



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 Religious Studies. Please note this report does not introduce new criteria, change the requirements of the standard, or change what we expect from assessment.

Insights

91916: Demonstrate understanding of the development of a community that shares religious or spiritual beliefs

Performance overview:

For Achieved, evidence that met the standard identified and described a specific community. The best quality student work identified and described who made up the community, where they were located, and key features of the community such as charisms, the work of the community, leaders, or influential people within the community.

The standard also requires a description of two or more significant factors that have had an impact on the development of the community, with examples. Evidence that met this criterion described significant factors that directly affected the development of the chosen community, such as natural disasters that meant the community needed to move, or the introduction of a new leader which changed the way the community functioned.

For Merit, students explained how each of the significant factors (such as the geographic location, the practices, or the people who were involved) impacted the community, such as how they impacted the growth or decline of the community, with examples.

For Excellence, students examined why each significant factor developed the chosen community over time. Examples that were provided developed the examination of how a significant factor caused the community to develop and change over a significant period of time into its current form/state. These examples were woven throughout the text to support statements made by the students.

Practices that need strengthening:

The most common issue seen was the lack of clarity and description of the chosen community. In some instances, only the beliefs of the community were described, or a description was given of society at the time rather than the religious or spiritual community. The community should be clearly identified, and a description of the specific community is required. This could include who makes up the community, where they are or have been located, when they were present, and the beliefs of the specific community.

The significant factors need to have a focus on the development of the community. This involves a focus on the evolution of the community. A historical recall of the community is not a requirement of the standard. Additionally, both significant factors should directly relate to the community identified and described.

For Merit, the explanation of how the significant factors developed the community needs to focus on how each factor developed the religious or spiritual community, rather than how

they developed society in general at the time. Additionally, how more than one significant factor developed the community needs to be explained.

91917: Demonstrate understanding of how a significant narrative relates to a religious or spiritual tradition

Performance overview:

Evidence that was awarded Achieved gave clear and well-developed descriptions of the chosen narrative's background, including details about its author, intended audience, and historical setting. These responses also identified more than one key message within the narrative and explained the meaning of each. Effective student responses used examples drawn directly from the chosen narrative to illustrate the messages.

For Merit, evidence that aligned with the requirements of the standard demonstrated this connection through references to the beliefs, teachings, or practices of the tradition. Furthermore, each message was supported by at least one example demonstrating the link clearly and accurately.

At Excellence, students showed how the key messages are reflected in the lives of members of the tradition today. The strongest responses demonstrated these messages in practice, using examples drawn directly from the tradition and integrated naturally into the discussion.

Practices that need strengthening:

For Achieved, challenges arose when the origin or context of the narrative was briefly touched on rather than described. The best quality student work described who wrote the narrative, who the audience was, and when and where it was written.

When key messages focused only on specific stories or events, the standard was not met. Overemphasis on characters or episodes distracted from the main message. The standard is best met when the significant narrative clearly conveys key messages that encourage discussion about their meaning.

Difficulty arose when more than one religious tradition was used and students used evidence from a tradition different from the one identified. One clear religious or spiritual tradition needs to be identified and used.

For Merit, difficulties arose when the link between the narrative and the tradition was unclear. To meet the standard, students should identify core beliefs, practices, or values from the chosen tradition that connect to the key messages.

For Excellence, challenges arose when examples of how key messages are applied did not come from the chosen tradition. Difficulties arose when examples were too generalised, such as referring broadly to Christianity rather than to a specific denomination such as Catholicism. All examples should be drawn directly from the selected tradition to meet the requirements of the standard.

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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.

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