



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Unit Standards

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Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Unit Standards

Introduction

This booklet outlines the criteria that will be addressed in the evaluation of unit standards prior to registration on the National Qualifications Framework.

Note: Compliance with these criteria is part of meeting the requirements of section 1.2.2 of the *QA Standard for ITOs* - see Appendix 3.

These criteria take effect from 1 October 2001¹.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is that part of the National Register of Quality Assured Qualifications containing National Certificates, Diplomas, and Degrees that are made up of unit standards and/or achievement standards. The NQF is based on principles of inclusiveness, portability, and transparency.

Unit standards are documents that specify learning and/or performance outcomes in terms of the required standard of knowledge and/or performance. They provide the basis for the design of assessment. Their intended audience is informed assessors - those with knowledge in the area being assessed and including candidates in their capacity as self-assessors.

Unit standards are not concerned with the delivery of learning or training programmes but, in describing required performance, inform the design of such programmes.

General requirements

NZQA is committed to:

- maintaining the high quality and credibility of New Zealand's nationally registered qualifications;
- working in partnership with industry, professional groups, and all stakeholders to ensure that New Zealand has a world-class qualifications system.

A unit standard will be registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) when it has been shown that:

¹ These criteria were reissued in October 2005 in order to remove reference to Quality Assurance Standard 2, which was superseded by the *QA Standard for ITOs*.

There is a demonstrable need for the unit standard, it does not unnecessarily duplicate an existing registered unit standard and it represents an achievable outcome worthy of certification in its own right

- there are no unnecessary or unreasonable restrictions on the pace or mode of assessment;
- the language of the unit standard does not create unnecessary or unreasonable barriers to access in terms of gender, ethnicity, or cultural background;

The content of the unit standard meets the requirements of the standard setter and is within its area of responsibility

- the unit standard has been endorsed as being fit for purpose for the intended sector;
- the standard setter has evidence that both new and revised unit standards have been the subject of consultation with stakeholders;

The unit standard meets the specific quality criteria as outlined in this document

- the outcomes in the unit standard are consistent with each other and the overall competence indicated by the title;
- the outcomes are achievable, manageable, coherent, assessable, and consistent with valid assessment practice;
- the unit standard is of publishable quality - free from spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors, consistent, and meeting current formatting requirements.


Unit standards must be fit for purpose. Periodic reviews and/or rollovers should ensure that this is so. The normal registration period is three years for new unit standards and five years for reviewed ones, although variations on these times are possible.

Unit standards may be written in Māori or in English.

Specific Quality Criteria for Unit Standards

Consideration of the above together with the following information details the specific requirements for the component parts of unit standards and the matters that will be addressed in the evaluation of unit standards prior to registration on the NQF.

In many cases the requirements are tightly specified. This normally arises as a result of the characteristics of the electronic systems for storing unit standard data and cross matching information to the other systems that support the operation of the NQF.

Where the requirements are fixed for these reasons the  symbol is shown.



NZQA is currently developing a new database, which will mean that some of these restrictions may be modified. When the new database is operational the current formatting requirements will change.

In other cases, the requirements are aligned to the broad principles of the NQF and the general requirements of unit standards as assessment documents for national certification. Negotiation is possible in some cases regarding those requirements.

1 Subfields and Domains

The classification system for the NQF comprises three tiers: fields, Subfields, and domains.


Unit standards are registered within a domain, which in turn is registered within a Subfield of the NQF. These classifications are shown on the unit standard.

- domains and Subfields must be registered as part of the NQF Classification System before unit standards are submitted for registration.
-  unit standards must be classified in registered domains.
-  titles must not exceed 60 characters inclusive of punctuation and spaces.

2 Titles

The title of a unit standard gives a clear indication of the significant outcome that someone who is credited with the unit standard has demonstrated they know and/or can do.

Titles must:

- describe a meaningful outcome attributable to an individual;
- be written as a single unique sentence with verb in the active voice, noun, and conditions and/or context consistent with the registration classification category;
- not normally include options;
-  not exceed 100 characters, inclusive of punctuation and spaces.

3 Elements

Elements describe the assessed lesser outcomes, if these exist, which collectively comprise the outcome in the title. In single element unit standards the element and the title must be the same.

Element(s) must:

- represent outcomes which are demonstrable and assessable;
- be in a format similar to the title - verb in the active voice, noun;
- expand on, and be consistent with, the title, forming a coherent set of outcomes related to the outcome described by the title;
- be clear and unambiguous, using language which has meaning for those people who will use the unit standard;
- not be optional and not normally include options.

4 Performance Criteria

Performance criteria specify the quality of the critical evidence required to meet the outcomes in the elements. Collectively, they provide the standards against which elements are assessed.

In relation to each element, the criteria will specify what is expected to have been done to a particular quality level or standard.

