Review of Achievement Standards Level 1, Phase 2

Public Engagement Survey Report: English

Feedback provided on draft, Phase 2 subject content 25TH August 2021

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## Purpose

This report outlines the feedback received from a Public Engagement Survey by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) on the Phase 2 development of Level 1 products for English. This report will present the quantitative data collected from the survey as well as summarising the common themes and trends appearing in the qualitative data. This report will be used to inform any necessary changes to the products before they go forward for piloting as part of the Review of Achievement Standards (RAS).

## Background

1. As at 23 August 2021, the Ministry received **59** responses to the Ministry’s online survey about the subject content developed so far for English. These included both multiple choice answer questions and long form, written response questions.
2. This report is organised into sections based on the questions in the survey:
   1. Summary of feedback as a whole
   2. General impressions of the subject content
   3. Course Outlines
   4. Individual Achievement Standards
      1. AS 1.1 and Assessment Activities
      2. AS 1.2 and Assessment Activities
      3. AS 1.3
      4. AS 1.4
   5. Impressions of the Achievement Standards as a suite
3. Please note that the content in this report does not reflect the opinions of the authors. The report aims to thoroughly and accurately reflect the views presented by those who fed back on the draft subject content.
4. **Summary of English**

There were **63** responses to **English** products. Respondents could choose any number of questions (quantitative or qualitative) to answer. As such, while there were a total of 63 responses, not all questions had the full 63 responses.

Quantitatively, responses were generally mixed, with a few exceptions. There were more negative responses regarding the course outlines (Section C). There were more positive responses on the question: “*Do the Internal Assessment Activities exemplify how mātauranga Māori can be recognised and valued in assessment?”* (AS 1.1 & AS 1.2). In addition, respondents expressed positively on the question: *“Do the Achievement Standards support ākonga Māori to succeed as Māori?”*

Qualitatively, concerns can be broadly divided into 6 categories: **(1)** Concerns that the new achievement standards would not improve New Zealand’s literacy rates, **(2)** that there was too much focus on student choice, **(3)** that the timeframes for course outlines were unrealistically short, **(4)** concerns regarding inequities, **(5)** that the workload for both students and teachers would be too high and, **(6)** confusion over how the assessments would/should be graded.

1. **General impressions of the subject content**

**Questions**

***Do you think the draft materials for this subject are ready for testing with students in pilot schools/kura?***

CHART B

***Do you have any further feedback on the draft materials? If there was one thing you think would help make these materials easier to test in the pilot, what would it be?***

There were 28 responses to this question.

* Many expressed concerns that the standards were not challenging enough. In that, there were inadequate student engagement/requirements pertaining to reading and writing. The primary worry was that the current achievement standards would contribute to poorer literacy rates across Aotearoa New Zealand.
  + *“Written texts must be at the centre of any worthwhile literature programme. Our students find reading challenging and they are getting worse at it with each passing year. Thus, we have even more of a responsibility to empower our students, and to challenge them to improve their reading skills. We will not fix the falling literacy levels by suggesting that creating a poster and talking about it is as intellectually rigorous as writing an essay. In fact, making this suggestion is doing our young people a disservice, as when they leave school, modern workplaces will require a level of literacy that our students won't have been given access to.”*
* Many sought further clarifications in terms of teaching. In that, it was expressed that there was not a clear enough vision of how or what teachers would need to teach their students.

* Some requested more information with regards to what was being assessed. In particular, the respondents expressed a lack of clarity on what the external standards would look like and how they would be graded.
* Some expressed concerns that there was too much focus on student choice. The main worry expressed was that students would not expand their perspectives as they would not be adequately encouraged to venture outside their comfort zones. There were related concerns that by focusing on student choice, students’ knowledge bases would only remain within their interests.
  + *“The continued focus on allowing students to select their own texts and topics based on what interests them is misguided and frustrating. Teachers are the sources of education in their classrooms. They are best placed to select texts which are going to allow their students to improve and learn something. Our students must be challenged to see things from different perspectives, not just their own.”*
* Few suggested that a list of recommended Māori texts as a teaching resource would be helpful to aid teachers who were less confident with teaching Māori texts.

