arrangement or by a different education organisation)
- all internally assessed achievement standards
- the earliest date when assessment will be completed for each standard and available for national external moderation – this information will determine your TEO's moderation submission date

Please indicate in the comment box if any of the standards are assessed in an integrated package.



Assessing achievement standards

TEOs assessing candidates in internal or external achievement standards must comply with the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Tertiary Education Organisations with Consent to Assess Entering Candidates Achievement Standards 2017* found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/teo-rules-for-achievement-stds/>

The key differences to consider are:

- the **random selection** of **eight** learner samples for external moderation
- using an Exam Centre for external assessment
- special assessment conditions.

Also see the:

- Special Assessment Conditions Rules at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/special-assessment-conditions/guidelines-for-schools/>
- Special Assessment Conditions exclusions at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/special-assessment-conditions/exclusions/>



Moderation plan

Monitoring and Assessment selects the standards for moderation and the submission date, based on the information in your TEO assessment plan and your TEO's moderation history.

During April, Monitoring and Assessment publishes the moderation plans. Your TEO can access the plan through the external moderation application.

The moderation plan indicates:

- the submission date
- standards that will be moderated.

Changes to assessment and moderation plans

Your moderation liaison must advise Client Services (qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz) of changes to assessment and moderation plans, this includes:

- **adding** standards to the **assessment** plan
- **removing** a standard from the **moderation** plan*.

*Note – NZQA does not make multiple changes to moderation plans. If your TEO is likely to make several changes, **please do not contact NZQA every time**. Instead please collate them and contact NZQA with **all changes** one month before the submission date.



Submitting assessment materials

You must use the external moderation application to submit moderation material, whether the materials to be submitted are online or physical.

What if... the material is for an integrated assessment

Please submit all materials for each of the standards being assessed. This will ensure different moderators have access to all relevant material.

What if... you have assessment materials and learner samples available well before the submission date

Please submit them early. While we cannot guarantee materials submitted early will be moderated immediately, it helps moderators and NZQA ensure the timely reporting of your moderation results.

What if... the material is from TKI or a commercial source

Please indicate on the submission that the source is TKI or Commercial and if you have changed it, select the 'modified' option.

For training and support to submit moderation materials see:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/moderation-online/>



Assessment material required

Please include the following assessment materials for moderation:

- assessment activities/tasks and instructions to learners and/or candidate evidence guides
- assessment schedules including evidence and judgement statements, and (if applicable) model or sample answers
- **three** assessed learner samples for each standard that has only an 'achieved' grade available – i.e. one complete set of assessed work for each of three learners. It is expected that at least two samples will be 'achieved', and any 'not achieved' samples will be borderline
- **eight** assessed learner samples for each standard that has merit and/or excellence grades available, from across a range of achievement: N (Not achieved), A (Achieved), M (Merit), E (Excellence), and including borderline samples. At least six samples should be 'achieved' or higher and any 'not achieved' samples should be borderline
- any relevant resources provided to the learner with assessment tasks, or submitted by the learner for assessment purposes
- a copy of the standard if you have assessed against an earlier version than is available on the NZQA website



Learner samples

Learner samples must be drawn from the current year.

If you cannot supply learner samples from the current year or for a current version of the standard, your moderation liaison should contact your Evaluator as early as possible. The Evaluator will either change the organisation's submission date to when three assessed learner samples will be ready for moderation or select an alternative standard.

Please ensure learner samples submitted for moderation are legible and are:

- verified as being assessed either at N (Not achieved) or A (Achieved) for standards with only the achieved grade available
- verified as being assessed with N (Not achieved), A (Achieved), M (Merit), E (Excellence) for standards with merit and/or excellence grades available
- identified as Learner A, B, C or Learner 1, 2, 3 (or initials only) – not named
- assessed against a current version of the standard
- assessed in the current academic year.

Please **do not** blank out the assessor/attestation signatures and dates on observation checklists.

Note: results for learners must be reported to NZQA within the timeframe stated in the *Consent to Assess standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.



Late submission and non-submission of assessment materials

If your TEO will not be able to submit the appropriate material for moderation by the submission date, your moderation liaison should contact your Evaluator well before the submission date.

A Materials Not Received (MNR) report will be issued automatically if materials do not arrive in time.

An MNR is considered to be non-compliance with national external moderation requirements.

