

Short Course Training Project – Your questions answered

Notional Hours

Q How did you determine the delivery and assessment hours? It might be difficult for some industries, especially the smaller employers, to provide the support and verification required. It is not possible to have a mandatory or an arbitrary figure for all types of standards.

A Based on the DASS rules of 10 notional hours per credit, we have used a formula of 6.5 hours per credit for the delivery (teaching and learning), and 3.5 hours for the formal assessment process to give guidance around the hours associated with each component.

The number of hours is to emphasise the need for learners to be given the opportunity to gain experience, often in the workplace and under direct supervision, undertaking the skills related to the standard they will be assessed against. A finding from the project was that the experience component was missing when learners were being assessed against standards delivered in a short course format. This was also supported by industry.

It is expected that the experience component will need to be demonstrated and justified as part of the evidence that supports the assessment decision. This could be through verification, or another form of evidence.

It is understood that some learners will progress faster than others and won't require all of the 10 hours of teaching, learning and assessment. It is equally recognised that some learners may need more than the 10 hours of teaching, learning and assessment to be deemed competent in a particular skill.

The gaining of experience in the workplace is not new and is not an 'extra'. Learners will naturally be gaining experience through doing, and they need to be provided with a level of supervision determined by the employer to ensure they are safe. In a lot of cases this is happening after the learner has been awarded the standard, rather than as part of the teaching, learning, and assessment process to ensure the learner is competent when awarded the standard.

Q There appears to be a contradiction between the current notional hours for unit standards and the new skill standards. Where new skill standards are being developed, current unit standards maybe combined into one skill standard, but the combined credits are less. Why are we now looking to increase the number of hours to deliver the current unit standards, when in 18 months' time the skill standards maybe less credits. Potentially we are looking to increase the quality now but decrease it when skill standards are introduced.

- A It is important that the credit values are considered when standards are reviewed, or new standards developed, to ensure they reflect the time required for teaching, learning, and assessment. We do know that some of the current standards have inflated credit values, or that the credit values do not reflect how the standards are being delivered and assessed, and this has been recognised in the guidance document. For example, US30072.

Skill standards will also have a credit value attached and the notional 10 hours per credit rule will still apply. Industry and providers are involved in any review or development process for standards, so it is important that the findings from this project help to inform the decisions around credit values and the intended use going forward, including looking at the delivery and assessment of that standard.

Workplace Verification and Assessment

- Q What will be considered in general as sufficient evidence from a verifier (i.e. will it be a checklist or do we need actual photos etc.) and with verification of hours will this be run similar to what will be considered sufficient evidence in your eyes?**

- A Evidence requirements will be dependent on the standard and context. The guidance document will give an indication of the types of evidence that is required, but it could include photos, a verifier sign off, and a logbook of hours related to the standard. Ultimately the provider will need to determine what this looks like when developing the assessment resource.

- Q How will SMEs and small businesses manage verification processes?**

- A The requirements for a verifier are outlined in the guidance document, but often people who meet these requirements are already in place within most businesses. If a verifier is not in place, then the assessor will need to undertake this function to ensure that the learner still has an opportunity to be assessed.

The management of the verifier or the assessor is something that providers will need to consider and manage. How this is achieved will be reflected in the delivery and assessment resources.

- Q In the crane industry, if a trainer does a one-day course and then waits a period of time for a verifier to sign off documentation, does that mean with that evidence the candidate can be awarded the US without any on site practical?**

- A The learner will not necessarily be required to undertake an assessor-observed lift. Evidence will be gained based on naturally occurring evidence gained in the workplace, including verified hours. A key point here is that the verifier does not make the assessment decision, this would be made by the assessor based on the body of evidence supplied by the learner and verifier.

Q How can a Provider ensure that verifiers comply with the necessary requirements? Assessors must adhere to CMR requirements. What specific criteria must a Verifier meet? Will Waihangā Ara Rau maintain a register for providers to consult, ensuring that verifier qualifications and experience meet the established standards?

A A new CMR is currently going through the approval process with NZQA. This CMR outlines the requirements for a verifier as also outlined in the draft Guidance Document.

A verifier is someone who supports the assessment process where an assessor is not directly observing the assessment being undertaken. This is typically in the workplace and not in a provider setting. A verifier does not make the final assessment decision. The role of the verifier is to:

- Verify that the evidence provided by the learner is valid, authentic, and consistent.
- Confirm that the learner's practice is in accordance with relevant legislation, codes, standards, and workplace practices.
- Based on their observations, verify the performance of the learner completing assessment tasks.
- Verify that the experience gained by the learner is related to the outcomes of the standard and is sufficient to ensure that the learner is ready for assessment.

Who can be a verifier?