1. **Course Outlines**

***Do the sample Course Outline(s) exemplify how the Significant Learning can form a coherent years’ programme with opportunities to assess the 4 Standards?***

CHART C: 1.1

***Do the Course Outline(s) demonstrate how teaching and learning could be grounded in mātauranga Māori?***

CHART C: 1.2

***Do you have any further feedback on the Course Outline(s)?***

There were 7 responses to this question.

* Most expressed concerns that the timeframes were too short and unrealistic.
  + *“4-5 weeks for a novel or film study were too short especially with an assessment at the end of the study.”*
  + *“Unable to cope with a tight timeline for study of said texts and work on multiple assessments at once (especially course outline 1 and 3).”*
* Few expressed concerns that there was insufficient consideration regarding the accessibility of the standards for diverse learners (students with dyslexia, ESOL, gifted, etc.).
* One respondent expressed concerns that flexibility in the outlines might lead to inequities. In that, the degree of flexibility within the course outlines might result in higher decile schools providing a better level of education for their students compared to less advantaged schools.

1. **Individual Achievement Standards**
   1. **AS 1.1 and Assessment Activities**

***Is this Achievement Standard ready for piloting?***

CHART D: 1.1

***Are the Achieved, Merit and Excellence criteria clear enough to support consistent assessment judgments?***

CHART D: 1.2

***Does the unpacking of the Standard and the Conditions of Assessment provide sufficient and clear guidance on the use of the standard?***

CHART D: 1.3

***Internal Assessment Activities***

***Could the activities for AS1.1 be used or adapted in your local context?***

CHART D: 1.4

***Do the Internal Assessment Activities exemplify how mātauranga Māori can be recognised and valued in assessment?***

CHART D: 1.5

***Do the activities for AS1.1 support the engagement, access, understanding and participation of all learners?***

CHART D: 1.6

***Do you have any further feedback on this standard and its activities?***

There were 7 responses to this question.

* Some expressed that there could have been more inclusion of te ao Māori, and that the existing inclusions of te ao Māori could have been better. In that, some of the existing inclusions could be perceived as tokenistic (Activity 1.1A) and seemed to be included only as an afterthought (Activity 1.1C – Possible contexts).
  + Activity 1.1A: *“Pōwhiri example seems somewhat tokenistic considering it is using a text about Te Ao Māori but doesn't require tauira to go further in-depth with what the text is about. It reads as a 'tick in the box' example.”*
  + Activity 1.1C – Possible contexts: *“I was disappointed that the possible contexts listed in 1.1C only included one that related to Te Ao Maori - the marae- in the afterthought list.”*
* Few expressed concerns that Activity 1.1A would be too challenging for ESOL Learners. In that, the material would be too difficult for second language learners to understand and appropriate.
* Few expressed that there was need for a te reo Māori glossary.
  1. **AS 1.2 and Assessment Activities**

***Is this Achievement Standard ready for piloting?***

CHART D: 2.1

***Are the Achieved, Merit and Excellence criteria clear enough to support consistent assessment judgments?***

CHART D: 2.2

***Does the unpacking of the Standard and the Conditions of Assessment provide sufficient and clear guidance on the use of the standard?***

CHART D: 2.3

***Internal Assessment Activities***

***Could the activities for AS1.2 be used or adapted in your local context?***

CHART D: 2.4

***Do the Internal Assessment Activities exemplify how mātauranga Māori can be recognised and valued in assessment?***

CHART D: 2.5

***Do the activities for AS1.2 support the engagement, access, understanding and participation of all learners?***

CHART D: 2.6

***Do you have any further feedback on this standard and its activities?***

There were 7 responses to this question.

