

Te Pūrongo Aroturuki Hōtaka

Ngā Pūnaha Mātairua Tarāwhare

Workforce Development Council Monitoring Report

National External Moderation 2022

Muka Tangata

People, Food and Fibre

30 Whiringa-ā-nuku 2023

30 October 2023

Take o te aroturuki | Purpose of the Monitoring

NZQA's role in the education sector is to ensure that New Zealand qualifications are regarded as credible and robust, nationally, and internationally, to help learners succeed in their chosen endeavours and to contribute to New Zealand society. This includes the monitoring of the quality of the Workforce Development Council's (WDC) systems and procedures for its moderation activities.

The purpose of this monitoring activity is to ensure Muka Tangata's national external moderation (NEM) systems and processes provide assurance that assessment materials are fit for purpose and assessor decisions are consistent with the national standards across all organisations that have consent to assess.

Commentary through the summary and analysis is intended to assist the individual WDC and strengthen the capability building and stewardship of this sector.

Tukanga aroturuki | Monitoring process

This review has been informed by Muka Tangata's self-assessment against the agreed NEM principles. The self-assessment report is intended to reflect on activity undertaken over the 2022 NEM cycle.

NZQA have analysed and reviewed the self-assessment report and the evidence provided, against the six NEM Principles which were agreed with the WDCs in May 2023 and reflected in the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Listing and Operational Rules 2022.

Te takenga | Background

Muka Tangata was established in 2021 as part of the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) and is the WDC responsible for the People, Food and Fibre sectors. As such, Muka Tangata manages four consent and moderation requirements (CMRs), two of which are shared by Toi Mai and Hanga Ara Rau. Muka Tangata supports a diverse range of industries within the people, food, and fibre sectors, having oversight of fourteen strategic sectors:

- Apiculture
- Arable
- Dairy farming
- Equine, Greyhounds and Racing
- Forestry
- Fruit

- Grapes and Wine
- Nursery, Turf and Gardening
- Poultry, Pigs, and other livestock farming
- Seafood
- Sheep, Beef, Deer, and Wool farming
- Support services
- Vegetables
- Veterinary Services and Animal Care

Muka Tangata's purpose is to maintain sector confidence and improve assessment outcomes for learners, employers and education organisations while ensuring programmes are industry-endorsed, employer-relevant and that qualifications meet national standards.

Having established a national external moderation system and processes based on existing effective models, Muka Tangata has since focused on research and feedback from educational organisations and industry partners. This is used to develop a sustainable approach for continual improvement. In 2022, SAARA, an external contractor, was engaged to review and report on Muka Tangata's quality assurance and moderation activities, including insights from partners. This report has enabled Muka Tangata to identify current good practices and implement change or improvements in areas which require strengthening.

Kitenga whakarāpopototanga | Summary of key findings

Muka Tangata has developed an effective NEM system that provides confidence that assessment practices are fair, valid, and consistent across its sectors.

On average, Muka Tangata verified 75% of the assessments they moderated. The verification rate of assessor decisions varied between education organisation types, with Te Pūkenga – Work Based Learning (WBL) having the highest rate of agreement with assessor decisions and other Te Pūkenga business divisions having the lowest.

Muka Tangata has effective moderation processes for assessment standards that:

- requires all education organisations to submit assessment materials for pre-assessment moderation in accordance with the requirements of the designated CMRs.
- identifies and prioritises pre-assessment moderation of assessment materials that have not been moderated by former Standard-Setting Bodies (SSBs).

- uses a risk-based approach to identify and prioritise post-assessment moderation of learner samples of unit standards and education organisations.
- has a matrix of guidelines and follow-up actions to resolve assessment and moderation issues of varying severity.
- views moderation as an opportunity to proactively manage poor assessment and moderation practice.
- supports Mātauranga Māori-based learning.

Ngā tūtohu | Recommendations

1. Continue to have a close relationship with the WDCs Community of Practice (CoP) committee to share expertise and help bring about sustainable flexibility and adaptability while maintaining consistency within this regulated space.
2. Continue to support research conducted on behalf of Muka Tangata's industry sectors and use the findings to inform the NEM system and assessment and moderation practices.
3. Continue to develop and work to incorporate Mātauranga Māori into business as usual and provide education organisations with practical te ao Māori support in assessment design, assessment practice, and moderation processes detailing the number of activities planned per annum.
4. Continue strong messaging to submit assessment material for pre-assessment moderation to provide assurance that assessments are fit for purpose.