A verifier could be an employer or the person supervising the learner undertaking the task in the workplace. The verifier must:

- hold the relevant industry qualification, standards, or registration at the level at which they are required for verifying evidence for or can demonstrate equivalent skills and knowledge in the relevant industry sector.
- be in a position or role to observe the learner undertaking tasks, and confirm learner performance, and validity of evidence.

Ensuring that the verifier meets the requirements of the CMR is a role for the provider to undertake and monitor. As the assessor is the person who makes the final decision to award the standard, the assessor also has the right to challenge the evidence provided, including the verification. The assessor also has the option of directly observing the learner undertaking the tasks if required.

At this stage Waihangā Ara Rau are looking to ensure they have more visibility of the network of assessors and making sure they do meet the requirements of the CMR.

Q We need to consider that for the larger companies, having internal assessors and verifiers is relatively straightforward. This is not the case for small to medium businesses that don't have the internal resources to support the training and assessment process. Providers will need guidance to develop solutions depending on

the situation, not all things are equal. Potentially a Centre of Excellence could be a solution for those smaller businesses where more teaching and learning needs to be supported by the provider.

A Agree. There needs to be different solutions for different contexts going forward. This may include more guidance from the WDCs or looking at ways that assessments are undertaken. For example, looking at practical assessment for theoretical knowledge.

Q Are you anticipating changes to the requirements of verifier credentials/qualifications (i.e. must hold US30423) if they are going to have a greater role in the proposed evidence collection? They are currently stipulated in the CMRs for certain standards.

A Waihangā Ara Rau has recently reviewed its suite of CMRs including the requirements for Teachers/Tutors, verifiers, assessors, and moderators. US30423 is currently not a standard specified within the CMR.

Q If a unit has model answers for the theory component, credible assessor should be able to assess this. – Markers vs assessors.

All assessors need to meet the requirements of the current CMR. Typically, this means they need to hold the relevant qualification or standards and hold 4098. The requirements for a teacher/tutor may also be outlined in a CMR, a marker would be considered to fit under this category as well.

Ultimately, it is the assessor who needs to make any final decisions regarding a learner's competency against the relevant standard. They can be assisted by others as part of the process, for example by a marker, but the assessor makes the final decision.

Q Is there a timeframe between completing the theory and the practical component of the assessment?

A There is no specified timeframe between the completion of theory and practical elements. This is a decision for the provider and part of the notional teaching, learning, and assessment hours for each standard.

Q How is the practical evidence supplied? What does it look like?

A There are multiple ways in which the practical evidence could be presented, and largely, this is a decision for each provider to make based on their delivery model and the context in which the assessment is taking place.

Examples of practical evidence could include:

- A logbook, or job cards, to indicate experience undertaking tasks under supervision prior to the assessment being undertaken.

- Assessment evidence could be photographs, videos, job cards, etc, that could be submitted electronically or on paper, depending on the provider's model.
- Verification of the evidence and experience from a verifier.
- Alternatively, the learner could be directly observed by the assessor.

Regulator/HSWA

Q Will the regulator come to the party with concessions for PCBUs who have large numbers of workers who haven't been assessed yet?

A We are unable to speak on behalf of the regulator, however we are ensuring that the regulator is aware of our project and its outcomes. It is important that any regulator guidelines are consistent with the outcomes from the project.

Q Has any consultation against the worker training and supervision within HSWA been done? <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/businesses/general-requirements-for-workplaces/providing-information-training-instruction-or-supervision-for-workers/>

A Yes, we have tried to engage with the regulator but have also considered any current guidelines throughout the project. It is important for industry that there is consistency of messages around the information, training, instruction or supervision for workers.

Consultation & timeframes for implementation

Q Is there a place that we can view the industry feedback that was gained as part of the initial discussions.

A The high-level themes from industry are documented in the full report from 2024. This is available at the following link: <https://www.waihangaararau.nz/short-course-training-project/>

As an overview, we consulted with over 295 people during the 2024 project. This included:

- 135 industry and provider representatives involved several Waihanga Ara Rau led technical and strategic groups. It also involved 20 industry assessors through the EarnLearn Conference.
- 21 industry and 60 provider participants across our webinars.
- 25 industry participants at an industry specific workshop
- 57 providers participants at a provider specific workshop.

Q If we have all this feedback coming in...and the guidance doc is due to finish consultation next week...what are next steps? Who is going to work through the feedback, and can we have providers around the table? They appear to be missed out in the previous working group.

- A Waihangara Ara Rau will be working through the consultation feedback and will be publishing the themes gathered from that feedback to ensure visibility of the process. The feedback and themes will help to any changes in the draft Guidance Document that will be tested with both providers and industry before being released.

Providers have been involved in the process from the beginning and have had a seat at the table. This will continue to be the case. Having said that, industry need to drive the solutions going forward.