If your TEO did submit assessment materials to the moderator and an MNR is issued, please contact your Evaluator.



Integrated assessments

TEO moderation plans may include standards where assessment has been integrated with other standards not selected for national external moderation. Your TEO may submit the whole integrated assessment package to the moderator, but clearly indicate which parts of the assessment material and learner samples apply to the standard selected for moderation.

For example, this could include:

- annotating and highlighting assessment materials and learner work
- including an assessment grid or 'map' that indicates which outcomes have been assessed in which assessment activities
- including written information that clearly explains how (and in which part of the materials) the standard selected for moderation has been assessed.

Your Evaluator may adjust the moderation plan to include additional standards within the integrated package.



Assessment by conversation

Conversations between assessor and others (for example the learner themselves, verifiers, attesters, supervisors, employers and colleagues) need to be formal assessment situations. This means both the learner and the other party have been fully briefed on the requirements of the standard and the assessment requirements and conditions.

Please include the following when preparing evidence for national external moderation:

- either a digital recording of conversations or a transcript of the conversation. The parts of discussion that have contributed to the assessor decision for the standard being moderated must be clearly identified. Refer to the specific unit standard outcome. Relevant parts of the recording should be indicated by listing the time stamps of the sections (for example 20:10-35:40).
- copies of any materials discussed, other supporting evidence for the standards being moderated and information considered by the assessor. This could be instructions/guidelines given to the learner, organisational policy and procedures, samples of learner work, or signed attestations.
- any notes or comments made by the assessor that will help the moderator verify the assessor decision
- the assessor guide used by the assessor.



Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

If your TEO uses RPL processes to assess a learner's knowledge and/or skills, submit documentation for national external moderation that shows:

- that RPL established the learner's current level of competency against the outcomes of the standard
- direct links between learner's evidence and the standard at outcome level. This may be done using an evidence grid/matrix that clearly indicates the evidence the assessor considered to make their decision. For larger portfolios, it may be helpful to colour-code specific pieces of evidence, so the moderator can navigate the material efficiently and consider all the relevant evidence.



Moderation report

The moderation report describes the outcomes of the moderation.

The moderation report will be provisionally published once the moderator has completed the moderation. You have 20 working days to review the provisional report, submit a query and/or appeal the moderation report comments or decisions. After this period the report becomes final. No changes can be made to the report once it is final.

Your moderation liaison can monitor the status as well as access moderation reports through the external moderation application.

Moderators will complete moderation reports within three weeks of the submission date. Moderation reports for Field Māori standards are moderated at kāhui. The turnaround time for materials moderated at kāhui may be eight to ten weeks, depending on the submission date.

Sections of the moderation report

Overview: This gives a summary of moderation findings in relation to the standard, including where there are any areas of concern. It refers to the assessor decisions, assessment materials and any significant issues raised in the moderation.

Learner evidence: This section comments on if assessor decisions about learner evidence are consistent with the national standard. This is the main outcome of the moderation report.

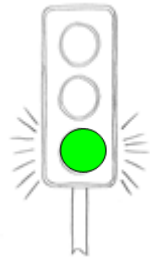
Assessment Materials: This section comments on the outcomes of the moderation for assessment task and conditions, and the assessment schedule.

Note: NZQA moderators' main focus is on the sufficiency of learner evidence in relation to the standard being assessed. **If** there are no issues identified with the assessed learner work, the moderator may not comment on the assessment materials: i.e. there will be no 'Assessment Materials' section of the moderation report.



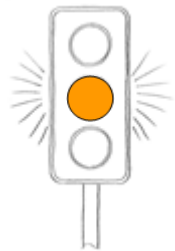
What to do when you receive the moderation report

The moderation liaison must ensure all relevant people in your TEO are aware of the moderation report results and comments.



What if... the moderator has selected 'Overall, assessor decisions for the sample of work provided are consistent with the standard' or 'The assessment materials meet the national standard'

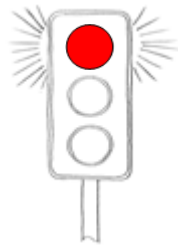
Address any minor issues or consider areas for improvement that the moderator may have commented on.