Ngā kitenge āmiki | Detailed findings

- a. National external moderation ensures assessment practice is fair, valid, and consistent

Muka Tangata's moderation system is designed and implemented to ensure assessment practice is fair, valid, and consistent.

Muka Tangata is developing policies, processes, and practices to support fair, valid, and consistent assessment practices across the sectors for which it is the standard-setting body.

Muka Tangata publishes an annual moderation plan and sends requests for moderation submission to providers quarterly. This outlines the moderation purpose and approach and provides a list of the unit standards selected for moderation and the documentation required. Muka Tangata does not utilise long-term plans, instead it bases annual plans on risks. This approach requires flexibility to respond to assessment and moderation needs of industry sectors and is not suitable to long-term quantitative selections, such as five-year plans.

Muka Tangata's strategic approach means that all communications aim to ensure valid assessment methodology across the Muka Tangata industry sectors. Communications with educational organisations outline expectations before the assessment begins. This sets a clear foundation for consistency across assessment practices. Newsletters, up-to-date website information, and face-to-face workshops offer a range of opportunities for education organisations to actively engage with Muka Tangata.

Muka Tangata Quality Assurance Specialists are recruited on the basis of their qualifications, experience and expertise in assessment and moderation. They are expected to fulfil the strategic expectations of supporting education organisations which assess learners within their sector and developing effective moderation practices. Staff have assessment and moderation qualifications recognised in the tertiary education and training sector or acquired and demonstrated through extensive industry experience. Quality Assurance Specialists are provided with professional development opportunities and are required to have completed or be working towards attaining relevant unit standards.

NZQA notes that CoPs have been established both within Muka Tangata and with the other WDCs' quality assurance teams. It is anticipated that these CoPs will develop consistency and cohesion between groups to ensure their assessment and moderation processes and practices align. Interactions with other standard-setting bodies provide an external gauge of best practices for assessment and moderation activities and also enable Muka Tangata to share their experience and expertise with the CoP.

Overall, Muka Tangata has the foundations of effective assessment and moderation systems in place. NZQA expects that further development and refinement will occur in the future.

Pre-assessment moderation

Muka Tangata requires that all assessments are pre-assessment moderated before being used by the education organization, as required by the relevant CMRs. Pre-assessment moderation requirements are clearly defined and identified in the pre-assessment coversheet, which is found on the Muka Tangata website. Providing this information enables education organisations to meet the expectations outlined or seek specific support from Muka Tangata. The pre-assessment moderation criteria are clear and relevant, and the report template directs the moderator to note issues as well as any required and recommended actions for the education organisation to complete.

Pre-assessment moderation is important to ensure that assessment is flexible enough to accommodate different assessment outcomes and assessment methodologies, including Mātauranga Māori-based learning and assessment.

Muka Tangata has seen a decline in the number of education organisations delivering and assessing standards in 2022 (124) compared to 2021 (167). Schools/kura account for the highest number of organisations assessed.

Muka Tangata conducted pre-assessment moderation on 438 assessment resources, of which 352 were approved or approved with modifications (80%). Another 62 (14%) were not approved and required a resubmission, with a further 24 (5%) assessment resources still in progress. Muka Tangata identified that they are working closely with education organisations or developers to resolve issues identified in pre-assessment moderation.

Muka Tangata requires all assessments of unit standards to be submitted for pre-assessment moderation prior to use. This requirement will enable Muka Tangata to gather more data regarding education organisation capability in assessment design and to provide more targeted guidance and support that ensure fair assessment opportunities and practices are being implemented.

Post-assessment moderation

Muka Tangata's post-assessment moderation requirements are clearly outlined on the post-assessment moderation coversheet, which is available to education organisations on the Muka Tangata website. This directs moderators to ensure that assessor judgements are at the national standard and that learners have the requisite knowledge and skills. As with pre-assessment moderation, the information made available on the Muka Tangata website and through their various communications, enables education organisations to analyse their ability to understand and meet expectations, or to seek specific support from Muka Tangata representatives.

In 2022, Muka Tangata conducted post-assessment moderation of 1,208 learner samples across 147 education organisations, including Te Pūkenga (23), PTEs (37), schools/kura (80) and Te Pūkenga - WBLs (7), with an assessor agreement rate of 75% overall. Te Pūkenga submitted a total of 179 learner samples, PTEs submitted 300 learner samples, schools/kura submitted 631 learner samples, and WBLs submitted 98 learner samples. Data indicates that verification of assessor decisions by the moderators was lowest for Te Pūkenga (68%), with schools/kura (77%) and WBLs (78%) having a higher percentage of agreement rates. The 2022 moderation verification rates provide a benchmark for comparison with future moderation activities.

b. National external moderation is appropriate to the nature of the learning outcomes and assessment evidence collected.

