

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Education for Sustainability
Level:	2
Achievement standard(s):	90814, 91733

General commentary

Candidates who achieved the strongest results were those who addressed sustainability in a balanced and integrated way, drawing together environmental, social, cultural, and economic perspectives in direct response to the questions. These candidates demonstrated clear alignment with the assessment criteria through focused, well-organised responses that showed purposeful selection and use of evidence. In contrast, candidates who relied on pre-prepared or generic sustainability material often struggled to meet the requirements of the standard, as their writing tended to be broad, descriptive, or only loosely connected to the initiatives provided.

High-quality responses were typically concise and analytical, showing an ability to evaluate effectiveness, consider implications, and support ideas with relevant evidence. Candidates who engaged critically with the initiatives, rather than simply describing them, were best positioned to demonstrate the depth of understanding required for Merit and Excellence.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 90814: Demonstrate understanding of aspects of sustainability in different contexts

Assessment

The examination focused on sustainability issues in two different contexts: waste-to-energy plants and the low mow movement.

Commentary

The resource materials effectively engaged candidates and generated robust discussions. Most candidates made use of the planning sheet to structure their responses. The inclusion of definitions for sustainability aspects and Māori concepts and values on the question paper provided strong support for candidate achievement. Demonstrating understanding and applying these concepts within discussions contributed to improved quality of responses.

However, there was a continued low number of candidates enrolling in and attempting the assessment. Despite this trend, the process of developing knowledge of sustainability—both as a learning experience and as a summative assessment—remains highly valuable given the increasing significance of global environmental challenges.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- explained how the practices outlined in the resource booklet contribute to a sustainable future
- referenced at least two different contexts and two key aspects of sustainability
- incorporated Māori values and concepts, specifically manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- delivered a comprehensive explanation of how the practices outlined in the resource booklet contribute to a sustainable future
- incorporated references to at least two distinct contexts and two key aspects of sustainability
- integrated Māori values and concepts, specifically manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga
- explained how the interrelationships between two or more aspects of sustainability support the achievement of a sustainable future.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- evaluated the effectiveness of both initiatives in achieving their intended objectives
- provided a well-considered analysis of the potential for both policies to contribute to a sustainable future
- integrated Māori environmental concepts and values into the analysis
- explored potential changes in local and/or international practices or policies that could promote sustainability.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- attempted to explain how the practices outlined in the resource booklet contribute to a sustainable future
- did not include references to at least two contexts and two aspects of sustainability
- did not incorporate Māori values and concepts, such as manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga.

Achievement standard 91733: Demonstrate understanding of initiatives that contribute to a sustainable future

Assessment

The 2025 examination comprised one question with two distinct parts. It focused on initiatives by organisations that promote sustainable practices and outcomes: New Zealand's Tourism Sustainability Commitment initiative; Tourism and artificial intelligence initiative.

Commentary

Overall, candidate performance showed improvement this year. Students demonstrated more consistent and accurate use of Māori concepts, and many were able to clearly identify the intended outcomes of the initiatives. The revised question structure provided effective support, enabling a greater number of candidates to attempt the final question and to demonstrate stronger analytical thinking in their responses.

However, a recurring issue was the tendency for some candidates to reproduce material from the resource texts without appropriate quotation or rephrasing. This often resulted in descriptive writing rather than analysis or justified conclusions, which limited the depth of some responses.

Candidates completing the digital assessment generally produced more detailed responses, supported by the absence of line limits, while those writing on paper frequently required additional space, particularly in the first two sections.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified the intended purpose of each initiative
- made conclusions about the effectiveness of each initiative that demonstrated basic understanding
- showed limited consideration of wider implications or future contributions to sustainability
- made little or no reference to Māori concepts.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- demonstrated in-depth understanding of the purpose and effectiveness of each initiative
- incorporated Māori concepts, particularly kaitiakitanga and manaakitanga, in relation to each initiative
- used evidence from the resource material to support evaluations
- produced strong responses to part (a) but, in some cases, did not attempt part (b).

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated comprehensive understanding of the aims and relative effectiveness of both initiatives
- integrated Māori concepts of kaitiakitanga and manaakitanga throughout their responses
- applied the initiatives to wider contexts using evidence from the resource material and their own knowledge
- proposed well-reasoned improvements that showed depth of understanding.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not clearly identify the intended purpose of the initiatives
 - provided limited or unclear conclusions about effectiveness
 - made little or no attempt at the final question.
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