



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

**National Qualifications Framework
Levels 1–3, 2007**

Social Studies

National Moderator's Report

National Moderators Report for Social Studies

General Guidance for Teachers of Achievement and Unit Standards

The purpose of external moderation is to provide assurance that teacher 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.

Overall general comment

The three sets of guide notes published on TKI that focus on ‘concepts’, ‘perspectives’ and ‘values’ are key to the formation of core understandings for teachers in Social Studies. Teachers should consult these guides in parallel to reading the explanatory notes in each achievement standard when designing their assessment materials.

There continues to be variability in quality of assessment materials submitted for external moderation. Some schools continued to develop high quality assessment material, characterised by a comprehensive range of support materials for students, clear structure within the assessment task and detailed assessment schedules and indicators that formed part of an integrated sequence of learning and assessment.

Some assessment materials require more scaffolding for student achievement at the higher levels of Merit and Excellence. When constructing the task and the assessment schedule, careful note should be taken of the explanatory notes as they provide detail that will support enhanced student achievement and allow for accurate assessor judgements.

Specific Standards

90217: Conduct a social studies inquiry

The achievement standard states that this inquiry is to be managed by the student with direction from the teacher. This means that the teacher has a direct input into the process of ensuring that the student has had access to equal time and resourcing to complete all four aspects of the assessment criteria. Teachers who took careful note of the explanatory notes and provided detailed templates, timelines and feedback for students, recognised the equal weighting that is placed on each of the four criteria in this achievement standard. Some of the most successful examples of this management

process have involved the negotiation of a time line and the creation of check points where the teacher gave the student feedback on their progress.

When considering the focus of the inquiry, note must be taken of the range as indicated by the achievement objectives at level 6 of the Social Studies curriculum and not stray into other focus areas as this invalidates the inquiry.

90218: Examine differing values positions

The first criterion of this achievement standard requires students to explain why people hold differing values positions. Student responses for this criterion were often superficial, largely because of the lack of background resource material provided. More comprehensive background information that includes the reasons for people holding a particular view, would ensure more students would be able to attain Excellence.

There needs to be a clear distinction in the scaffolding provided for students between reasons for and consequences for society of people holding differing values positions. Consequences for society are bigger than effects on a particular person. The intent of the achievement standard is for students to consider an issue that has a wide impact on society and will therefore generate a range of values positions. Consequences of these values positions can then be put into action.

Some sound examples of assessment materials focused on topical high interest issues that were connected to a particular focus of the class, rather than a one-off stand alone activity that was created solely for assessment purposes.

90219; Decide on social action(s) in relation to a social issue

Some teachers used authentic situations based on events which were familiar to students. Student responses to these activities showed a high level of engagement. These students were able to establish an understanding of consequences of the social action and the selection of the preferred action were more concrete.

90273: Conduct an advanced social studies inquiry

The level two inquiry achievement standard requires teachers to provide guidance for students, rather than a comprehensive template of every step in the process. Some teachers provided a high level of assistance to students while working through the requirements of this standard.

Students need to incorporate evidence from their inquiry into their conclusions. Without this direct link the inquiry can not be validated. The achievement standard requires generalisations at Excellence. This means that students are expected to take the conclusions beyond the smaller focus of the specific research question and apply them to the wider context of the focus of the inquiry. Students have tended to add to the depth of information about their conclusions from their individual questions, rather than extrapolate out into the wider context of the inquiry.

90274: Describe responses to values position(s)

The step up from Merit to Excellence within this achievement standard caused some issues for schools. Explanatory Note 5 states that the term ‘in depth’ requires that the

social studies concepts and perspectives are linked and supported with accurate and detailed evidence. This means that the language used should include social studies concepts when unpacking the perspectives that people hold when responding in a particular way to a values position. This explanation of the response must be supported with accurate and detailed evidence to show that the analysis is not a theoretical position but does exist in society.

90275: Plan social action in relation to a social issue

When designing an assessment task for this achievement standard, schools must be mindful that the requirements at Excellence involve a two pronged approach to the planning of a social action that will address the social issue. Students must demonstrate the ability to evaluate a number of alternative plans as part of the process of identification of the plan that is most likely to succeed. Some schools supplied templates that provided students with enough evidence to justify their final selection for the formulation of plans but not for the evaluation of plans.

90691: Conduct an advanced social studies inquiry

The level three Social Studies inquiry requires students to conduct the inquiry independently. This means that they should be given an outline of the process, the expected outcomes, a time allocation and access to resources. In some instances, schools provided detailed templates for students which omitted requirement such as the linkage of a range of evidence from differing perspectives within the conclusion. Omissions such as this resulted in students producing a huge body of work but being unable to attain beyond the achievement level. While the process may look similar to that at level two, Explanatory Note 6 makes the distinction between level three and other levels.

90692: Explain a values system

At the core of this achievement standard is the development of the understanding that a values system is dynamic and is formed by the sum of its parts and that the relationship between these component parts has significance for the society within which the values system operates. Teachers have become clearer about this intent as a result of the publication of the Values guide notes.

The complexity of and potential for multiple interpretations of this achievement standard has led to the development of a range of models of assessment activities.

90693: Examine social action(s) in relation to a social issue

The trend for social actions to be based more on local events has continued as teachers become more confident with the requirements of the achievement standard. Because consideration of the consequences of the social action is a requirement for Merit and above, it is important for teachers to choose a social action which is still relevant in today's society. This will enable students to bring validity to their analysis of consequences through the availability of specific evidence.