

**Field      Humanities****Review of *Understanding Religion* achievement standards**

<b>Subfield</b>	<b>Domain</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>Subject reference</b>
Religious Studies	Understanding Religion	90816, 90817, 90818, 90819, 90820, 90821, 90822, 90823, 90824, 90825, 90826, 90827	Religious Studies 1.1-1.4, 2.1-2.4, 3.1-3.4

The Ministry of Education has completed the review of the achievement standards listed above.

**Date new versions published**

**December 2013**

**Planned review date**

**December 2016**

**Summary**

The Religious Studies achievement standards were first registered in December 2008 for use from 2009 onwards. The standards had not been used sufficiently to be included in the Alignment of Standards reviews that took place from 2009 to 2012.

The purpose of this review was to ensure that the standards were fit for purpose and meet quality design principles for achievement standards and recognise worthwhile outcomes that relate to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC).

The school sector and other key stakeholders were consulted about the draft standards during July and August 2013. The responses to the consultation drafts were considered by a Working Group comprising teachers and other stakeholders from a variety of different contexts.

It has been agreed that a two-year transition period will be put in place to enable teachers to phase in the new standards as they develop new teaching and learning programmes, and assessment materials. During this period, teachers may use the replaced versions of standards (or the replaced standards) or the newly registered ones.

**Main changes**

- Changes to titles, with corresponding changes to the achievement criteria for each grade.
- Simplification of language used to ensure that there is greater clarity about the outcome being assessed for each standard at each grade.
- For consistency and clarity of progression across the levels, the title of the Level 1 standards retain 'describe' as the outcome, the title of the Level 2 standards now all start with 'explain', and the Level 3 standards use 'analyse'.
- All the standards except Religious Studies 2.1 and 3.1 are category B reviews. This means that the overall outcomes being recognised by the standards have not changed significantly.
- Religious Studies 2.1 and 3.1 are category C reviews, which means that they have both been replaced by new standards.

Further information about the purpose of the review and the detailed changes that were made to the standards may be found in the Appendix.

### Impact on existing organisations with consent to assess

None.

### Impact on Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR)

All new and review category B achievement standards have been registered on CMR 0233.

### Impact on registered qualifications

Key to type of impact	
<b>Affected</b>	The qualification lists a reviewed classification (domain or subfield) in an elective set The qualification lists a standard that has changes to level or credits The qualification lists a C or D category standard
<b>Not materially affected</b>	The qualification lists a standard that has a new title The qualification lists a standard that has a new classification

The following Ministry of Education qualifications are impacted by the outcome of this review and will be updated when they are next revised. The classifications and/or standards that generated the status *Affected* are listed in **bold**.

Ref	Qualification Title	Classification or ID
0928	National Certificate of Educational Achievement (Level 1)	90816-90819,
0973	National Certificate of Educational Achievement (Level 2)	<b>90820</b> , 90821-90823, <b>90824</b> ,
1039	National Certificate of Educational Achievement (Level 3)	90825-90827

The following table identifies qualifications developed by other SSBs that are impacted by the outcome of this review. The SSB has been advised that the qualification requires revision.

Ref	Qualification Title	Classification or ID	SSB Name
0231	National Certificate in Employment Skills	90816-90819	NZQA National Qualifications Services

### Impact of changes on [Exclusions List](#)

For transition purposes, the following exclusions will apply for new achievement standards.

Achievement standard	Excluded against each of these standards
90820	91724
90824	91725

### Detailed list of unit standards – classification, title, level, and credits

All changes are in **bold**.

<b>Key to review category</b>	
<b>A</b>	Dates changed, but no other changes are made - the new version of the standard carries the same ID and a new version number
<b>B</b>	Changes made, but the overall outcome remains the same - the new version of the standard carries the same ID and a new version number
<b>C</b>	Major changes that necessitate the registration of a replacement standard with a new ID
<b>D</b>	Standard will expire and not be replaced

<b>Internally assessed achievement standards categorised as category C expire at the end of</b>	<b>December 2015</b>
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<b>The last date for assessment of superseded versions of internally assessed achievement standards categorised as category B is the end of</b>	<b>December 2015</b>
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## Humanities &gt; Religious Studies &gt; Understanding Religion

<b>ID</b>	<b>Ref</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Review Category</b>
90816	1.1	Describe key features of a sacred text <b>Describe the purpose of a sacred text within a religious tradition</b>	1	6	B
90817	1.2	Describe a significant aspect within the development of a religious tradition <b>Describe a significant development within a religious tradition</b>	1	6	B
90818	1.3	Describe key ethical principles of a religious tradition and how they are applied to an issue <b>Describe the application of the key ethical principle(s) of a religious tradition to an issue</b>	1	6	B
90819	1.4	Describe key beliefs of a religious tradition	1	6	B
90820	2.1	Examine the meanings within a sacred text	2	6	C
<b>91724</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>Explain a significant theme in a sacred text within a religious tradition</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	
90821	2.2	Explain the changes in an expression of a religious tradition <b>Explain the changes in an expression(s) of a religious tradition</b>	2	6	B
90822	2.3	Examine an example of contemporary social action related to a religious tradition <b>Explain how a contemporary social action derives from the ethical principles of a religious tradition</b>	2	6	B
90823	2.4	Explain the significance of a key belief within two religious traditions <b>Explain the key beliefs within two religious traditions in relation to a significant religious question</b>	2	6	B