Muka Tangata's national external moderation is appropriate to the nature of the learning outcomes and assessment evidence collected.

Muka Tangata's moderation is appropriate, flexible and accommodates a variety of learning outcomes, assessment contexts and evidence-gathering methods (workplace-based assessment and provider-based assessment). Although desk-based moderation is used for the majority of assessments, site visits, peer moderation, workshops and networking groups are used for the remainder. These options provide flexibility in moderation as appropriate to the nature of the learning outcomes and type of assessment evidence collected.

Muka Tangata provides practical examples of a flexible and adaptive NEM system. These include a software application for gathering different types of evidence, such as photographs, videos, and digital media. On-job assessment material provides adaptive assessment practices within specific Mātauranga Māori-based learning. This is supported through a research-based Māori-centric resource repository. Muka Tangata is working with education organisations through moderation feedback and onsite visits to redevelop assessment tools which reflect the requirements of the unit standards and the context of the assessment. By engaging with education organisations to gain more clarity about the context of assessments, and through an understanding of the assessment tools available, Muka Tangata is able to support education organisations effectively.

Muka Tangata used targeted moderation of key focus areas in 2022, including education organisations with particularly high or low usage of standards, those already on action plans, or with continuous non-compliance previously identified by Transitional Industry Training Organisations (TITOs), tertiary education organisations undergoing EER, and newly registered education organisations. In addition, Muka Tangata focused on standards with a health and safety and/or legislative focus and new standards. The education organisations and standards were then categorised into subgroups depending on their priority for review. Standards are selected for post-assessment moderation only. The 2022 Moderation Plan indicated that Muka Tangata would focus on a risk-based approach to determine the mode and frequency of moderation and the standards moderated for each education organisation.

Quarterly reports capture relevant data to support decision-making and assessment and moderation practices. Publication of NEM findings facilitates transparent discussions across industry sectors, in addition to the quarterly newsletters detailing examples of good assessment and moderation practices. The publication, Te Whakatōnga is an example of efforts by the WDC to ensure all stakeholders are informed of research findings through to the practical application within assessment and moderation practices. These examples also support decision-making within the NEM process.

Additionally, there is quarterly reporting to the Muka Tangata Chief Executive and Board

regarding stakeholder engagement, consultation, consent to assess applications, pre-assessment moderation results, and progress toward targeted post-assessment moderation activities by sector. Themes and trends are reported and commented upon, interventions are noted, and a targeted focus for the following quarter is signaled, based on the findings.

Contracted external expertise has supported the development of the cultural competence of Muka Tangata staff and enables them to lead Mātauranga Māori practices by example. From interactions with education organisations through to the design and implementation of assessment practices, Muka Tangata staff are able to model and lead conversations, thus supporting education organisations' practical understanding of how te ao Māori can be incorporated within their mahi.

Muka Tangata knows that these approaches are working because a quarterly moderation report is developed, reviewed, and communicated widely within Muka Tangata and across sector stakeholders to actively seek feedback to inform continual analysis of efforts. This enables Muka Tangata to evaluate the effectiveness of the NEM system based on stakeholder experiences and feedback. Face-to-face professional development workshops received an overall rating of 4.2 out of 5.0, with education organisation kaimahi indicating that they appreciated the connection and engagement between their education organisation and Muka Tangata. Nine quality assurance workshops also resulted in an overall rating of 4.2 out of 5.0 with education organisations having the opportunity to engage directly with Muka Tangata's quality assurance staff to provide feedback. This has resulted in targeted areas for support in subsequent workshops, such as comparisons between the quality of assessments in industry sectors.

c. National external moderation provides confidence that learners have achieved the specified standard.

Muka Tangata's national external moderation provides confidence that learners have achieved the specified standard.

Muka Tangata's has multiple points of evaluation of its NEM system, including industry and sector consultation and focused moderation activities, which provide confidence that learners have achieved the specified standard. Through the Consent to Assess process, the Muka Tangata Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team ensures that education organisations meet the requirements of the appropriate CMR. This is used for the WDC toward endorsement of an organisation's application to NZQA for consent to assess standards.

