

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject: Geography
Level: 1
Achievement standard(s): 91934, 91935

General commentary

Overall, candidates performed well when they used key words in the questions to guide their answers. This allowed candidates to appropriately respond to questions rather than supply pre-determined answers. Candidates who supported their responses with geographic terminology and detailed evidence from resource material and/or case studies, were more successful.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91934: Demonstrate understanding of how natural processes shape an environment

Assessment

This assessment had two parts. Part A required candidates to apply their knowledge of natural processes to an unfamiliar environment, specifically in relation to the phenomena/features that the natural processes create. Part B required candidates to apply their understanding of the impacts that natural processes have on a case study of their choice.

Commentary

This examination rewarded candidates who had developed a broad understanding of natural environments, the phenomena within them, and the processes that shape them. Case-study environments that provided clear opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the natural processes operating within them were particularly effective. These contexts supported candidates to confidently transfer their knowledge to unfamiliar environments presented in the examination. Contexts that positioned the environment itself at the centre of learning were particularly effective, as they enabled candidates to demonstrate how natural processes shape that environment.

Section A clearly distinguished candidates who understood natural processes from those who were overly reliant on the rote-learned answers from a selected case study. Some candidates struggled to explain natural processes in the unfamiliar environments provided. For example, candidates who had studied the Tongariro volcanic environment sometimes incorrectly applied volcanic processes to Resource A: Mt Cook, which is not a volcanic environment. Candidates who demonstrated an understanding of the broader intent of the standard, focusing on how natural processes shape environments rather than solely on the causes and impacts of an extreme event, were better positioned to meet the assessment requirements, particularly when they had studied multiple environments. This supported a more holistic understanding of natural processes and how they shape environments.

Some candidates did not show understanding of the difference between a natural process and a feature, when labelling the resources.

In Section B, successful candidates were those who focused on natural processes operating in an environment and then explained the impacts and implications of those processes. Many candidates instead selected major natural events – such as the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake, Mt Tarawera eruption, or Cyclone Gabrielle. These candidates tended to focus on the impacts of the event rather than explaining the natural processes behind the event and how those processes lead to impacts. It is important to note that sea level rise, storms, cyclones and earthquakes are not processes, they are phenomena or events. Candidates need to show an understanding of the processes that cause these if they include them in their responses.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified some natural phenomena and/or features in an unfamiliar environment
- described a natural process by providing a sequence of events that occurs in their operation
- linked a natural process to an impact it has had on people
- provided some case study information in their response
- used some geographic terminology in their response.

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

- identified a range of natural phenomena and/or features in an unfamiliar environment
- explained the link between natural processes and the phenomena and/or features they have formed
- linked natural processes to impacts they have had on people
- provided a range of case study information in their response
- used a range of geographic terminology in their response.

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

- identified a range of natural phenomena and/or features in an unfamiliar environment
- explained the link between natural processes and the phenomena and/or features they have formed
- linked natural processes to impacts they have had on people
- explained the implications that natural processes may have on people in the future
- provided a range of case study information in their response
- used a range of geographic terminology in their response.

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

- labelled processes rather than features on the resources or did not label the resources at all
- identified processes rather than describe or explain them as being a sequence of events
- discussed the impacts that people may have on an environment, rather than the impacts that natural processes have on an environment
- did not include case study information.

Achievement standard 91935: Demonstrate understanding of decision-making in response to a geographic challenge in the wider Pacific region

Assessment

This assessment was based on the decision-making surrounding the challenge of sea level rise in Fiji. The decision-making process involves an analysis of different viewpoints and perspectives relating to the issue, and how these can influence decisions that are made to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise in the future.

Commentary

Candidates are encouraged to discuss the concepts that are relevant to the context of the assessment. In this case, candidates who used the Fijian concepts found in the resources were better able to show a holistic understanding of the challenge and the decision that needed to be made to mitigate it.

Many candidates did not understand the difference between a perspective and a viewpoint even though it was clearly explained in the booklet. Candidates are advised to ensure they structure their response in a way that enables them to differentiate between these.

It was pleasing to see most candidates use evidence from the resources. While most chose to use evidence from the unfamiliar resources based on the challenge of sea level rise, those candidates who also included evidence from the stimulus resources were better able to show a holistic understanding of the challenge.

It is noted that a number of candidates who received Not Achieved did not complete the assessment.

The final question required candidates to discuss the viewpoint/perspective that had the least influence when making their decision. Those candidates who discussed a group/individual who based their viewpoint on one perspective, rather than multiple perspectives, were more effective when answering this question.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated a basic understanding of the geographic challenge facing Fiji
- identified the option each group/individual would choose
- used excessively lengthy quotations, which limited their ability to show understanding of the relevance of these quotations in their response
- clearly indicated their chosen solution to the challenge
- supported their responses with some limited evidence from the unfamiliar resources
- demonstrated a basic understanding of the holistic nature of decision making.

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

- discussed both the viewpoint and perspective of each group/individual in relation to each option
- discussed the viewpoints and perspectives of many groups/individuals when making a final decision
- supported their responses with evidence from a variety of resources.

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

- demonstrated a clear understanding of the difference between a viewpoint and a perspective
- clearly indicated their chosen solution to the challenge and justified their choice by comparing it with the other options
- acknowledged the viewpoints and/or perspectives of all groups/individuals involved

- justified their choice for the viewpoint/perspective that had the least influence in making their decision
- integrated evidence from both the stimulus and unfamiliar resources to support their responses
- incorporated accurate geographic terminology.

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

- described what sea level rise is rather than discuss the challenge this is bringing to Fiji
- did not demonstrate understanding of the difference between a viewpoint and a perspective
- did not support their decision with information from the groups/individuals involved
- did not use evidence from the resource booklet to support their response.
