

Title	Conduct cervical screening		
Level	6	Credits	10

Purpose	<p>This unit standard is for registered health practitioners who wish to become qualified in cervical screening.</p> <p>It has been developed to align closely with the National Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP) - Competencies for Cervical Screening Education and Training.</p> <p>People credited with this unit standard are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – demonstrate knowledge of the NCSP – demonstrate knowledge of the barriers to cervical screening and strategies for improving participation – invite women for cervical screening and participation in the NCSP – assess the cervix and obtain a cervical screening specimen – interpret cervical screening tests, provide information about results, initiate follow-up action, and complete documentation – evaluate own cervical screening practice.
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Classification	Health Studies > Cervical Screening
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Available grade	Achieved
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Prerequisites	<p>Candidates must be a registered health practitioner, such as a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, enrolled nurse or registered midwife and must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a have a current New Zealand practising certificate; b provide a clinical supervisor for completion of the clinical component; c possess professional/personal indemnity insurance; d have access to an appropriate client base.
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Guidance Information

- 1 All evidence presented must comply with NCSP operational and procedural requirements as documented in:
 - *NCSP - Competencies for Cervical Screening Education and Training*, available at https://www.nsu.govt.nz/system/files/page/competencies-for-cervical-screening-education-and-training_may_2019.pdf (referred to in this unit standard as NCSP Competencies), and

- *NCSP Policies and Standards*, available at https://www.nsu.govt.nz/system/files/page/ncsp_standards_1.pdf (Section 1: *NCSP Overview*)
https://www.nsu.govt.nz/system/files/page/ncsp_standards_3-apr17.pdf (Section 3: *Cervical Screening Services*)
 - *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Cervical Screening in New Zealand 2020* (referred to in this unit standard as the *NCSP Guidelines*), available at <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/health-professionals/national-cervical-screening-programme/clinical-practice-guidelines-cervical>.
- 2 For the award of credit for this unit standard, candidates need to be familiar with:
 - *NCSP Policies and Standards* and its revisions;
 - Bethesda Coding System available at <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/publications/bethesda-2001-nz-modified-codes-cytology-laboratories>;
 - *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Cervical Screening in New Zealand 2020*;
 - Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 [(Part 2) Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights];
 - Health (Cervical Screening (Kaitiaki)) Regulations 1995;
 - Health Act 1956 [Part 4A National Cervical Screening Programme (s112A to s112ZP)];
 - Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.
 - 3 Competency for this unit standard must be assessed after the completion of a minimum of 15 cervical screening tests, or at the discretion of the candidate's clinical supervisor if the candidate has prior cervical screening experience.
 - 4 Non-New Zealand registered health practitioners wishing to apply for entry into programmes leading to this qualification, can apply to the NCSP programme manager for consideration.
 - 5 Candidates enrolled in a programme leading to this unit standard must have ongoing supervision by a permanent clinical supervisor when undertaking cervical screening, until they are assessed as being competent.
 - 6 Candidates must follow the practices and policies of the NCSP and demonstrate an interest and commitment to women's health and to ongoing professional development.
 - 7 For the purposes of this unit standard, *women* includes people who are transgender and qualify for cervical screening.
 - 8 Definitions

Cervical sample taker is a registered health practitioner, such as a medical practitioner, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, enrolled nurse or registered midwife who has successfully completed cervical screening training in accordance with the NCSP policies and standards.

Clinical supervisor is an experienced cervical sample taker delivering a cervical screening service who provides supervision, mentoring and support to the candidate, according to NCSP requirements.

Enrolled nurse refers to a nurse trained in New Zealand with a diploma in enrolled nursing (or equivalent), working under the direction and delegation of a registered nurse.

HPV is the acronym for human papillomavirus, the main risk factor for the development of cervical cancer.

NCSP Quality of Smears Report identifies the percentage of samples in a given period that were adequate specimens. The NCSP provides this report to all cervical sample takers on request.

NCSP Register is the national database in New Zealand that holds the details of cervical cytology and histology results, HPV tests and colposcopy information for all women who participate in the NCSP.

Priority group women refers to Māori, Pasifika and Asian women aged 25 – 69 years, and other women aged between 30 – 69 years who are either unscreened or who have not had a cervical screening test in the previous five years.