What if... the moderator has selected 'Overall, assessor decisions for the sample of work provided are not yet consistent with the standard' or 'The assessment materials require modification'

- The moderation report will specify where the materials or learner evidence do not meet the requirements of the standard.
- Review the requirements of the standard and guidance for assessors before assessing more learners against the standard.
- The assessment materials must be modified before they are used again.
- The standard may be chosen again for moderation as a resubmission in the same year, or in the following year.





What if... the moderator has selected ‘Overall, assessor decisions for the sample of work provided are not consistent with the standard’ or ‘The assessment materials do not meet the national standard’

- The moderation report will detail what changes you need to make to the assessor judgements or assessment material to meet the national standard.
- Review the requirements of the standard and guidance for assessors before assessing more learners against the standard. A higher level of support and professional development may be required.
- The assessment materials must be significantly altered before they can be used again.

Feedback in all NZQA moderation reports should be used to inform assessment practice within your TEO. It can also inform your organisation’s assessment design and internal pre- and post-assessment moderation processes.

The annual summary will detail anything else your TEO needs to do.



Queries

What if... your TEO is not clear on the meaning of something in the moderation report

You can ask the moderator a question if you do not understand a comment and/or decision in a moderation report.

For example you might ask the moderator: *When you said “there is too heavy reliance on the verifier’s attestation as it does not provide evidence to substantiate the ticks”, what further evidence are you expecting?*

Note: submitting a query does not change the result of the moderation report. See ‘Appeals’ if you do not agree with the moderator decision(s).

Training and support materials to assist you to query a moderation report are available at:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/moderation-online/>



Appeals

What if... your TEO understands the information in the moderation report but does not agree with the moderation result and/or comment

You can appeal the decision(s).

It is recommended that your moderation liaison contacts Monitoring and Assessment before formally appealing to ensure your grounds for appeal are valid.

Do not send any new material to be considered. The appeal applies only to the material originally sent to the moderator.

Training and support material to assist you to appeal a moderation report is available at:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/moderation-online/>



What does NZQA do with your appeal?

Your TEO may appeal moderation decisions up to 20 working days after the report has been provisionally published (once the report is final it cannot be appealed).

Once the appeal is submitted it may take up to six weeks for NZQA to process it.

The National Moderator for the relevant subject, an Evaluator, and the Team Leader review the assessment materials, the moderation report and the individual points raised in the appeal.

The results of the moderation appeal will be available through the external moderation application once the decision has been made. The report will show if comments and/or decisions have changed as a result of the appeal.

The outcome of the appeal is final.



Annual summary

Once all moderation reports for your TEO are final, NZQA summarises the results in an annual summary.

NZQA will notify you when your annual summary is available. This is typically within six weeks of your submission date.



Further action

The annual summary will detail anything your organisation needs to do to address the issues identified by moderation. This only applies where some or all moderation results do not meet national external moderation requirements. NZQA expects your TEO to respond to these concerns with actions that address the issues raised.

NZQA might:

- request actions or a more formal action plan to address issues identified
- impose a condition on the TEO's consent to assess
- take other action under legislation.

Your TEO must respond to any action plan requests from NZQA in the timeframe specified in the annual summary.

We encourage your moderation liaison to contact your Evaluator if you have any questions.

If non-compliance is ongoing and unresolved, NZQA may ultimately withdraw your TEO's consent to assess against standards.



Action plans

TEOs must submit an assessment and moderation action plan when:

- moderation reports identify major or a significant number of assessment issues (within a system or across systems in the same moderation year) or
- recurring or different assessment issues have been identified within or across systems for more than one year.

The decision to request an action plan depends on:

- the number and nature of assessment issues identified
- the number and/or range of standards being assessed
- the TEO's moderation history.

Monitoring and Assessment has developed an action plan template for TEOs to complete. It will be sent with the annual summary if you are required to submit an action plan.



How the action plan is monitored

Your Evaluator will follow up with your moderation liaison to ensure that the action plan is helping you improve your TEO's assessment and moderation outcomes.

Action plan follow-up may include:

- earlier submission date for national external moderation in the coming year
- telephone discussion to check on what actions you have completed and their success
- meeting with your TEO for more in-depth discussion about implementing the action plan
- asking your TEO to submit evidence of the action plan being implemented (for example internal and/or external moderation reports, improved processes, completed staff training or workshops)
- assessment and moderation as a discussion point or focus area in any pending External Evaluation and Review process
- focused reviews of assessment practice (including NZQA compliance visits).