- Q Since Waihangara is still collecting all feedback and the process of gathering feedback and making it transparent as part of the consultation is not finished, which is crucial for the consultation, when are we looking to extend the stakeholder feedback deadline? The 28th of March is not a realistic** deadline for us to review all the other feedback and analyse it before providing our own feedback.

- A The consultation period shall be extended out to 11 April to allow additional time for feedback, although we recognise those stakeholders who have met the original deadline.

- Q Resource pre-mod timeline – What happens after 1 July if a provider doesn't have amended assessment documents re approved by the WDC in time (especially if rework needed, and for some providers they will have multiple short courses to review (including supportive curriculum documents); the final guidance document released 11 April is the same day the 7-week moderation window opens.**

The seven-week window in the timeline is to ensure that there is the opportunity to have reviewed materials pre-assessment moderated so they can be used from 1 July. Materials submitted after this time period will mean that there are delays in the approval process.

- Q A lot of standards are referenced in good practice guidelines. Are you looking at those good practice guidelines and I see the timelines there for rolling it out in July. What's the chance of having those guidelines changed by then?**

- A We will need to work with industry and the owners of the good practice guidelines to ensure that the appropriate standards are reflected going forward. It is an important step in the process, but consistency of messaging is important to ensure that the right outcomes are being achieved.

- Q Are you suggesting providers review their current short courses and submit undated assessment resources in April? Why not speed up the move to Skills Standards before major changes are made by providers. What you are suggesting is that providers would need to review short courses and assessments twice, now based on the US and then once the Skills Standards are released. Very costly to both the providers and**

industry. Recommend we start with fit for purpose skills standards that meet specific industry needs.

- A The solution needs to be a stage approach, and unit standards are going to be part of the environment until skill standards are developed and registered and providers have the time to develop any delivery and assessment resources. Realistically this could be a minimum of a two-year timeframe, so we need to start implementing a solution now.

We don't consider that providers need to make any large changes to the current delivery and assessment resources. Based on implementation timeframes we are currently suggesting that any new assessment resources would need to be pre-assessment moderated by 1 July, but we will work with providers to make this as seamless as possible.

Refresher training courses

- Q Refresher training – how often do you want people to refresh and how would this be monitored/reported?**

- A Refreshers are not a requirement for any of the standards. While there is some WorkSafe guidance, the refreshers and their timing are a decision for industry/employers. Refreshers could be undertaken through a provider or done internally within the workplace; this is a decision for the employer.

- Q Refreshers are not a legal requirement and are industry self-imposed, not by providers or assessors it is illegal for an assessor or provider to put an expiry on a course with exception of forklift operator and first aid.**

- A Refreshers are not a requirement of achieving the standard or retaining the standard. However, in some cases, there are Worksafe guidelines around the frequency of refresher type training to ensure workers maintain competency around high risk tasks.

This refresher training could be provided through a provider or could be done through in-house training. The decision is an employer decision to make. There has been a lot of discussion re the compulsory nature of refresher training, they are not compulsory.

Quality Assurance/Moderation

- Q When moderating assessment are you moderating to the standard or commercial competency?**

- A Waihangā Ara Rau are moderating the assessment to ensure that the assessment meets the outcomes of the standard, including the level of that standard. Where commercial competency is specified in a standard then that must be considered as part of the evaluation.

Skill standards

Q Timeline – when are the heights units calendared to be changed over to skill standards?

A The heights unit standards review to transition to skill standards will begin shortly within the Scaffolding and Industrial Rope Access reviews.

Consent to assess

Q Do we have to apply for consent to assess?

A Consent to assess will be considered on a case-by-case basis once the skills standard requirements are determined. Where suitable to do so, we will automatically give consent to assess during the listing process of the new standards.

Other

Q Application of skills within a workplace is often aligned with work site requirements or industry accepted practice – which is not always the same as the unit standard requirements – how is this allowed for within workplace? verified practice? For example, a unit standard that requires two types of machines or lift types, but the employer uses only one specific machine and lift type with no variance.

A This is a valid point, and a gantry crane is an example of where workers may lift the same load repeatedly through the workday. Where this is a barrier, an interim ruling may need to be considered. This will also need to be considered during the review and transition to skill standards. Examples of barriers should be feed through as part of the open consultation period.

Q In addition, with 23229 workplaces are currently struggling with workers being off site for 1 day let alone 2 to learn how to wear a harness correctly. Where do you see units 17600 & 25045 fitting in with 23229 & 15757?

A We are working with Toitū te Waiora to incorporate both standards 17600 and 23229 into the guidance document, this will also include the confined space standards delivered in short courses. An updated document will be made available with the inclusion of these.

Q Most of our customers are not new to our industry. We operate in the industry space. You need to make sure there is a way to easily separate out the different learners from the workplaces.

A A provider will need to consider learners who can demonstrate experience and will have internal processes that will apply depending on the situation. The guidance document is aligned to the large portion of learners who attend these courses and are new to the industry with little prior experience. Learners with English as a second language will need to

be given additional support to ensure they understand the subject and be deemed competent against the outcomes of the standard.

