Toi Mai Quality Assurance Assessment Guidance Document

This document outlines the Toi Mai general assessment practice expectations. These expectations are also best practice guidelines and have been around for some time. The below outlined expectations are not exhaustive, and it is impossible to list criteria for every situation. As the standard-setting body for our industries, we always endeavour to ensure that assessment practices are robust and that our standards and qualifications have integrity.

When thinking of developing new assessment material and submitting pre-moderation, have an upfront conversation with us. Although we have outlined our expectations here, we are always open to having a discussion and hearing what your views are – we are here to support you. Please email us at moderation@toimai.nz

It is recommended that this guidance document is used with:

- Guide to developing assessments for unit standards
- Pre-moderation coversheet
- CMR0099 (v9)

Assessment practice guidelines:

1. Overview
2. Online assessments
3. Open-book exams/assessments
4. Multiple-choice questions
5. Assessor feedback to ākonga
6. Re-submissions
7. Assessment practice – the basics

1. Overview

Toi Mai as the standard-setting body believes that pre-moderation leads to good assessment practice and ensures that a national standard is maintained when it comes to assessing. It is therefore a requirement that only assessments that have been pre-moderated and approved are used.

Developing assessment material can be a difficult task, time consuming for both the applicant organisation and Toi Mai. Processing time is 20 working days, and re-submission must take place within 10 working days. When assessment material has been submitted three times or more, or there appears to be a lack of timely progress, pre-moderation applications may be closed. Where bulk pre-moderations are sent in, then turn around times may be extended.

Toi Mai will only accept pre-moderation applications where the applicant organisation is an NZQA-registered provider and has consent to assess for the relevant standards. We welcome integrated assessments (covering two or more unit standards), and we are open to alternative forms of evidence for assessment such as audio, video, photographs, verification etc. where appropriate. While previous versions of standards may be used, Toi Mai requests that for the development of assessments, the latest version of that standard is utilised.

When developing and conducting assessments remember to consider CRAVES:

Current: at the time of assessment, the work is relevant and up to date.
Reliable: assessment is at the required level and consistent.
Authentic: the work of the ākonga and not copied from other sources.
Valid: meets assessment criteria and is relevant to the subject.
Equitable: ākonga are given fair opportunity to meet requirements of the standards.
Sufficient: all assessment criteria and learning outcomes are covered.

2. Online assessments

Online assessments are digital evaluations used to measure skills, knowledge and abilities of students. The advantages of online assessments include convenience, efficiency and scalability, but the challenges include integrity issues, cheating, technical glitches and bias in AI-based assessments.

Several platforms specialise in different types of online assessments. Some of the more widely used include:

- Moodle
- Canvas
- Blackboard

Lockdowns pushed a lot of providers to rush to get learning and assessment materials online, without being able to take the time to evaluate the impacts of their current assessment practices. To ensure online assessments are robust, authentic and collect valid evidence we need to be aware of ensuring the following is taken into consideration. Please note when submitting online assessments for pre-moderation, you must ensure the submission reflects the conditions and environment of the assessment as viewed by ākonga.

Group projects, when being completed online, need to be managed carefully to ensure individual contributions are captured and clearly show criteria have been met appropriately by each ākonga.

Knowledge recall questions should be avoided. Multiple-choice questions should not be used, and if short answer questions are deemed appropriate, there should be a time limit given. There must also be systems in place to block access to the information to be recalled; for example, open access to the internet must not be allowed and open book assessment should not be used. Knowledge recall questions are vulnerable to cheating in an online environment. Online proctoring systems are available and should be used.

Online assessment lends itself well to extended responses, problem solving, explanations, scenario based, analysis and reflective exercises. This is also a good format for audio and video evidence.

Most Learner Management Systems (LMS) platforms allow for randomisation of questions from a question bank, and this would allow for different versions of the assessment to be created for each learner. The larger the question bank the more

secure the assessment becomes. Attention needs to be given to ensuring unit standard requirements are still met when substituting questions from the question bank.

Feedback and feedforward need to be embedded when initially designing an online assessment. Feedback and feedforward are two ways of providing information to learners about their performance. Feedback is focused on the past and can be positive or negative. While feedforward is focused on the future and is usually solution-oriented and constructive.