Performance criteria must:

- be expressions of evidence, not assessment tasks or instructions to assessors about the way to conduct assessment;
- give informative guidance to assessors and candidates as to what evidence is required;
- provide sufficient detail for valid and consistent assessments to be made;
- collectively indicate the level or quality of performance required;
- refer to essential activities and/or results critical to the outcome being assessed;
- not introduce new aspects of performance which are not implied by the element.

There is no requirement that performance criteria be limited to single sentences.

5 Range Statements

Range statements may be included to provide a common frame of reference to ensure that all candidates are assessed against the same set of applications, and clarify assessment conditions.

Range statements can apply to:

- all outcomes in the unit standard, written in the Special Notes section;
- individual outcomes, written immediately below the relevant element, or incorporated into the element text;
- an individual performance criterion, written immediately below the relevant criterion, or incorporated into the criterion text.

Range statements must:

- clearly distinguish the items which need to be considered.

6 Special Notes

Special Notes are used for conveying any information that will assist in the interpretation of the standard and/or increase the likelihood of consistent assessment judgement. They can also be used to indicate any special assessment requirements or conditions.

- if there is more than one special note, the notes must be numbered.
- references must be restricted to publications which clarify the standard and be accessible (in the public domain) to candidates, assessors, and providers.
- references must be cited fully showing, as a minimum, author, *title*, publisher, place of publication, date of publication.
- where acts, codes, or regulations are included, formal names and date of enactment must be shown.
- references to other unit standards must specify their identification numbers.
- 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 standard.
- terms being defined must be differentiated in some way from ordinary text, for example italics, and be clearly and simply expressed.

- the purpose of each special note must be clear.

7 Levels

Unit standards will be registered at one of the approved levels of the NQF. Each of the levels is characterised by performances described by the specified descriptors for that level (see Appendix 2).

- the level assigned to the unit standard must provide a best match between the descriptors and the outcome and performance requirements of the unit standard.

8 Credits

Credits allocated to unit standards must reflect the notional learning time it is expected to take candidates to meet the outcome and performance requirements in those unit standards. Notional learning time includes time spent in structured tuition and self paced learning and practice; time taken to gather and provide evidence for assessment purposes; and time taken to be assessed in all the outcomes and contexts.

One credit represents a notional 10 hours of learning, practice, and assessment time with respect to the outcomes and contexts of the unit standard.

Credits allocated must:

- be whole numbers and no more than 120;
- be consistent with unit standards of comparable outcomes and similar contexts.

9 Purpose Statements

Purpose statements must:

- summarise the content of the unit standard and express information which is consistent with that content.

They may also say for whom the unit standard is intended.

While there is no requirement to restate the elements it is one way to summarise the content of the unit standard.

10 Entry Information

Entry information may be included to provide guidance to providers and candidates about underpinning knowledge and skills that are critical to health and safety.

Entry information refers to entry to assessment and not entry to a course.

NZQA assumes that any requirements specified in this section will be verified by the assessor as having been met prior to the award of credit.

- where there are no entry requirements, the statement 'Open.' must be shown.

- ☞ where prerequisite unit standards are specified, they must be listed as: Unit <id no>, *title*. Multiple listings must clearly distinguish each unit standard.
- lists of prerequisite unit standards must be followed by the phrase *or demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills*.
- time based entry criteria are not acceptable - the skills and knowledge derived from experience should be specified.

11 Quality Management Systems

☞ The accreditation and moderation options must match those in the registered Accreditation and Moderation Action Plan (AMAP).

12 Comments By, and Expiry Date

These dates will be entered by Framework Registration.

Additional Technical Criteria for Review, Revision and Rollover

Reviewed unit standards

Reviewed unit standards must meet the same technical quality criteria as new unit standards. However, application for registration must be accompanied by a Review Report for publication (see criteria for the Report p. 11). An assurance is also required that the review of the moderation arrangements has informed the review of the unit standards.

In the review process unit standards will be placed in one of four categories:

Category A No change is made to the content or classification of the unit standard.

The unit standard will be published as a new version and display new registration and planned review dates.

Category B Changes are made that do not affect the assessment parameters of the unit standard. The outcomes and required evidence are substantially unchanged, and the standard setter is confident that people credited with the new or old version are comparable in terms of competence.

The unit standard will be published as a new version and display new registration and planned review dates.

Category C Significant changes have been made to the unit standard such that there are material changes to what is being certificated. The standard setter views people with credit for the new and old version as being different in terms of competence.

A new identification number will be assigned to the replacement unit standard(s) by Framework Registration.

The replacement unit standard will include a reference to the ID of the replaced unit standard under 'replacement information' on the unit standard

Category D The unit standard is being allowed to expire and is not being replaced.