Reduce inequalities refers to improving the health of disadvantaged populations.

Sample refers to a cervical or vaginal sample which is sent to laboratory for analysis.

Transfer system refers to the transfer of records from one provider to another, where appropriate.

Visualising the cervix refers to the insertion of a speculum to obtain a clear view of the cervix, in order to note and record any abnormal findings, and to take the cervical specimen.

Outcomes and performance criteria

Outcome 1

Demonstrate knowledge of the NCSP.

Performance criteria

- 1.1 The cervical screening programme in New Zealand is explained in terms of the context of women's health in accordance with the NCSP Competencies.
- 1.2 Women's participation in the cervical screening pathway is described as per the NCSP Policies and Standards and the NCSP Guidelines.

Outcome 2

Demonstrate knowledge of the barriers to cervical screening and strategies for improving participation.

Performance criteria

- 2.1 Barriers to cervical screening are explained in terms of the needs and concerns of individuals and service providers.

Range barriers include – individual, society, system.

- 2.2 Strategies for improving participation are described that address barriers to cervical screening and reduce inequalities.

Range includes strategies of the – candidate, cervical screening providers, government.

Outcome 3

Invite women for cervical screening and participation in the NCSP.

Performance criteria

- 3.1 Women eligible for cervical screening, in particular priority group women, are encouraged to participate in cervical screening.

Range encouragement includes but is not limited to – health education, health promotion, community awareness raising;
health education includes but is not limited to – reasons for having a cervical screening test taken, the process involved, how women will receive their results, the effect of HPV on the cervix, the pathophysiology of cervical cancer.

- 3.2 Women are invited to participate in the NCSP in accordance with legislative requirements and the NCSP Policies and Standards.

Range invitation – includes recall for ongoing participation.

Outcome 4

Assess the cervix and obtain a cervical screening specimen.

Performance criteria

- 4.1 Women are treated with dignity and respect, in a culturally appropriate manner.

- 4.2 A clinical assessment is made in respect of the woman's health history, and any signs and symptoms indicating possible abnormalities, in accordance with NCSP Policies and Standards.

Range clinical assessment includes – identification of when HPV testing should be offered in accordance with the NCSP Guidelines.

- 4.3 The technique used for taking a sample avoids unnecessary discomfort to the woman in accordance with the NCSP Competencies.

- 4.4 The technique used for taking a sample includes visualising the cervix, taking a sample to produce an optimal result, and assessing the lower genital tract for any abnormalities.

Range lower genital tract includes – external genitalia, vagina and cervix; assessing the lower genital tract includes – recognising characteristics of normal and abnormal, the range of normality.

- 4.5 The candidate’s NCSP Quality of Smears Report identifies the percentage of samples that are adequate in accordance with the NCSP Competencies.

Outcome 5

Interpret cervical screening test results, provide information about results, initiate follow-up action, and complete documentation.

Performance criteria

- 5.1 Results are interpreted according to laboratory recommendations, NCSP Guidelines, and clinical indications.

Range evidence of ten interpretations.

- 5.2 Women are informed about results and follow-ups are carried out in accordance with NCSP Policies and Standards and the NCSP Guidelines.

Range follow-ups may include – a repeat test, or referral to a general practitioner, or a colposcopy service.

- 5.3 Accurate and confidential record-keeping systems are maintained including an effective recall and transfer system in accordance with legislative requirements and the NCSP Policies and Standards.

- 5.4 An effective interface with the NCSP Register is maintained in accordance with the NCSP Policies and Standards.

Outcome 6

Evaluate own cervical screening practice.

Range includes but is not limited to – technical performance, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, adequacy of samples taken.

Performance criteria

- 6.1 The candidate’s own strengths and areas for improvement are identified to inform future practice.

Replacement information	This unit standard replaced unit standard 1098.
Planned review date	31 December 2025

Status information and last date for assessment for superseded versions

Process	Version	Date	Last Date for Assessment
Registration	1	21 July 2016	31 December 2021
Rollover and Revision	2	27 February 2020	31 December 2021
Review	3	10 December 2020	N/A

Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR) reference

0007

This CMR can be accessed at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/search/index.do>.

Comments on this unit standard

Please contact NZQA National Qualifications Services nqs@nzqa.govt.nz if you wish to suggest changes to the content of this unit standard.