ID	Ref	Title	Level	Credit	Review Category
90824 91725	3.1 3.1	Analyse a significant theme in a sacred text <b>Analyse the meanings in a sacred text within a religious tradition</b>	3 3	6 6	C
90825	3.2	Analyse religious expression in New Zealand <b>Analyse a religious tradition(s) in Aotearoa New Zealand</b>	3	6	B
90826	3.3	Examine the response of a religious tradition to a contemporary ethical issue <b>Analyse the response of a religious tradition to a contemporary ethical issue</b>	3	6	B
90827	3.4	Compare and contrast a religious tradition with a secular world view <b>Analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions</b>	3	6	B

## Review of Religious Studies achievement standards

### Introduction

The Ministry of Education, in association with NZQA, is reviewing the Levels 1-3 Religious Studies achievement standards. The focus of this review is to ensure that the standards meet quality design principles for achievement standards and recognise worthwhile outcomes that relate to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC).

### Purpose

The purpose of this project includes:

- developing L1-3 standards aligned with the outcomes from curriculum levels 6-8
- addressing any duplication of standards issues
- addressing any credit parity issues.

### Principles guiding review

The process has been guided by:

- the direction of the NZC – in particular the vision, values, principles, and key competencies and the conceptual strands of the Social Sciences learning area
- the Principles for Standards Review.

The principles guiding the standards review can be summarised as follows:

- A standard must be derived from a curriculum or established body of knowledge.
- A standard must have a clear purpose.
- A standard must allow valid and reliable assessment.
- Grade distinctions (between A, M and E) must be based on qualitative differences in achievement. Grade distinctions should not be based on the candidate being required to acquire and retain more subject-specific knowledge.
- Credit Parity - one credit should reflect a notional 10 hours of learning, practice and assessment for an average candidate.
- Standards should not duplicate one another. Duplication occurs when the central knowledge/skills, understandings, and competencies specified for a standard are all largely similar to those of another standard.

In addition to this, the following decisions have been made:

- All standards derived from learning areas in the NZC will be achievement standards (and not necessarily limited to 24 credits per level).
- The numbers of standards assessed in an external time-bound written examination at any one level will be limited to three per subject. Independent advice from assessment experts clearly indicates that for valid assessment in such examinations a candidate needs a minimum of one hour for each standard.

### Development of Levels 1-3 Religious Studies standards

These achievement standards were originally developed in 2007 and 2008 and are now due for review to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose.

### Nature of Religious Studies standards

The Religious Studies standards have been developed for a diverse Aotearoa New Zealand and need to be able to be used by all schools and all students – those with a specific religious affiliation as well as by those who have none, but wish to acquire knowledge and understanding of religions. This is viewed as important in the context of globalisation and of the migration of people of different faiths and cultures to Aotearoa

New Zealand. Understanding religions contributes to understanding how belief systems function in societies and to the fostering of an inclusive society in Aotearoa New Zealand that reflects the histories and traditions of all its people.

#### **Statement on religious diversity**

New Zealand is a country of many faiths, with a significant minority who profess no religion. Increasing religious diversity is a significant feature of public life.

Source: Human Rights Commission website: The NZ Diversity Action Programme: [National Statement on Religious Diversity](#)

In most of the standards, the Aotearoa New Zealand context of the standards is not specified, but it is expected that the context used for the standards will relate to the local, national, and global communities of which students are members. In effect, this is likely to mean that an Aotearoa New Zealand context is often the most relevant and appropriate.

#### **Religious Studies Curriculum**

Schools that offer learning programmes that are assessed against Religious Studies standards will develop their own school-based curriculum to:

- reflect their religious, sociological, and/or philosophical approach to the teaching of Religious Studies
- meet the interests and learning needs of their students
- assist students in developing their personal and vocational pathways
- support the aspirations of family, whānau, and the school's local community.

#### **Addressing Credit Parity**

The decisions made regarding credit parity are based on the guideline of one credit representing 10 notional hours of learning time derived from current research. The allocation of six credits to each standard has been retained.

#### **External and Internal Assessment**

All the standards continue to be assessed internally because this provides more opportunity for authentic assessment activities to be developed that relate to relevant religious contexts.