There are many methods to prevent and detect academic fraud, and developers of online assessments need to show their considerations and decisions made in this space and identify their methods.

Re-submission opportunities must be available to your ākonga, but there must be very clear parameters and limitations. Typically, ākonga will submit their assessment and there may be two resit opportunities after that. Your assessor guide should reflect how resits will be managed. Unlimited re-submission opportunities do not measure ākonga knowledge. Further guidance for re-submission protocols is available in *section 6. Re-submissions*.

3. Open-book exams/assessments

Definition: An assessment in which examinees are allowed to consult their class notes, textbook and other approved material while answering questions.

Questions within the assessment must be designed in such a way to enable ākonga to critically think and apply their own knowledge when answering, such as essay style questions, problem solving questions, solution-based questions or analytical type questions.

Open book is not a suitable assessment tool for simple fact-based answers such as 'Identify a comb and describe its use.'

Resources allowed in the assessment should not be providing the direct answer to ākonga. Resource content should only be available to support ākonga in making connections within their own analysis, and care should be taken with allowing class notes.

These exams should have a strict timeframe, and assessment conditions must be outlined in the student and assessor assessment instructions, including timeframes, and the types of resources allowed or not allowed in the assessment.

Please note: Toi Mai may ask further questions during pre-moderation regarding the delivery and resources ākonga are allowed access to as part of the assessment.

An open book is not the ability to google answers directly providing short answer responses.

All open book assessments must be conducted in a controlled environment with monitoring to prevent the use of AI access.

Research assignment

Definition: allocation of a task or set of tasks that are marked and graded. Ākonga are expected to complete the tasks over a set period of time.

Ākonga are presented with tasks/questions to research, then apply their own analytical skills to learn and understand the requirements of the tasks. They present their findings in their own words.

As with open book assessments, questions in the assignment must be designed to enable ākonga to think critically and apply their own knowledge when answering. Generally, resources are not provided in this type of assessment as they are designed for ākonga to research their own sources of information.

Assignments can be a presented in creative ways, for example: essays, portfolios, posters, PowerPoints, video presentations and more.

Research assignments should include a timeframe for submission. Ākonga should be required to document and reference their sources of information for their findings with their submission. The assessor should be reviewing any referenced material and ensuring the answers are not plagiarised.

It is the expectation of Toi Mai that ākonga answer in their own words and that questions are designed to ensure this can be achieved: How? What? Why?

Please note: although ākonga answers may differ in assignments, assessor evidence and judgements should still provide the assessor with a minimum quality and quantity of an acceptable standard of evidence required to be demonstrated.

When considering what type of assessment method you use to evaluate ākonga understanding of a unit standard content, the assessment developer must always consider the CRAVES *(outlined in 1. Overview)* assessment principles.

For the two methods of assessment outlined above, authenticity is a key element for Toi Mai consideration when conducting any pre- or post-moderation. Helpful guidance for this consideration during development is available here: Authenticity - NZQA.

Further guidance for re-submission protocols is available in *section 6. Re-submissions*.

4. Multiple-choice questions

The NZ Council for Educational Research identifies multi-choice as:

". . . questions that provide a number of options from which students select the best answer. The format of a multiple-choice question consists of two parts:

- *The stem, which is the introductory question, or an incomplete statement;*
- *The options, consisting of the correct answer, and the incorrect answers*

Multiple-choice is not suitable for use when outcome or achievement criteria call for learners to describe" (Hipkins, R, 2006).

Multiple-choice questions primarily test the memorising of facts, so the potential for incorrect answers to be selected is high (even more so if ākonga can try again). Multiple-choice options do not confidently demonstrate ākonga understanding and competency to the question being asked.

Alternatives to multiple-choice questions could be short answer or open-ended questions, where ākonga are expected to generate their own responses.

The NZQA framework provides a list of unit standard levels and outlines the knowledge, skills and application required from ākonga to meet unit standard outcomes. Understanding the requirements can help with assessment development: Level descriptors for the NZQCF :: NZQA.

Level 1 and 2

Multiple-choice questions could arguably be used for level 1 and 2 standards, when the response is for *identify* **questions only**, although it is recommended that assessments are not multiple-choice in their entirety.

