National Moderator Report 2026
Physics

The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed standards in 2025. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for Physics. Please note this report does not introduce new criteria, change the requirements of the standard, or change what we expect from assessment.

Insights

91521: Carry out a practical investigation to test a physics theory relating two variables in a non-linear relationship

Performance overview:

To meet this standard, students need to collect data, determine uncertainties, use graphical analysis to determine the equation, and compare the result with a physics theory.

Evidence that met the standard at higher levels described how variables were controlled and why, compared the determined result with a physics theory (often a formula), and stated the limitations of the result.

Practices that need strengthening:

When selecting a physics theory for testing, choosing one that involves several variables that need to be controlled may provide students more opportunity to achieve at Merit and Excellence.

Excellence requires discussing the limitations of the theory's applicability to the practical situation. This is more than describing the limits of available equipment. Other influences on measurements should also be considered, e.g. various frictions.

91522: Demonstrate understanding of the application of physics to a selected context

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to relate the key physics ideas to the selected context.

Evidence that met the standard had clear explanations of the physics ideas involved in the chosen context.

Physics concepts from level 8 of the curriculum are required to meet this standard.

Practices that need strengthening:

This standard requires research into a context that involves physics. Students who met the standard focused on the level 8 Physics ideas that apply while covering relevant technical or engineering details.

To give feedback on this report click on this link.

Assessor Support

NZQA offers free online support for teachers as assessors of NZC achievement standards. These include:

- Exemplars of student work for most standards.
- National Moderator Reports.
- Online learning modules (generic and subject-specific).
- Clarifications for some standards.
- Assessor Practice Tool for many standards.
- Webcasts.

Exemplars, National Moderator Reports, clarifications, and webcasts are hosted on the NZC Subject pages on the NZQA website.

Subject Pages

Online learning modules and the Assessor Practice Tool are hosted on Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system. You can access these through the Education Sector Logon.

Log in to Pūtake

We also may provide a speaker to present at national conferences on requests from national subject associations. At the regional or local level, we may be able to provide online support.

Please contact assessorsupport@nzqa.govt.nz for more information or to lodge a request for support.