### **Rationale for Changes to Religious Studies Achievement Standards September 2013**

#### **What Has Changed?**

Most of the standards have a change in title, with corresponding changes to the achievement criteria for each grade. These changes have been made to simplify the language used, and to ensure that there is greater clarity about the outcome being assessed for each standard at each grade. For consistency and clarity of progression across the levels, the title of the Level 1 standards retain 'describe' as the outcome, the title of the Level 2 standards now all start with 'explain', and the Level 3 standards use 'analyse'.

The focuses of AS2.1 (was previously 90820) and AS3.1 (was previously 90824) have been interchanged to reflect a more meaningful progression of skills at each level. The focus on the sacred text now moves from describing its purpose at Level 1, to explaining a

significant theme throughout the text as a whole at Level 2, and then to detailed analysis of meanings at Level 3.

The grade descriptors within each standard have been expanded and clarified to give further guidance to assessors beyond the current wording of 'breadth' and/or 'depth', which was identified as an issue for users of the standards.

The grade descriptors (explanatory note 2 in each case) now use the standardised term 'involves' to describe the requirements for 'achieved', 'merit', and 'excellence'. In each case the term 'involves' means 'all of the following points are required'.

Explanatory notes have been reworded as necessary for clarity, to ensure they use religiously-neutral terminology wherever possible, and to include examples from a wider range of religious traditions.

Other explanatory notes have been restructured to reflect the most recent template requirements, and to remove information relating to teaching programmes and assessment conditions. Information relating to assessment is now included within the new Conditions of Assessment that have been developed for each level.

**AS1.1 (90816)** *Describe the purpose of a sacred text within a religious tradition*

There is a shift from focusing on key features to considering the purpose of the sacred text (this may be expressed through key features such as language features and genre). There is now a clearer progression to AS2.1 (significant theme within a sacred text) and AS3.1 (meanings within a sacred text).

**AS1.2 (90817)** *Describe a significant development within a religious tradition*

The title and achievement criteria have been reworded to express a single key outcome. The intent and purpose of the standard have not changed. There is scope within this standard for aspects of prayer, liturgy and worship to be covered within consideration of the significant development.

**AS1.3 (90818)** *Describe the application of the key ethical principle(s) of a religious tradition to an issue*

The title and achievement criteria have been reworded to express a single key outcome, which is to describe how a religious tradition's key ethical principle(s) are applied to an issue. Students are still expected to describe the key ethical principle(s).

**AS1.4 (90819)** *Describe key beliefs of a religious tradition*

The achievement criteria have been reworded to ensure that they express a step-up in the quality of evidence required for Merit and Excellence, and do not require additional evidence. Students are still expected to describe the significance of the key beliefs within the religious tradition for Merit and Excellence.

**AS2.1 (91724)** *Explain a significant theme in a sacred text within a religious tradition*

This standard now focuses on an explanation of a significant theme throughout a sacred text.

**AS2.2 (90821)** *Explain the changes in an expression(s) of a religious tradition*

The title and achievement criteria have been amended to allow for more than one expression to be assessed. The intent and purpose of the standard have not changed. There is scope within this standard for the expression(s) to be prayer, liturgy and/or worship. To assist in the interpretation of possible contexts for this standard, the examples of expressions have been expanded to include art, music and literature, as well as prayer, liturgy and worship.

**AS2.3 (90822)** *Explain how a contemporary social action derives from the ethical principles of a religious tradition*

The title and achievement criteria have been reworded to clarify the focus of this standard, so that it links clearly with ethical principles of a religious tradition to ensure progression from AS1.3 and then to AS3.3. Students are expected to explain how the ethical principles of a religious tradition give rise to the contemporary social action.

**AS2.4 (90823)** *Explain the key beliefs within two religious traditions in relation to a significant religious question*

The title and achievement criteria have been reworded to clarify the intent of the standard. Students are expected to explain the key beliefs of two religious traditions in relation to the same significant religious question. The key beliefs of each of the two religious traditions are likely to be different.

**AS3.1 (91725)** *Analyse the meanings in a sacred text within a religious tradition*

This standard now focuses on the analysis of meanings in a sacred text. Students must derive meanings using two recognised methods of interpretation, and then analyse both the meanings and the methods used.

**AS3.2 (90825)** *Analyse a religious tradition(s) in Aotearoa New Zealand*

The title and achievement criteria have been reworded to broaden the focus from religious expression in Aotearoa New Zealand, to allow students to focus on wider aspects of a religious tradition or traditions. The analysis may focus on one religious tradition, more than one religious tradition or on religion in general. There is scope within this standard to consider prayer, liturgy and/or worship within a religious tradition.

**AS3.3 (90826)** *Analyse the response of a religious tradition to a contemporary ethical issue*

While the title and achievement criteria have had minor rewording (a change from 'examine' to 'analyse'), both the intent and purpose of this standard are unchanged.



**AS3.4 (90827)** *Analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions*

The title and achievement criteria have been reworded to require that the analysis of the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view is related back to ultimate questions. Within the analysis, students will still compare and contrast the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view.