

NCEA Assessment Snippets

Geography Specifications

All teachers should have downloaded the 2007 versions of the assessment specifications for all of the geography externally assessed standards. These include material, which will help teachers to prepare their students for the examinations e.g. changes to the format of assessment and outcomes to be given specific emphasis including content, skills, ideas and perspectives(e.g. creating a histogram, and interpreting an urban environment from a feminist perspective are signalled at Level 3).

A statement in the 2007 Level 1 and Level 2 specifications that may need clarification is “Where questions lend themselves to being answered in written form **or** with the use of annotated sketches, diagrams or maps, candidates will be a choice as to the mode of answer.” I.e. it is hoped students selecting ‘written form’ e.g. paragraphs are not restricted from including and referring to a diagram or sketch, a practice currently encouraged.

NCEA geography, resources

Teachers who have downloaded internal assessment activities from the web, obtained copies from other providers, or written them themselves in the past should continue to check that they still match the current requirements of the standards i.e. that the assessment tasks, assessment criteria and the requirements of the standards all match up. A number of activities on the website have been updated (e.g. for level 3 geography version 2), and these are available at: www.tki.org.nz/e/community/ncea also check the ‘Just Up’ section.

NCEA information and results

Copies of the 2006 exam papers, judgement statements, moderators’ reports, examiners reports and examination results are available on the NZQA website. ,

Scholarship 2006

The scholarship performance standard and 2006 exam paper and resource booklet are available on the www.nzqa.govt.website as are the assessment schedule and 2007 Assessment Specifications.

2006 review and consultation process

This review was part of the planned cycle of review for achievement standards and was informed by feedback from secondary schools, advisers, moderators, and examiners. The main changes for geography resulting from the review involved *Geography Level 1 AS90203*

The phrase ‘and difference in living conditions’ has been removed from the purpose statement (immediately before the achievement criteria). This will improve manageability of assessment for this achievement standard. Difference in living conditions is better covered within the context of AS9033 at Level 2.

Geography Level 2 AS90333

The wording in both the achievement with merit and achievement with excellence criteria have been changed from ‘...within and between countries’ to ‘... within or between countries’. Considerable complex content is required for this achievement

standard and it was considered that the 'and' requirement was too demanding. The last sentence in Explanatory Note 2 has been deleted in line with the change to the achievement with merit and achievement with excellence criteria.

2007 Review of Geography L1 Achievement Standard

Significant changes to the Level 1 Geography Achievement Standards are proposed. It is important that your feedback is received regarding the appropriateness of the proposed draft reviewed standards. The consultation questionnaire must be returned by Monday 21 May.

National geography Assessment Trends

Overall Trend

It is apparent that students tend to achieve better in internally assessed achievement standards than in the externally assessed ones at all three levels. This is probably related to the effective learning that takes place in these topics, the opportunity to prepare students well using formative assessment strategies, the availability of reassessment / resubmission opportunities and the fact that the results of students who did not achieve, are not required to be provided to NZQA. However, given the significantly higher numbers receiving the internally assessed achievement standards it begs the questions why our students do not do better in the external papers given the review process the achievement standards have undergone, the more detailed nature of the specifications, the availability of past examination papers and schedules plus the annual examiner (and moderator) reports. In comparison with 2005 external results, the overall percentages of students who 'did not achieve' was higher despite more time, experience, credit reduction, and familiarity with the assessment systems and processes and the like. This may be an area for further investigation.

An ongoing and possibly related concern is the numbers of candidates presenting themselves on exam day, but then being selective in deciding which of the papers to attempt. This process of 'credit accumulation' artificially boosts the number of not achieved grades and makes the interpretation of results nationally less reliable. The reliability of results at the school level is not such a problem as the numbers of voids are indicated. It would be highly desirable if NZQA in this regard were to remove the number of voids from its nationally reported statistics.