Writing multiple-choice questions

- Write the stem, either as a question or an incomplete statement.
- Make sure that the options are grammatically consistent with the stem.
- Check that there are no clues to the right answer.

- Options must include realistic answers, not making it too obvious what the correct answer is (such as making wrong answers far-fetched or unrealistic).
- Avoid using keywords in the options.
- Check only one correct answer is provided.
- Make sure the correct answer is randomly placed. Some people tend to place the correct answer in the middle.
- Avoid double negatives (when two negative words are used together), for example: How should the task be *not* completed *incorrectly*?

Level 3 and above

The criteria for standards at level 3 and above will most likely require ākonga to **describe, explain and justify.** Assessment questions must allow ākonga to answer comprehensively in their own words, and multiple-choice questions are not appropriate at this level.

Reference

Hipkins, R. (2006), Using multi-choice questions for assessment. Assessment Resource Banks.
https://arbs.nzcer.org.nz/using-multiple-choice-questions-assessment

Further guidance for re-submission protocols is available in *section 6. Re-submissions*.

5. Assessor feedback to ākonga

Assessors need to provide evidence of supportive and detailed feedback to ākonga. Feedback needs to include details as to why ākonga received the grade they did and what the assessor has observed. Feedback that is identical and appears to have been copied and pasted for multiple ākonga is strongly discouraged.

NZQA website states: *"Evidence is the learner's work, which demonstrates achievement of the assessment criteria. It needs to be recorded in ways that can be verified by another subject specialist or a moderator."* Gathering evidence of learner achievement :: NZQA.

NZQA also mentions that "*feedback to students needs to be timely, acknowledges achievements and supports further progress*". If the feedback provided only states "Tim did well, good job Tim", this is insufficient as it doesn't outline what the ākonga did a good job in, and feedback needs to be more specific to the activity that took place. If there was a component where Tim struggled and needed help, this also needs to be documented.

NZQA quotes "*students have feedback that leads to improvement*". If the assessor doesn't provide ākonga feedback for improvement, ākonga will not understand improvements required, therefore hindering their future achievement opportunities. More guidance on this can be found on the NZQA website: *Effective assessment: Practice guide*.

6. Re-submissions

Re-submissions (or resits) occur when an ākonga has made an error that prevents them from passing the assessment the first time around. If an ākonga has made several significant errors, a re-submission should not be granted. NZQA states a re-submission "can be offered to individually identify students to correct a minor error and gain the grade of Achieved only, not Merit or Excellence". The achieved grade applies to both graded assessment and competency based assessments.

NZQA rules around re-submissions state that only one re-submission can be allowed for each assessment of a standard. However, NZQA also mention that rules for re-submissions for unit standards may differ where a WDC is the standard-setting body (SSB), and in this case the rules of the SSB must be followed.

Toi Mai recommends a maximum of two re-submissions as unlimited re-submissions do not measure ākonga knowledge or understanding. If ākonga cannot pass an assessment after two re-submissions, the achievement outcome should be 'not achieved'. If they want to try again, ākonga should be assessed at a later date after they have had the opportunity to review their learning.

Re-submissions may be offered only when the assessor judges ākonga have made a mistake they are capable of correcting themselves. If the assessor needs to provide the answer or more learning/teaching is required after the first assessment, then a re-submission is not the appropriate next step.

The assessor must supervise ākonga when re-submission takes place to monitor authenticity. More guidance on re-submissions can be found here: _NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024_ (Resits page 10) and _Myth 4 Resubmission :: NZQA_.

7. Assessment practice – the basics

There are basic assessment processes that should be embedded into practice. Toi Mai expects to see evidence of these processes during moderation.

Assessment material must:

- include clear fields to record date of assessment and assessor decisions – including re-submission dates and re-submission rationale
- be consistent in *versions* between assessments and assessor guides/marking schedules (preferably the latest version)
- identify where tasks/activities are in relation the unit standard PCs and ranges – a matrix is preferred – aligning assessment tasks to PCs.
- be marked to show assessor review and validation of ākonga responses
- have verbal responses summarised and recorded on the assessment.

When developing assessment material, please feel free to contact us at moderation@toimai.nz if you have any queries or concerns regarding the findings in this document.