



On-Job Qualifications  
for Active Careers



SKILLS ACTIVE ASSESSORS  
The heart of industry training

This information sheet will help you understand how to use the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) Level Descriptors when assessing trainees.

## WHAT ARE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS?

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has developed Level Descriptors for qualifications and unit standards listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

For qualifications, the NZQF has ten levels. All qualifications are assigned to one of these levels:

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES
10	Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates
9	
8	
7	
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	



The levels are based on their complexity, with Level 1 being the least complex and Level 10 the most complex.

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATION DEFINITIONS, LEVEL 1-6 CERTIFICATES (NZQF)

Level	Purpose
1	To qualify individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement
2	To qualify individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s) /areas of work or study
3	To qualify individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields(s)/ areas of work and/or preparation for further study
4	To qualify individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s)/areas
5	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study
6	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised/ strategic context



For unit standards, Level Descriptors provide details about what a trainee is expected to know, understand, and be able to do at each level.

**Knowledge**

What a trainee **knows and understands**

**Skills**

What a trainee **can do**

**Application**

How the trainee **applies the skills and knowledge** in a particular context.  
(This includes: responsibility, behaviours, attitudes, attributes, competence)



As a Skills Active assessor you will be assessing qualifications and unit standards at Levels 1-6.

### UNIT STANDARD LEVEL DESCRIPTORS, LEVEL 1-6

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Application
1	Basic general and/or foundation knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply basic solutions to complex problems</li> <li>Apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly structured contexts</li> <li>Requiring some responsibility for own learning</li> <li>Interacting with others</li> </ul>
2	Basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply known solutions to familiar problems</li> <li>Apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General supervision</li> <li>Requiring some responsibility for own learning and performance</li> <li>Collaborating with others</li> </ul>
3	Some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and apply from a range of known solutions to familiar problems</li> <li>Apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited supervision</li> <li>Requiring major responsibility for own learning and performance</li> <li>Adapting own behaviour when interacting with others</li> <li>Contributing to group performance</li> </ul>
4	Broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems</li> <li>Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance</li> <li>Some responsibility for performance of others</li> </ul>
5	Broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems</li> <li>Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts</li> <li>Some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others</li> </ul>
6	Specialised technical of theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems</li> <li>Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts</li> <li>Responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts</li> </ul>





### TEAMWORK UNIT STANDARDS

<b>Level 1</b>	US 3503	<i>Participate and communicate in a team/group to complete a routine task</i>	2 credits
<b>Level 2</b>	US 9677	<i>Participate in a team or group which has an objective</i>	3 credits
<b>Level 3</b>	US 9681	<i>Contribute within a team or group which has an objective</i>	3 credits
<b>Level 4</b>	US 11101	<i>Collaborate within a team or group which has an objective</i>	5 credits
<b>Level 5</b>	US 21336	<i>Lead a team to achieve a complex objective</i>	5 credits

### CREDIT VALUE

As well as being assigned a level, each unit standard and qualification has an assigned credit value. The credit value gives you an idea of how much time the trainee needs to spend engaged in learning, practice and assessment. In general, lower-level unit standards also have a lower credit value, reflecting the expected skill and knowledge level.



One credit is equal to ten hours of notional learning. So, if you were assessing a qualification with 40 credits the trainee would need to spend approximately 400 hours engaged in learning, practice and assessment. If you were assessing a unit standard worth 3 credits the trainee would spend up to 30 hours on learning, practice and assessment.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ASSESSORS TO KNOW ABOUT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS?

An important assessor responsibility is to judge each trainee's **competence**. Can the trainee complete the assessment for a unit standard or group of standards **to the required standard?**

Assessors need to know about Level Descriptors so they can judge the trainee's evidence against the appropriate descriptor. Judging trainee competence needs to be at the correct 'level'- not too little- not too much...just right!

Because assessors want to 'do things right' there could be a tendency towards over-assessment.



It is important that assessors do not over-assess.



## WHAT IS OVER-ASSESSMENT?

Over-assessment happens when you expect skills and knowledge higher than, or more than, what's required to meet the required standard.

It can also occur when you ask the trainee to collect more evidence than is needed, or when you judge a trainee on something that is not part of the unit standard requirement for assessment, such as basing your judgement on the presentation rather than the content of their assessment evidence.

## SOME TIPS FOR ASSESSORS

You can avoid over-assessment by:

- Making sure that you know the level and credit value of the unit standards that you are assessing
- Using your assessor guide to ensure that you understand the evidence requirements and judgement statements for each assessment task
- Checking the level descriptor for one level below and one level above that which you are assessing- to make sure that your expectations of the trainee are at the correct level
- Taking the time to self-review your assessment practice to make any changes for improvement