NCEA Assessment for Level 1

As in the past at Level 1 the most popular external standards, based on student entry numbers, are 1.4 (Skills and Ideas) followed by 1.1 (Extreme Natural Events), with 1.2 (Population) being the least popular followed by 1.3 (Resource Use). The reduction in the topic coverage required by Version 2 of Achievement Standard 1.2 does not appear to have changed this situation. It is however noteworthy that 1,417 students did do the Population Studies related unit standard option. The most popular internal standard in terms of numbers gaining credit was 1.6 relating to Examining Current Geographic Issues.

At Level 1 AS1.1 had the highest percentage of achieved with excellence grades 7.8% while AS 1.3 had the lowest (1%). Surprisingly in 2006 AS1.4 had the greatest percentage of not achieved grades (62.1%) while AS 1.2 had the least (28.6%). A variation in external achievement paper results is still an issue.

NCEA Assessment for Level 2

As with Level 1 it is apparent that students tended to achieve better in the internally assessed standards than in the externally assessed ones. The reasons for this are undoubtedly the same as given for Level 1. The most popular internal standard in terms of numbers gaining credit was 2.6 relating to a Contemporary Geographic Issue and the least popular was 2.5 relating to Geographic Research. This result was also reflected in results from previous years (and is mirrored at Level 1). It undoubtedly reflects of the variation in difficulty between these two standards.

A real concern with the 2006 Level 2 external results (with the exception of Applying Skills and Ideas) is the high percentages of 'not achieved' results for the PCTs (62.1% for AS 2.2, 66.6% for AS 2.3 and 48.3% for AS 2.1). This has been an ongoing issue particularly for AS 2.3 and AS 2.2 and it is hoped that the panel leaders do not feel they are locked into the Profiles of expected Performance indicators.

As at Level 1, panel leaders indicated a number of the candidates presenting themselves on exam day, were selective in deciding which of the papers they had entered to complete, possibly exaggerating the concern to some degree. The trend of not attempting all papers is likely to be more pronounced at Level 2 with candidates only needing 60 of the 80 credits for NCEA (20 credits being carried over from the level 1 NCEA Qualification). The variation in results between the Level 2 standards warrants further investigation.

As in past years the achievement standards with the highest numbers of candidates entered to sit the external standards are AS 2.4 (Skills and Ideas) and AS 2.1 Natural Landscapes. The significant drop off in the numbers entered for 2.2 Urban Settlements and 2.3 Disparities in Development could be partly due to some schools not offering credits for one or other of these achievement standards or assessing them by the use of unit standards. Significant numbers are opting to do the unit standards for the Level 2 related PCTs. To overcome the high rates of not achieved results it may help if the Assessment Specifications signalled more strongly the main emphasis of the papers, or reduced the number of criteria being assessed giving learners more time to complete all papers. The modified Version 3 for AS 2.3 may help in this regard.

NCEA Assessment for Level 3

As with Levels 1 and 2 it is apparent that students tended to achieve better in the internally assessed standards than in the externally assessed ones. The most popular internal standard in terms of numbers gaining credit was AS 3.6 relating to a Contemporary Geographic Issues as was the case at the other two levels. In terms of percentages gaining each achievement level for the internals there does appear to be a high level of consistency, apart from AS3.3 which is also the least popular of the internal standards.

A concern with the 2006 Level 3 external results was the comparatively higher percentages of 'not achieved' results compared with 2005 especially for AS 3.4 (AS3.1 (48.4%), AS1.2 (52.4%) and AS1.4 (57.1). Increasing numbers of students at level 3 are opting to do unit standards for 5095 (Natural Processes) and 5096 (Cultural Process). This may be to give students more time in the external exam. In

the NZBOGT exam survey it was reported the students who were attempting all 3 standards, especially the more able, struggled time wise. A growing number of students are also selecting US 11084 Assess a work of fiction from a geographic perspective worth 2 credits.

Priorities for 2007

The Board should continue to be proactive in supporting achievement standard based assessment and the related NCEA qualifications. It is also important to continue communication with the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to bring any matters and concerns relating to geography assessment to their attention.

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