The expiry year of categories C and D unit standards must be specified in the Review Report. Normally the expiry date is two years from the date the review is completed.

Rollover of unit standards

If unit standards are nearing their expiry date and there has been insufficient information to inform a review, they must be rolled over. They are then issued as a new version with new *comments by* and *expiry* dates but with content unchanged. The application for registration must be accompanied by a Rollover Report for publication.

If, however, unit standards contain out of date references (eg to legislation or prerequisites) they should be revised as well as rolled over.

Revised unit standards

Unit standards can be revised when they require minor amendments prior to review. A revision might involve corrections; updating legislation or prerequisites; or making minor changes to improve assessability. The process is similar to that for review but the required level of consultation may involve only a limited number of stakeholders.

The Review Report

A report reflecting the nature of changes made is required for publication on the NZQA Website. This report is not intended to be a detailed account of the review process.

The report must include:

- the reason for the review and a brief outline of the review process;
- a summary of the main changes made;
- a list of the unit standards, in table format, with the changes shown in bold, and including the review category (A, B, C or D) ascribed to each unit standard;
- the transition arrangements from the old to the new unit standards, if any C category reviews are involved.

The report must also clearly outline the impact, if any, on

- existing provider accreditations
- currently registered qualifications that the unit standards are a part of.

Te Reo Māori in Unit Standards

Unit standards written in Māori

Unit standards may be developed and submitted for registration in Māori. Such unit standards must meet the same technical specifications as all other unit standards.

If, in order to maximise access to these unit standards, they are submitted in English and te reo, the two versions of the unit standard will be regarded as one unit standard and have the same id number.

Use of te reo in English unit standards

Where a unit standard is written in English, it may include individual Māori words.

Māori terms that are in common usage in New Zealand do not need a translation in a glossary;

Māori words that could have a number of meanings but are being used in a specific way should be listed in a glossary in the Special Notes.

Appendix 1 - Level descriptors

Level	Process	Learning demand	Responsibility
1	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are limited in range - are repetitive and familiar - are employed within closely defined contexts 	<p>Employing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recall - a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills - no generation of new ideas 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in directed activity - under close supervision - with no responsibility for the work or learning of others
2	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are moderate in range - are established and familiar - offer a clear choice of routine responses 	<p>Employing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic operational knowledge - readily available information - known solutions to familiar problems - little generation of new ideas 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in directed activity - under general supervision and quality control - with some responsibility for quantity and quality - with possible responsibility for guiding others
3	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require a range of well-developed skills - offer a significant choice of procedures - are employed within a range of familiar contexts 	<p>Employing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some relevant theoretical knowledge - interpretation of available information - discretion and judgement - a range of known responses to familiar problems 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in directed activity with some autonomy - under general supervision and quality checking - with significant responsibility for the quantity and quality of output - with possible responsibility for the output of others

Level	Process	Learning demand	Responsibility
4	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require a wide range of technical or scholastic skills - offer a considerable choice of procedures - are employed in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts 	<p>Employing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts - analytical interpretation of information - informed judgement - a range of sometimes innovative responses to concrete but often unfamiliar problems 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in self-directed activity - under broad guidance and evaluation - with complete responsibility for quantity and quality of output - with possible responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others
5	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require a wide range of specialised technical or scholastic skills - involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures - are employed in a variety of routine and non-routine contexts 	<p>Employing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas - analytical interpretation of a wide range of data - the determination of appropriate methods and procedures in response to a range of concrete problems with some theoretical elements 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in self-directed and sometimes directive activity - within broad general guidelines or functions - with full responsibility for the nature, quantity and quality of outcomes - with possible responsibility for the achievement of group outcome

Level	Process	Learning demand	Responsibility
6	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require a command of wide-ranging highly specialised technical or scholastic skills - involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures, often in non-standard combinations - are employed in highly variable routine and non-routine contexts 	<p>Employing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specialised knowledge with depth in more than one area - the analysis, reformatting and evaluation of a wide range of information - the formulation of appropriate responses to resolve both concrete and abstract problems 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in managing processes - within broad parameters for defined activities - with complete accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes
7	<p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require a command of highly specialised technical or scholastic and basic research skills across a major discipline - involve the full range of procedures in a major discipline - are applied in complex, variable and specialised contexts 	<p>Requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge of a major discipline with areas of specialisation in depth - the analysis, transformation and evaluation of abstract data and concepts - the creation of appropriate responses to resolve given or contextual abstract problems 	<p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in planning, resourcing and managing processes - within broad parameters and functions - with complete accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and/or group outcomes

Level	Involves skills and knowledge that enable a learner to:
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide a systematic and coherent account of the key principles of a subject area; and - undertake self-directed study, research and scholarship in a subject area, demonstrating intellectual independence, analytic rigour and sound communication.

