

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship

Health and Physical Education 2025

Performance standard 93501

General commentary

Overall, candidate responses demonstrated effective use of the relevant health and physical education documents listed in the Assessment Specifications (note this list was updated in 2025), with most candidates integrating it appropriately into their topics. Many candidates clearly identified their chosen wellbeing issue or challenge early in the report and attempted to apply perspectives to explore a range of viewpoints related to their chosen issue. However, some candidates who referred to the new document(s) outlined in the assessment specifications did not apply different perspectives. This suggests that, while the assessment specifications were accessed, they were not always fully understood or consistently applied.

Some successful examples of perspectives included:

- using opposing viewpoints (for and against)
- a range of perspectives (e.g. youth, public health, government, or Sport NZ)
- different socio-ecological perspectives (e.g. personal, interpersonal and societal etc.)
- lenses guided by models and theories (e.g. healthism, Te Whare Tapa Whā, and determinants of health)
- perspectives from specific disciplines (psychological, biophysical, or sociocultural).

This year's submissions reflected a greater balance between Health-focused and Physical Education focused reports. Many candidates continued to select themes such as declining participation in sport and pressure within sport.

Reports generally maintained a socio-cultural focus, although it was pleasing to see a noticeable increase in attempts to integrate biophysical knowledge. Overall, there was an improvement in the quality of balanced reports, with evaluation more frequently established from the outset. Effective evaluation involved weighing different perspectives on the selected wellbeing issue or challenge and using these to develop a reasoned conclusion about its significance and implications.

The critical evaluation is expected to focus on the wellbeing issue or challenge itself rather than on the strategy document. While critique of the document(s) remains relevant, this should support, rather than substitute, the evaluation of the issue.

Although the choice of wellbeing issue or challenge remains open, this flexibility presented challenges for some candidates. Some selections demonstrated only a tenuous connection to a strategy document, resulting in limited integration and, at times, uncertainty as to whether the topic clearly sat within the Health and Physical Education curriculum.

Hauora was often treated in a formulaic and surface-level manner. Health promotion, and attitudes and values, were not as clearly or convincingly integrated as in previous years.

Notable strengths included sound knowledge of social determinants of health and key concepts such as self-determination, social comparison, and healthism, as well as effective application of the socio-ecological perspective.

Evidence suggests that some schools submitted work originally produced by candidates for NCEA Achievement Standards with minimal adaptation for Scholarship. Simply extending an Achievement Standard report by adding a paragraph to link the topic to a strategy document does not meet the expectations of a Scholarship response.

Report on performance standard

Candidates who were awarded **Outstanding Scholarship** commonly:

- demonstrated compelling critical evaluation through clear, engaging writing (without reliance on inflated vocabulary)
- employed a coherent structure (including purposeful headings) that supported a sustained and synthesised argument on an issue of personal relevance
- made explicit, well-integrated use of different perspectives to produce balanced, justifiable conclusions
- established a clear evaluative focus from the outset and maintained this focus throughout the report
- showed in-depth understanding of relevant Health and Physical Education concepts, integrating socio-cultural and biophysical knowledge where appropriate
- integrated the required strategy document(s) effectively, demonstrating a high level of understanding and critical thinking
- integrated, where possible, both socio-cultural and biophysical knowledge and concepts
- used social theories thoughtfully as analytical lenses to deepen critique
- grounded claims in up-to-date, relevant research (often Aotearoa New Zealand-based), challenging taken-for-granted assumptions
- embedded cultural knowledge and applied health promotion frameworks (e.g., Te Pae Mahutonga, Ottawa Charter) with appropriate issue-specific actions suggested for each component of the chosen framework
- demonstrated independent, divergent thinking and used evidence and theory purposefully to justify conclusions and consider future implications.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- selected topics clearly linked with the Health and Physical Education curriculum area
- engaged with the updated Assessment Specifications, integrating one or more required document(s) purposefully and demonstrating critical engagement rather than token reference
- established a clear critical evaluation of the selected wellbeing issue or challenge from the start of their report
- organised reports coherently (with purposeful headings) to support a sustained, synthesised argument
- substantiated the wellbeing issue or challenge and its impact on young people, using relevant, up-to-date evidence, including one of the specified documents (often Aotearoa New Zealand-based)
- incorporated a range of perspectives, albeit sometimes implicitly, to produce balanced, justifiable conclusions
- demonstrated conceptual depth by linking underlying Health and Physical Education concepts, and integrating a limited number of relevant biophysical and socio-cultural (e.g. determinants of

health, social inequality, healthism, theories of motivation and hegemonic structures) knowledge and theory where appropriate

- evaluated the wellbeing issue or challenge clearly, extending to implications and feasible improvements to policy or strategy
- exhibited independent insight by questioning assumptions and biases, applying social theories, and weaving in candidate-generated evidence to strengthen the argument.

Candidates who were **not awarded Scholarship** commonly:

- selected topics that were not well suited to sustained critical evaluation or sat outside the Health and Physical Education curriculum scope
- did not clearly identify a specific wellbeing issue or challenge
- showed limited engagement with the updated assessment specifications, at times reflecting use of older, outdated versions
- did not integrate evidence from the required document(s); referencing was often absent or minimal
- lacked a clear structure and logical flow
- presented formatting and length issues (too long or too short; spacing, margins, font size; limited referencing)
- overused images that added little value to the development of their argument
- demonstrated limited understanding of underlying concepts and of the Level 8 Health and Physical Education New Zealand Curriculum knowledge
- attempted to cover too many theories or ideas superficially, undermining depth and coherence
- relied on descriptive writing and large quantities of data without meaningful analysis or synthesis
- omitted multiple perspectives or these were weakly integrated, reducing balance and justification for conclusions
- presented flawed or superficial arguments, with no evidence of their own experience, indicating limited understanding of the issue
- submitted work originally produced for Achievement Standards with minimal adaptation for Scholarship
- misinterpreted the Overview of Youth Health as a strategy document rather than a contextual summary of youth health in Aotearoa New Zealand.