* Some expressed concerns that more work and skills seemed to be required of AS 1.2 compared to other achievement standards within English.
  + *“Looking at what skills and understanding, and work, are needed for 1.2, it does not appear equitable to 1.1. There is more work for the same credits.”*
  + *“Whilst at first glance, I think this looks like a really deep standard- responding to a text. However, I think as the standard is, there is a bit too much going on. It seems a combination of the current 1.6, 1.7 and with some 1.11 thrown into the merit criteria to confuse things.”*
* Some expressed concerns over the potential disparity of work and preparation between the verbal and visual components of the presentation (Activity 1.2B).
* One respondent expressed concern over the vagueness and inconsistency of the grading step-ups for ‘A’ and ‘E’.
  + *“They appeared to have been written by different people. Achieved and Excellence were vague, in places. The order of descriptors needs sorting so they lone up across the levels.”*
  1. **AS 1.3**

***Is this Achievement Standard ready for piloting?***

CHART D: 3.1

***Are the Achieved, Merit and Excellence criteria clear enough to support consistent assessment judgments?***

CHART D: 3.2

***Does the unpacking of the Standard and the External Assessment Specifications provide sufficient and clear guidance on the use of the standard?***

CHART D: 3.3

***Do you have any further feedback on this standard?***

There were 9 responses to this question.

* Some expressed that the stimulus might act as an inhibitor, and was potentially limiting, especially for creative writing. There were also some concerns raised over the information/clarity of the stimulus, with regards to how it would be practically executed in a classroom setting.
  + *“Do we just do write without any stimulus materials until we feel the student is ready and then give them the stimulus materials so they can write two pieces that are to be submitted by the 24th of September?”*
* Some expressed concerns that the standard was not challenging enough if key skills such as editing, is excluded. With regards to the lack of editing, one respondent commented that the lack of editing was unfair to creative learners who take pride in their work through the process of editing.
* Some expressed a need for more clarifications regarding the marking criteria, such as, more information on what aspects of the pieces would be graded (ideas, spelling, grammar, etc.).
  + *“Lack of clarification about marking. Where does the audience / purpose sit in the marking schedule? No clarification of intrusive error. And will it be marking only on ideas not on skills (spelling / grammar?)”*
* One expressed concern over ensuring equitability and fairness with regards to digital vs handwritten scripts.
  + *“How will you ensure that students with access to devices are not using programmes such as Grammarly? Students who have no option but to handwrite their scripts are at a disadvantage here.”*
* One respondent raised a request to allow bilingual responses on standards as per the Ministry’s communications on Teacher Only Day
  + *“At present, the instructions require "all pieces must be written in English", but when queried on the live chat, the MOE response was "it would be absolutely acceptable for a student to include dialogue in te reo...and would in fact strengthen the piece". As someone who is bilingual regularly writes bilingual dialogue, I would find the "must be in English" requirement quite oppressive. I don't want to put off our budding bilingual writers! It would be more inclusive to state that it is acceptable to include bits of other languages but that a glossary is required.”*
  1. **AS 1.4**

***Is this Achievement Standard ready for piloting?***

CHART D: 4.1

***Are the Achieved, Merit and Excellence criteria clear enough to support consistent assessment judgments?***

CHART D: 4.2

***Does the unpacking of the Standard and the External Assessment Specifications provide sufficient and clear guidance on the use of the standard?***

CHART D: 4.3

***Do you have any further feedback on this standard?***

There were 10 responses to this question.