Level	Involves skills and knowledge that enable a learner to:
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>demonstrate mastery of a subject area; and</i> - <i>plan and carry out - to internationally recognised standards - an original scholarship or research project.</i> - Demonstrated by: - <i>the completion of a substantial research paper, dissertation or in some cases a series of papers</i>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>provide an original contribution to knowledge through research or scholarship, as judged by independent experts applying international standards.</i>

Appendix 2 - Checklist for Unit Standards Evaluation

This form should be used in conjunction with the *Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Unit Standards*

Name of SSB:

Subfield(s) and domain(s):

Number of unit standards:

(For NZQA use only)

Batch:

	Checked by		Tick box for compliance, or include explanatory comments and expand in covering letter if required
	SSB	NZQA	Comments
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION			
Endorsement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Evidence of consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AMAP Registered No. _____ - or attach new draft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
GENERAL			
Outcomes do not unnecessarily duplicate existing unit standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Language is clear and does not present potential barriers to access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcomes are consistent with each other and the title	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcomes are consistent with valid assessment practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Evidence requirements are achievable, clear, and the assessment load is reasonable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Text is free from typographical, grammatical, and punctuation errors (publishable quality) & meets current formatting requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Checked by		Tick box for compliance, or include explanatory comments and expand in covering letter if required
	SSB	NZQA	
			Comments
SPECIFICS			
1. Classifications (SCUNQ)			
Subfields and domains are registered on the Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Titles			
Describe meaningful outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use the format Verb - Noun - Condition/Context, and are consistent with the domain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are unique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do not include options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do not exceed 100 characters including punctuation and spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Elements			
Are collectively consistent with level and title	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Express demonstrable and assessable outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are in a format similar to the title: verb in the active voice, noun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are all compulsory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Element and title are the same for single element unit standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Performance Criteria			
Express the critical evidence required to meet the outcomes in the elements (are not tasks or instructions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide informative guidance and sufficient detail for manageable assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Collectively indicate the level or quality of performance required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are consistent with the element	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Checked by		Tick box for compliance, or include explanatory comments and expand in covering letter if required
	SSB	NZQA	Comments
5. Range Statements			
Range notes that apply to the whole unit standard are placed in the special notes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are immediately below the relevant element, or incorporated into the element text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are immediately below the relevant performance criterion, or incorporated into the criterion text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Special Notes			
Full references are confined to special notes and cited as follows: Author, <i>Title of Book</i> (Place: Publisher, year), page no(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Glossary items are clearly defined and consistent within unit standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
References to other unit standards meet format criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relevant acts, codes, or regulations are included with formal names and date of enactment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The purpose of each special note is clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Level			
The level assigned to the unit standard accords with the level descriptors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Credits			
Are within the range 1-120 (inclusive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are consistent with unit standards of comparable outcomes and similar contexts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are fair in relation to content of the unit standards and aligned with the definition of credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Purpose Statements			
Summarise, and are consistent with, the content of the unit standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Checked by		Tick box for compliance, or include explanatory comments and expand in covering letter if required
	SSB	NZQA	Comments
10. Entry Information			
References to other unit standards and prerequisites are listed as follows: Unit <id no>, <i>title</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does not include time based entry criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relationships among the unit standards are not recursive (circular)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prerequisites are set out in a diagram (not for publication)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Accreditation and Moderation options			
Match statements on approved AMAP (Accreditation and Moderation Action Plan)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Comments by, and expiry date		<input type="checkbox"/>	These will be inserted by Framework Registration
REVIEW REPORT*			
Outlines the review process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provides rationale for, and summary of, the major changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Includes table of unit standards, with changes shown in bold, and including review category (A, B, C or D)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outlines transition arrangements for C and D category reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Includes table showing impact on accreditations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Includes list of affected qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

* for publication on the NZQA Website.

On behalf of
SSB

On behalf of NZQA

Checked by _____

Checked by: _____

Date checked _____

Date checked: _____

Appendix 3 – Quality Assurance Standard for ITOs

Section 1.2.2

Development and review of unit standards and national qualifications

The ITO submits national qualifications and unit standards that meet industry needs and are able to be registered on the NQF.

The ITO demonstrates this by

- i implementing a process for developing and reviewing Accreditation and Moderation Action Plans (AMAPs), unit standards, and national qualifications that results in standards and qualifications that
 - are based on the needs of trainees
 - are supported by industry
 - meet NZQA registration criteria
 - are normally of sufficient quality to be processed without needing further development².

The *QA Standard for ITOs* can be found at:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/aaa/resources.html>

or click on the following link:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/aaa/docs/itostandard.pdf>

² Typically, an application that requires further development will require the ITO to resume the development process and the application will be subject to several quality assurance cycles.