Overall, we are trying to increase the level of competency for learners that are attending the course. The two days incorporated the opportunity for teaching, the time to reinforce their knowledge through practical application in different situations, and assessment across different situations to ensure they are competent and safe in the use of a harness whilst working at heights with minimal supervision.

Q Why are block courses mentioned as a type of short course? Block courses are embedded within longer work-based training or apprenticeships and are not stand-alone short course delivery.

A Block courses are mentioned as the issues identified for short-course delivery are the same for block courses where the delivery and assessment is undertaken over a short period of time resulting in a high number of credits being awarded. Often the learners have not been exposed to the skills being delivered on the block course and due to timeframes, the main focus is on assessment rather than delivery with an opportunity to practice before being assessed. This is currently a concern for the PGD and Scaffolding sectors.

Q If you issue an interim determination on credit values, how will that affect the credit values within existing approved programmes?

A An interim determination cannot be applied to credit values. However, the suitability of some standards within a current programme will need to be considered going forward.

Q How will Head Contractors with thousands of subcontractors (hundreds of companies) screen if the individual learners no longer show up on site with unit standards? They won't get access to site to get the experience.

A Industry are part of the solution in ensuring that the correct standards are being specified for 'access' to site and the purpose of the guidance document is to ensure we have consistency across the industry and that the right standards and skills are being specified.

We do not want industry to move away from standards, but we do want the correct standards to be specified to reflect those basic skills required to be safe on site. The standards are not designed to be a 'ticket' to start training, they are designed to show a learner's competency in the skills related to that specific standard.

Q ESOL – English language issues is another complete problem that needs resolving in itself. We are identifying several areas of the country where this is becoming more of an issue for employers and training providers.

A Workplace training in New Zealand can present unique challenges when English is a second language or workers have literacy and learning difficulties. The needs for these learners are not always met, in particular with the theory component of an assessment. Some providers are looking at contextualizing learning and assessment resources to address this issue, but more needs to be done in this area.

Q With the example of the height units, it seems presumed that the candidate is only working at height as a singular function of their job. In thousands of instances, the workers are infrequently working at height or tangentially working at height. How are they supposed to satisfy the evidence requirements while the employer is just trying to ensure they are first trained as they are legally required to do. It seems the NZQA is likely to get usurped by non-unit-based VOCs.

A Using working at heights as the example. We have recognised that for most learners this is not a singular role and something they may undertake infrequently as outlined in the question.

The question to consider is if the current unit standards being used are needed by all of the current learners who are achieving them. For instance:

- US23229 – it is considered that the outcomes from this standard could be used to meet the requirements of industry by giving learners the basic skills and knowledge to work at heights in the workplace and that this could be delivered and assessed via a short course.
- US15757 – This standard is specifically aimed at those learners who are using, installing, and disestablishing temporary height safety system and tailored more to someone working in the industrial rope access industry.

It could be argued that the majority of learners being awarded this standard are not working in this context and don't require this standard to work safely at heights, for example when using MEWPs or mobile scaffolding.

Based on the context of this standard the experience required to be deemed competent should be obtained in the workplace where learners are frequently undertaking tasks associated with using, installing, or disestablishing temporary height safety systems.

There are potentially three separate situations to consider based on the question:

- **Training** – Learners can receive training in order to be given basic skills and knowledge without the need to be assessed against a standard. In this instance, you would expect learners to be more heavily supervised in the workplace and receive ongoing training to ensure that they are deemed safe.

Training could be used by an employer to fulfil their obligations, and if required, the learner could be assessed against a standard at a later stage. A VOC process could also be used in this instance.

- **Competency** – A learner undertakes training, learning, and assessment against the criteria of a standard. As part of this process, they would need workplace experience under supervision and exposure to the appropriate tasks to be deemed by an assessor as competent in that standard.

Once deemed competent they would be able to undertake those tasks in the workplace with limited or no supervision on a regular basis.

- **Ongoing competency** – There is an obligation to ensure that a learner maintains their competency in a particular task. If that learner continues to undertake that task on a regular basis in the workplace, then demonstrating ongoing competency should be easier than a learner who is undertaking that task infrequently or who hasn't undertaken that task for a long period of time.

The infrequent learner may need additional training and supervision in the workplace to show their competency, and the process for demonstrating this will depend on the employer's policies and procedures. This may be through a refresher course with a provider, through an internal VOC process, or through another equally viable process.

None of the situations outlined above is right or wrong, but the fact that a learner has been awarded a unit standard cannot be relied upon to demonstrate ongoing competency in a particular task. However, it should be able to demonstrate that the learner has been through quality training, the opportunity to reinforce and practice their skills in the workplace, before being assessed as competent in that skill.