* Many expressed multiple concerns over combining two assessments into one standard. This included: (1) concerns of overall workload, (2) a potential to disadvantage students who are better at one component over another and, (3) an apprehension over forcing students to complete an unfamiliar text essay (English 1.4: Section A).
  + *“I think that it is a mistake to lump two externals together under one standard. I see them as requiring different skills and teaching.”*
  + *“Unfamiliar Texts should be an internally assessed standard, and response to written texts AND visual texts should be externally assessed. I read in the NZ Herald that Unfamiliar Texts is the paper most students choose to opt out of...so you decide keep it as an external?”*
* Some expressed their concern regarding the inequities of exams in general. Respondents raised the issue of exam conditions being unfair to those who have exam anxiety and tend not to perform well under exam conditions.
  + *“I'm very concerned about this being an exam - there is potentially some room for this in some instances, but other options of assessment should be considered and offered. Exams are not equitable, and it worries me that we are reverting back to this.”*
* Some expressed confusions over how this standard will be graded especially if a student does well for one component (e.g., Section B: Studied Text) but does poorly for another (e.g., Section A: Unfamiliar Text). Additionally, some expressed concerns over fairness, with regards to students having their skills correctly assessed.
  + *“This is a disadvantage for students who may do better in one than the other and do not get a result for each is that correct? Whereas now they can receive the correct result of their skills and capabilities for each – a grade for novel essay and then one for film and then one for unfamiliar. This seems unfair now.”*

1. **Impressions of the Achievement Standards as a suite**

***Do the four Achievement Standards as a group credential the most important knowledge and/or skills for this subject as illustrated by the Learning Matrix?***

CHART E: 1.1

***Do the Achievement Standards support ākonga Māori to succeed as Māori? (select all that apply)***

CHART E: 1.2

***Are the Achievement Standards appropriate to Level 6 of the curriculum? (Approximately Year 11)***

CHART E: 1.3

***Do you have any further feedback on the Achievement Standards?***

There were 20 responses to this question.

* Many expressed concerns that the standards were not challenging enough in general. Most of these feedbacks made the additional point regarding their growing concern over the falling literacy rates in New Zealand (see next bullet point).
  + *“These standards lack challenge and rigor. They aim to strip central knowledge of literature out of the curriculum in favor of procedural texts such as 'food writing.' And will not make sure that all New Zealand children read a novel or a collection of poetry, within their schooling.”*
  + *“While the proposed Level 1 English standards do not outright prevent broad NZC coverage and engagement with challenging literary texts, they fail to encourage it.”*
* Many expressed concerns that the standards will not boost literacy rates. Additional concerns have been expressed over the inadequacy of writing and reading in the new achievement standards.
  + *“We know that our literacy levels are low and falling lower, but we will not fix them by acting like speaking in conversation has the same academic rigor as writing an essay. It is a fallacy to claim that modern workplaces do not require high levels of literacy, as all professions spend most of their work lives writing and reading.”*
  + *“As they stand, the standards offer little opportunity for schools to engage in the study of literature; the focus seems to be on short opinion-type texts, and texts unrelated to literary study. They appear to be geared towards enabling students to avoid doing much reading at all. Given our falling rates of literacy, this raises a red flag for us.”*
* Some are concerned that there was too much focus on student choice and as such, students will select topics only based on interest and will not venture outside their comfort zones.
  + *“The standards are focused on students selecting their own texts and topic based on interest. This is increasingly being called into question, with many countries, such as England, moving away from them as student outcomes plummet. The issue with students pursuing interest is that no student learns as much as they would if the teacher chose a text, one which they knew the students would learn from, and guided them through it. These standards ask the teacher to step aside and assume that the students, at the age of fifteen, have the knowledge and expertise to teach themselves and make good choices. I work with teenagers; I can assure you they do not.”*
* Few expressed concerns over workload. In that, the standards are now more assessment heavy and require more intense work.
  + *“These standards still seem assessment heavy. They are fewer, larger standards but they seem to require more intense work. I don't think they will make the year learning based. I think it will remain teaching to the standard.*
* Few expressed that schools should have more freedom to arrange their own curriculum.
  + *“We suggest that these standards be 'opened up' to allow schools the scope to arrange their curriculum to delve more deeply into the study of what we consider to be our core knowledge base: the academic study of literature and the study of language.”*
* One respondent expressed concerns over the combining of different skills within the same achievement standard. There was worry that students may not be able to achieve the entire assessment criteria, or that some skills do not actually work well together in the standards.