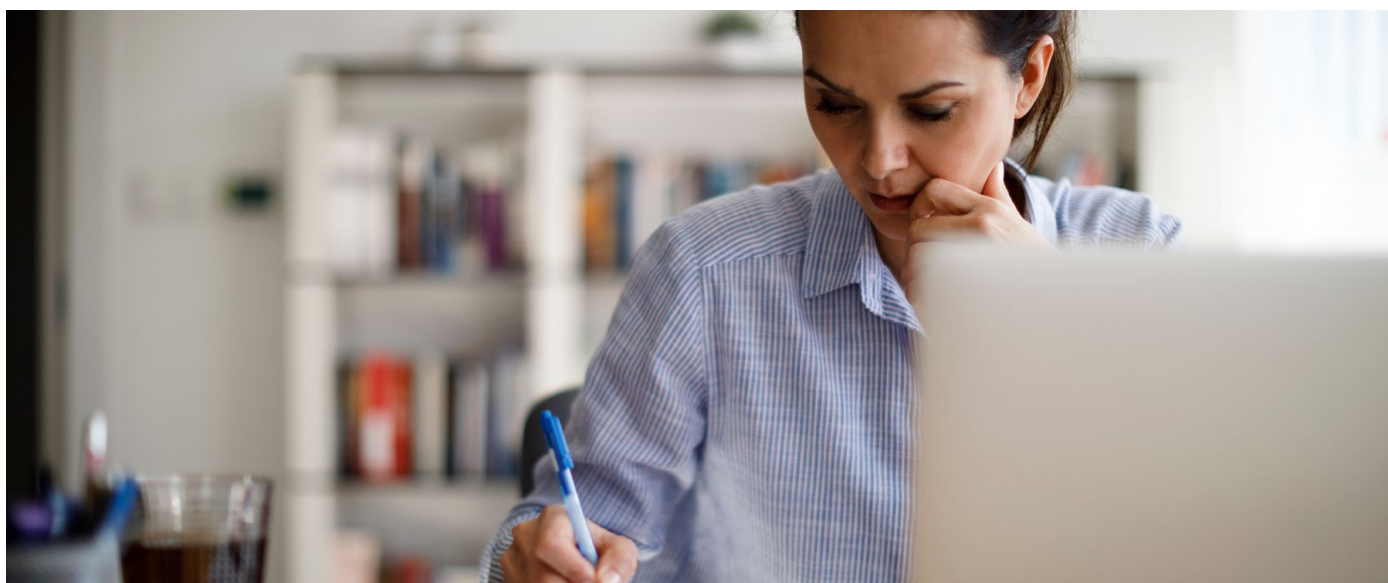


A-Z Guide

WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT



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Introduction

This is a brief summary prepared for employers who wish to offer their employees credit for national unit standards leading to a national qualification. If you require further information, please visit the New Zealand Qualifications (NZQA) website.

An employer must be an accredited provider of the National Qualifications Framework before they can offer credits under the Framework. In order to become accredited providers, employers must fulfil quality requirements to prove they have the resources to run their programmes.

Unit Standards and the National Framework

National standards are unit standards and achievement standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework. Unit standards are used in both academic and vocational contexts for National qualifications, while achievement standards are only used in school curriculum subjects. Each unit standard describes a specific level of performance. Each unit standard describes what a learner needs to know or what they must be able to do. Learners must meet the entire standard before they get the credit. There is no credit for partial success or failure. Unit standards are developed by experts in their fields (engineers for engineering standards, geographers for geography and so on). Each unit standard reflects the best of current practice and understanding in their particular field.

The National Qualification Framework

The New Zealand National Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) is the vehicle for registering national standards and enabling people to be assessed against those standards and get credit for a national qualification.

It is designed to provide:

- Nationally recognised, consistent standards and qualifications, and
- Recognition and credit for learning of knowledge and skills.

Framework qualifications are quality-assured and administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

10	Doctorates
9	Masters
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelors with Honours
7	Bachelors Degrees, Graduate Diplomas
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

There are 10 levels on the Qualifications Framework. 1 is the least complex and 10 is the most complex. Levels 1 to 3 approximately relate to secondary education and basic trades training. Levels 4 to 6 generally reflect advanced trades, technical and business qualifications. Level 7 and above equate to advanced qualifications of graduate and postgraduate standards.

- Framework qualifications consist of: National Certificates - at all levels but normally found at levels 1-4.
- National Diplomas - at levels 5 and upwards.