Quality Assurance Specialists within Muka Tangata's moderation team conduct the pre- and post-assessment moderations. Quality Assurance Specialists are required to have skills and experience in assessment and moderation standards and practices. They are required to

understand risk criteria and profiles and to work with education organisations to improve assessment practice. They must have experience in the tertiary education and training sector, knowledge of training delivery options, industry-specific knowledge to understand the current assessment subject matter, and extensive experience in interpreting the assessment requirements of unit standards. In 2022, professional development has been a focus for Muka Tangata to ensure that the moderation team is equipped with training specific to the role. The calibre of moderators provides assurance to all their stakeholders that Muka Tangata's moderation system is reliable and supports good assessment practices, thus providing confidence that learners have achieved the specified standard.

Assessment and moderation data is gathered regularly. Statistics and analysis of data are reported regularly to stakeholders. Stakeholder feedback from specific sectors is actively sought through business-as-usual interactions, workshops, surveys, and review activities. Quarterly reports to the QAE team, management, and Council include progress against moderation targets, trends, and themes (insights), and a summary of activities.

Muka Tangata has identified common themes arising from moderation findings which include education organisations submitting learner samples that they believe had not been pre-assessment moderated by the previous TITOs, using out-of-date resources and a lack of sufficient evidence to demonstrate a learner meeting the requirements of the standard.

d. National external moderation provides confidence in the reliability and consistency of assessor judgements about learner performance.

Muka Tangata's national external moderation provides confidence in the reliability and consistency of assessor judgements about learner performance.

Muka Tangata's NEM system provides confidence in the reliability and consistency of assessor judgements about learner performance. Pre-assessment moderation ensures CMRs, policies and other instructions are followed. It also ensures that assessment methodology is appropriate, the assessments give learners opportunities to meet the requirements of the standards, and the marking guidance supports assessors to make fair, valid and consistent decisions. Post-assessment moderation ensures that assessor decisions are reliable and consistent and are supported by the learner evidence. Post-assessment moderation gives confidence in the assessor judgements and the learners' standard of achievement. Sampling for desk-based moderation is in line with Ohu Ahumahi WDC guidance.

All unit standards and education organisations are risk assessed and moderated in a consistent manner. Based on Ohu Ahumahi guidelines, Muka Tangata states that the percentage of assessment activities post-assessment moderated is in line with other WDC NEM systems. Out of 1208 learner samples, 909 assessor decisions were verified across all sub-sectors (75%). Of 147 education organisations, 109 met moderation requirements

(74%). Muka Tangata has indicated that they incorporate methods of improving this result in their National External Quality Assurance and Moderation Plan 2023 or undertake appropriate remedial steps to address issues as required. This first year of statistical data will be useful as a benchmark to evaluate assessment and moderation practices in the future.

Muka Tangata's NEM policies and processes provide details on the administrative processes for documenting actions in the case of non-compliance. An escalation plan provides a matrix of guidelines to identify and resolve issues of varying severity. This supports consistent follow-up for moderation issues. A moderation guidance document provides practical support for moderators' decision-making. Examples include types of learner answers and advice regarding the sufficiency of evidence.

Muka Tangata's moderation processes have been well developed and established and are reviewed and discussed regularly. Subsector quality assurance and moderation reports are also developed for review and action. These reports highlight the quality of assessment and moderation within a specific industry sector. For example, a quarter four sub-sector Quality Assurance and Moderation Report highlighted the findings across Agriculture - Poultry & Pig Farming. In this industry sector, 93% of assessor decisions were verified and 100% of tertiary education providers were found to be meeting the standards of assessment.

Muka Tangata's self-assessment for improvement happens continually and specifically at the end of the year. Internal meetings have key agenda items, including updates on moderation metrics and moderation activity. Ongoing upskilling of Muka Tangata quality assurance staff ensures currency of skills. This occurs through the community of practice engagement across WDCs, conferences, industry visits, and peer moderation sessions.

e. National external moderation must be cost-effective.

Muka Tangata's national external moderation aims to be cost-effective.

Muka Tangata's moderation practices indicate that they achieve efficiencies by maximising the use of their internal resources. Also, most assessments moderated are paper-based or digital, indicating more desk-based moderation is required than onsite visits.

Muka Tangata's risk-based approach to selecting and prioritising unit standards to moderate also assists in the cost-effectiveness of moderation overall.

f. National external moderation must focus on improving assessment practice.

Muka Tangata's national external moderation system focuses on improving assessment practice.

