



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

Insights

92048: Demonstrate understanding of findings of a social inquiry

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to communicate their findings from a social inquiry using primary and secondary evidence.

Successful responses tended to focus on depth rather than breadth in relation to the inquiry question. Assessors supported this by:

- Ensuring students had strong familiarity with the inquiry context before starting the assessment.
- Designing a single, rich, challenging inquiry question (and carefully aligned sub-questions where appropriate), rather than multiple separate questions not connected by an overarching question.
- Developing the question themselves, or co-constructing it with students, enabling evaluation and critical conclusions (rather than description or explanation) to ensure sufficient challenge for Excellence.
- Pitching the inquiry question at curriculum level 6 and making it accessible to all students.

Examples of questions that allow students to evaluate and critically connect findings include:

- Should New Zealand ban social media for under-16s?
- How is climate change affecting where people live in the Pacific and New Zealand?
- Why is the treatment of migrants in the United States by ICE seen as a global human rights issue?
- To what extent does social media help or harm young people to understand political issues in New Zealand?

To gain further insight into the importance of developing appropriate focus questions for this standard, and guidance on how this can be achieved, please see the 'Developing Evaluative Questions' bite-sized module on Pūtake.

Practices that need strengthening:

More careful consideration of how students use primary and secondary evidence is needed to ensure consistency with the national standard.

Features of student use at each grade level include the following:

- **Achieved** – Students use relevant primary and secondary evidence to support generalisations. This may include statistics, graphs, photographs, dates, names, quotes, survey results, official documents, news articles, and interview excerpts. Each key finding has some form of relevant evidence within the description.
- **Merit** – Students use evidence to support explanations. Evidence is clearly connected to the inquiry focus, and multiple pieces are likely used for each key finding. Students may explicitly explain relevance using phrases such as “This shows...” or “This indicates...” Evidence is processed rather than copied as large text blocks.
- **Excellence** – Students use evidence to develop evaluation. Indicators include multiple pieces of evidence working together for a key finding, careful selection of sources, and consideration of how evidence contrasts or builds on each other to influence overall conclusions.

If students gather their own primary source data, assessors should ensure it clearly aligns with the inquiry question. In many cases, this evidence appeared to be included solely to meet the requirement for primary sources, without considering its relevance to the question.

Additionally, the focus of the inquiry must also be aligned to the themes outlined in Explanatory Note 4. These include:

- The impacts of a global flow.
- Diversity and inclusion in society.
- The views on and application of human rights.
- The dynamic nature of identity and culture.

92051: Describe a social action undertaken to support or challenge a system

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to take a social action related to a social issue and, through that action, support or challenge a system connected to the issue.

Students were most likely to meet the requirements of the standard when the system was clearly identified in the assessment task, and they understood how it worked and connected to the selected issue before choosing their social action and engaging in the assessment activity.

Selecting a system appropriate for curriculum level 6 was essential. The systems that consistently appeared to be the most effective were:

- **Humanitarian system.** Organisations or networks that provide aid and relief during crises or emergencies. Components often include fundraising, volunteers, and resource distribution.
- **Social Welfare System.** Government and community services that support wellbeing through housing, healthcare, income assistance, and related programmes. Components include policies, agencies, service providers, funding structures, resources, and volunteers.
- **School.** The education system within a school setting, including rules, leadership, and processes that shape student learning and wellbeing. Components often involve teachers, boards, and school policies.

Students tended to be most successful in this standard where the teacher had provided and taught both the issue and the system before students were able to select their own social action.

Full class social actions were also effective, as long as students were able to clearly demonstrate their own action in relation to the overall action and had a clear understanding of the issue and system.

Practices that need strengthening:

To strengthen the assessment, it is helpful to identify the issue and system first, then select an action that naturally aligns with their choice. This approach supports clearer connections and more meaningful discussion of the action, its impact, and its suitability in relation to the system.

Students were least likely to meet the requirements of the standard when:

- The system they aimed to support or challenge was not made explicit in their response.
- The social action lacked a clear focus in relation to that system.

Some students attempted to both support and challenge the system, which could cloud their ability to clearly communicate and explain the impact and evaluate suitability.

Appropriate Social Action

The scope of the social action should be carefully considered to ensure students can meaningfully measure and discuss its impacts and evaluate its suitability. For example:

Issue: Poverty in New Zealand

System: Support for Social Welfare System

- Limited Scope – Bringing in two cans from home for a class food drive.
- High Scope – Raising awareness for the food drive, engaging neighbours, approaching local supermarkets for donations, and bringing in their own cans from home.

Issue: Social Media access for Under-16s

System: Support for legislative system

- Limited Scope – Sending a single email to an MP who has already indicated they support the bill.
- High Scope – Sending multiple letters to MPs from political parties that have indicated they would not support the bill, signing the petition on the B416 website, preparing a submission on the bill for a select committee.

It is highly beneficial for assessors to have confidence prior to students undertaking their social action that:

- the selected system and the action are clearly aligned,
- that students understand if they are challenging or supporting that system, and
- the scope of the action provides opportunities for explanation and evaluation that reflect curriculum level 6.

When the assessment task required a pre-determined social action (such as creating a PSA) before the social issue and system were considered, this often limited the students' ability to effectively communicate how they have supported or challenged a system in relation to an issue.

To strengthen the assessment, it is helpful to identify the issue and system first, then select an action that naturally aligns with their choice. This approach supports clearer connections and more meaningful discussion of the action and its impact.

Level 2 and Level 3

Practices that need strengthening:

Across Levels 2 and 3, further understanding is needed of the criteria requiring students to discuss "perspectives, values, and points of view".

When this criterion applies, students must address all three elements. At curriculum levels 7 and 8, students should also show some connection between these elements.

For Social Studies standards, 'points of view' and 'perspectives' have distinct meanings and must be treated separately:

- Points of view are opinions or attitudes about an issue, action, or event. These are specific and situational and may change based on the information that is available.
- Perspectives are broader ideologies or frameworks shaping those views, e.g. conservative, feminist, te ao Māori, nationalist. These tend to remain stable over time.

Values and beliefs sit within perspectives, while points of view are held by individuals or groups aligned with those values and beliefs.

Example

- Social Issue: Managed retreats in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Perspective: Indigenous
- Values: Deep connection between people, land, and culture; kaitiakitanga; whakapapa to ancestral land; manaakitanga; decolonisation.
- Viewpoint: Claire Charters (Auckland Law Professor and Rongomau Taketake at HRC).
 - Risk of Māori being disproportionately impacted.
 - Māori must be involved in decision-making due to fundamental value differences.
 - As kaitiaki, decisions would follow a different process.

When selecting contexts, students are most successful when perspectives and ideologies are clearly defined before assessment begins. At curriculum levels 7 and 8, it is still appropriate to scaffold by helping define relevant perspectives and ideologies during teaching and learning.

To gain further understanding of this criterion, the bite-sized module 'Point of View' on Pūtake is available.

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.