The assessor

The person who does the assessment is called the assessor. The assessor could be the immediate supervisor or manager in day-to-day contact with the people being assessed. They could be the owner of the business or a specialist trainer. They could also be an external assessor carrying out workplace assessments for a group of firms in an industry or region on behalf of an industry training organisation (ITO) or national standards body (the bodies that set the standards). Whoever the assessor is, they must be competent to do the job – competent in the functions being assessed and/or be able to recognise the competencies of others and to judge them against unit standards. The assessor who is assessing someone with a view to crediting their competence towards a national qualification must be linked to the quality assurance system required by the relevant standards-setting body.

The candidate

This is the person who is being assessed. They could be a trainee, an apprentice, a manager, or an employee at any level in the organisation. Candidates come in all varieties, young learners and mature adults, women and men, confident and hesitant, of different ethnic backgrounds and some with special needs.

All require fair, realistic and equitable assessment of their current competence and encouragement to go on. It's all about recognising the skills people already have and about encouraging them to develop more skills in the future.

What is Assessment?

Assessment is the process of collecting and evaluating evidence about a candidate's performance. Traditionally, most evidence has come from examinations, tests and other specifically constructed assessment tasks. The National Qualifications Framework allows evidence of student's performance to be collected from a variety of sources.

The candidate's product is a form of evidence. Permanent products include a report, a poem, a set of accounts, a tangible object such as a piece of furniture, or a drawing. Less permanent products could include a theatre performance, a meal, or a negotiation. In some cases, a process could be more important. The process could be taped, observed or recorded in a test paper. There can also be recognition of prior performance. The candidate could well have learned the skill and/or knowledge some time before. What is important is that he/she can show that the standard has been achieved (by prior work experience as evidenced by samples of their work, letters from their supervisors, etc.). The key is that evidence can come from various sources.

The evidence collected will need to be evaluated. The evidence can be evaluated using 1 of 3 approaches. Firstly, the evidence can be evaluated against the candidate's previous achievement. This is called self-referenced assessment. Alternatively, it can be evaluated against agreed standards. This is called standard-based assessment. Finally, it can be compared with the achievement of others – called norm-referenced assessment. The National Qualifications Framework uses a form of standard-based assessment.

What is a good assessment?

Assessment methods should be:

- **Appropriate** – the assessment is suited to the performance being assessed (for example a driving test to assess driving performance and a highway code test to test understanding of road codes).
- **Fair** – assessment methods do not disadvantage individuals or groups of individuals.
- **Integrated with work or learning** – evidence collection can be ongoing and linked with normal learning or work.
- **Manageable** – the methods used are relatively straightforward, readily arranged and will not interfere unduly with learning.
- The evidence collected should be:
 - **Valid** – assessment to provide evidence that is fit for the purposes.
 - **Direct** – assessment activities should be as similar as possible to the conditions of actual performance (for example a simulation exercise).
 - **Authentic** – the work being assessed is attributable to the student/candidate being assessed. If there is outside assistance it must not distort the assessment.
 - **Sufficient** – the evidence will establish with confidence that all criteria have been met and that performance to the required standard could be repeated with consistency.

Assessment should be systematic. Assessment activities are planned and recording is rigorous. Assessment should be open in the sense that the candidate understands the assessment process and the criteria to be applied. It should be consistent in that under similar circumstances, the assessor will make the same judgement again and other assessors will make similar judgements.

What is Moderation?

This is a process to ensure consistency of judgements. There is generally a moderation plan to ensure that all assessors who assess against a unit standard are using comparable assessment methods and making similar and consistent judgements about learners' performance.

Assessment Planning

It is essential that all assessment practices are based on the following planned approach:

- Analyse information contained within the elements and performance criteria of the unit standard(s).
- Specify the evidence required and link this to the context in which assessment will occur.
- Determine methods for gathering evidence.
- Establish the criteria for evaluating performance.
- Ensure the process links to administrative requirements (both internal and external).
- Determine what information is required by the candidate, prior to the assessment event.
- Ensure assessment strategies match the relevant quality procedures (including evaluation and pre-assessment moderation requirements).

Remember

- Always call AdviceLine on 0800 300 362 to check you have the latest guide.
Never hesitate to ask AdviceLine for help in interpreting and applying this guide to your situation.
- Use our AdviceLine employment advisors as a sounding board to test your views.
- Get EMA Legal or one of our consultants to draft an agreement template that's tailor-made for your business.

This guide is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice.

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