Muka Tangata has focused on sustainable ways to improve assessment practices. Two research streams supply substantial data for decision-making in developing support of assessment practices. In 2022, the SAARA Group (external quality consultant contractor) carried out an External Moderation Review (EMR), and the Muka Tangata Poutiaki te Ara Kounga Māori (Māori Adviser) developed Te Whakatōnga. The EMR captured stakeholder perceptions and needs toward improving education organisation materials and practices. Te Whakatōnga outlines, identifies, and recommends a bespoke approach to deliberate incorporation of Mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori values. With foundational guidance from these two, the NEM system provides sustainable opportunities for continual improvements. All recommendations have either been incorporated into the National External Quality Assurance and Moderation Plan 2023 or require further development work before being implemented as soon as practical.

There are clear and supportive processes for assessors and moderators to query NEM findings to better understand expectations across the sectors. Workshops, assessor networks, and publication of NEM findings, assist education organisations' learning from sector-wide feedback on assessment practices.

NEM results inform CMR improvement through clarification of standards' interpretation and review. To support this, a spreadsheet of issues identified with standards is available on the website with interim responses and risk assessment prior to scheduled reviews.

Muka Tangata's NEM is shown to be evolving and innovative through the use of technology and incorporation of Mātauranga Māori to support contextualised evidence that learning outcomes have been met. A continually updated spreadsheet, available to all industry stakeholders, provides the latest feedback on standards and the priority assigned to the standard for action to be taken by Muka Tangata. The spreadsheet is developed from assessor and education organisation feedback, stakeholder consultation, and NEM results.

Feedback is captured and reported formally through the Quarterly Quality Assurance and Enhancement Metric reports, as well as in specific subsector Quality Assurance and Moderation Reports for each sector. Muka Tangata knows that these processes and evolving practices are effective because they continually scan for opportunities to receive feedback from assessors and their organisations. This occurs from the relationship building during pre-assessment moderation through to post-assessment moderation and programme review stages.

National External Moderation Data

Table 1: Number of education organisations with consent to assess

WDC	Number of consent to assess – school/kura	Number of consent to assess – tertiary education organisations	Total
Muka Tangata	372	1,109	1,481

Table 2: Pre-assessment moderation by type of organisation

Organisations	Number of organisations moderated	Number of assessments moderated	Number of assessments that met the requirements of the standards
Government Training Organisations (GTEs)	0	0	0
Te Pūkenga subsidiaries and WBL	10	154	123
Private Training Establishments (PTEs)	13	150	143
Schools/kura	6	12	8
Wānanga	0	0	0
Total	29	316	274

Table 3: Post-assessment moderation by type of organisation

Organisation	Number of organisations moderated	Number of learner samples moderated	Number of assessor	Percentage of assessor decisions
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			decisions verified by the moderator	verified by the moderator
Government Training Establishments (GTEs)	0	0	0	0%
Te Pūkenga subsidiaries / WBL	30	179 / 98	121 / 76	68% / 78%
Private Training Establishments (PTEs)	37	300	225	75%
Schools/kura	80	631	487	77%
Wānanga	8	0	0	0%
Total	147	1,208	909	(Average) 75%

Table 4: Standards called for moderation by industry

Industries	Number of standards Muka Tangata is responsible for	Number of standards called for moderation
Animal Care and Veterinary Services	-	5
Equine, Dogs and Racing	-	6
Pest Management	-	2
Agriculture general, Sheep, Beef and Deer	-	22
Nursery production, Landscape. Amenity, Sports Turf & Arboriculture	-	18
Dairy farming	-	12
Forestry	-	14
Apiculture	-	4
Vegetable and fruit production	-	7
Agricultural vehicles and machinery	-	14
Poultry and pig farming	-	4
Seafood	-	19
Grape and wine	-	6

Schools/kura	-	204
Total	-	337

- Data not available

Table 5: Appeals and action plans

WDC	Number of appeals	Number of organisations with action plans
Animal Care and Veterinary Services	0	0
Equine, Dogs and Racing	0	0
Pest Management	0	0
Agriculture general, Sheep, Beef and Deer	0	0
Nursery production, Landscape. Amenity, Sports Turf & Arboriculture	0	0
Dairy farming	0	0
Forestry	0	0
Apiculture	0	0
Vegetable and fruit production	0	0
Agricultural vehicles and machinery	0	0
Poultry and pig farming	0	0
Seafood	0	0
Grape and wine	0	0
Schools/kira	0	0
Total	0	0