

The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed Languages standards in 2019.

It does not clarify specific standards but provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year.

Awarding Excellence

When making judgement for Excellence, it needs to be ensured that all indicators of the Excellence criteria in the standard have been fully addressed. These are outlined in the Explanatory notes. The quality of evidence provided should also reflect the curriculum level. If the evidence demonstrates that the Excellence criteria have been only partially met, then the grade awarded cannot be Excellence. This is critical in distinguishing between high Merit and Excellence.

Consideration also needs to be given to the overall submission, such as succinctness and clarity.

In Languages, a grade is awarded for the most consistent level across the portfolio. Where Excellence (or any grade) is only visible in one piece, this will not constitute the most consistent level.

For Excellence at Level 3, students also show that they are able to analyse, interpret, challenge, explain, evaluate etc. They move beyond simply giving information or describing. In order to explore and justify perspectives, which shows evidence of language at the expected level, successful tasks ensure that there is enough substance to enable this. In some instances, for the Interact standard, tasks have been seen that are set at a level below what is needed.

Students at Excellence typically show flexibility to use the language they have learnt in a variety of ways and at the appropriate times. There will also be a high level of mastery shown of lower level language.

Collecting evidence

Opportunities are encouraged that allow students to collect evidence through different modes, such as blogs, video clips, etc. Such opportunities allow students to have agency on how best to demonstrate what they know.

Video evidence is already a feature of language evidence collection. Video is the most appropriate way to collect evidence for the 'interact' and 'presentation' standards.

Student wellbeing

Where students are guided in how to present their evidence succinctly, the quality of their responses improves. When students are aware of the concept that quantity is not an indicator of quality, this also helps to reduce workload pressures.

Some students produce an excessive volume of evidence. Students are not required to submit evidence beyond the criteria of the standard. It is appropriate for teachers to guide students to produce succinct evidence in response to the achievement criteria of the standard.

Sometimes, presentations especially, are well beyond the time expected. More successful submissions come from those who are able to produce concise, organised presentations that clearly show evidence of their ability in the suggested time frames.

The time and word count guidelines in the Conditions of Assessment are a good indicator of the requirements at each level.

In terms of student wellbeing, it is also timely to consider the importance of positive contexts and guidance regarding potentially 'dark themes' or inappropriate material. While the need for self-expression and realism is not disputed, the mental and physical wellbeing of students in their learning and assessment should be a significant consideration in programmes.

Dark themes are not an issue in Languages moderation.

Assessor Support

The Best Practice Workshops (online and face-to-face) offered by the Assessment and Moderation Team continue to be viewed by the sector as significantly contributing to improved assessor practice:

*"The workshop helped to review my own knowledge, and great to share ideas."
"It was great having time to challenge my thinking in assessment."*

Based on the success of the 'on request' model and the ability to have targeted support, the Assessment and Moderation Team will continue delivering this support model in 2020. Workshops or presentation slots can be requested to provide targeted support to regional or national audiences.

Additionally, we will continue to run the generic Transforming Assessment Praxis Programme, an online programme which helps assessors learn about re-contextualising assessment resources and collecting evidence in different ways to better meet the needs of their learners.

More detailed information, including how to request or register for a workshop, can be found on our Best Practice Workshop pages or by emailing workshops@nzqa.govt.nz.

Observations from the 'Interact' standard

This standard is producing some high-quality examples of students using the target language they are learning to express themselves and to interact with other people.

In some moderation submissions there is still an inclination towards role plays, interviews or interactions where participants have clearly practised the specific task. These do not produce natural evidence to support the criteria or intent of the standard. The most successful student evidence typically demonstrates genuine reactions to what has been said, rather than moving to the next prepared question.

There is no expectation that students will speak without practice of the language involved, as students will be learning the language in class and practising using it in a variety of ways. However, the specific assessment task should also not be practised with different students before the task, or with the partner before recording.

Students who demonstrate successful outcomes for the Interact standard come into an assessment having thought about the language they will be using. This may include some focus questions they may ask if the opportunity arises, while taking the interaction in natural directions. Providing questions beforehand is unlikely to allow evidence of the interactive intent of the standard to be demonstrated.

Overly rehearsed conversations, or teacher-led interviews where students simply respond to questions with prepared answers, do not allow for the above to occur. Elements of the unexpected are essential for students to be able to show that they have the necessary language strategies.

Typical characteristics of natural use of language include features such as seeking clarification, self-correcting, reacting to what is said rather than moving to the next prepared question, making mistakes, pausing for thought, prompting etc.

Successful assessment activities allow opportunity for students to provide natural evidence of the strategies required by the standard rather than rehearsed material.

Moderation shows that sometimes the task needs to be adjusted to ensure language at the appropriate curriculum level, e.g. talking about family by naming family members, saying their ages etc. reflects language at level 3 of the curriculum. For level 6 there needs to be some added complexity, e.g. by talking about past and/or future events, giving reasons and explanations etc. This is applicable to all of the internal standards.

Feedback and feed forward

The writing standard allows crafting and the use of resources. However, these resources should be used to assist the learning, not to provide complete chunks of language which are used unaltered and which the student would never be able to reproduce.

Successful student evidence aligning with the intent of this standard conveyed the intended meaning, despite acceptable inconsistencies for a second language learner. However, moderation has shown a significant rise in the amount of work that is almost error-free and native speaker-like in sentence structure. This is not indicative of second language learners producing evidence of their own ability to write in the target language.

Feedback for this standard should be general in nature and not error-specific, e.g. referring to a specific criterion that may need more focus. More than one opportunity for feedback may mean that authenticity is compromised.

The work submitted needs to represent the authentic ability of the student. The resource should not be the 'author' of the work. A guide to this may be to reflect on whether this student could reproduce a piece of work on the same topic on a further occasion, unassisted.

This is also pertinent relating to the intent of the 'Presentation' standard if feedback and feed forward is given on drafts. Resubmissions of a whole Presentation with the aim of improving pronunciation errors the second time is not a valid resubmission.

Communications

Outcome statements in external moderation reports

In 2017, moderation report outcome statements changed from '**Confidence**' statements to '**Consistency**' statements, as explained in an NZQA [Circular](#) at the time.

The previous **FOUR** 'Confidence' statements were changed to **THREE** Consistency statements. This reduction in the number of categories of statement has, in some cases, resulted in moderation report outcomes previously noted as 'Confident' now being noted as 'Not Yet Consistent'.

It is important to recognise that 'Not Yet Consistent' does not imply major issues on the part of the assessor, but that the aspects highlighted can be easily addressed through the advice given in the report.