



Pacific  
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# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

## MICRO-QUALIFICATION IN DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS: UNIT STANDARDS BOOKLET

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme:  
Pacific Community



# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

MICRO-QUALIFICATION IN DEVELOPING  
ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS:  
UNIT STANDARD BOOKLET

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme:  
Pacific Community



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The Pacific Community

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## Introduction

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), which is a division of the Pacific Community (SPC), is the agency responsible for measuring and monitoring quality in education in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). EQAP focuses on two priority areas: facilitating labour and learner mobility, and enhancing educational quality.

One of the areas EQAP invests in to fulfil these objectives is quality assurance in post-secondary education and training. Establishing regional educational standards and benchmarks is crucial if the aspiration of PICT leaders to set up a framework is to be achieved.

As a regional quality assurance agency, EQAP has been mandated to perform the functions listed below:

- Quality audit of quality assurance agencies.
- Accreditation of institutions and provider qualifications in countries that do not have national quality assurance agencies.
- Accreditation of regional qualifications and units of learning.
- Quality assurance of providers to deliver regional qualifications and units of learning/ micro-qualifications.
- Recognition of foreign qualifications.

This year, EQAP has also ventured into the development of micro-qualifications. A micro-qualification is a subset or component of a qualification that is designed to address a specific need where only certain skill sets are required. Micro-qualifications are created by developing and packaging the learning outcomes. Many organisations, including SPC, develop and deliver short training packages to address gaps in skills and competencies. However, most of the training is neither accredited nor recognised, as there are no pre-defined systems for the development and packaging of such training. The national quality assurance agencies in the region only accredit and recognise full qualifications and do not have any established mechanisms to recognise the short training packages.

With the influx of these training packages that are provided by various organisations in the region, there is a need to appropriately develop them into micro-qualifications (MQ) and have them recognised. This will add value to the certificates acquired by learners who have been trained and will enhance their employability.

For a micro-qualification to be appropriate for and relevant to the needs of the industry, the industry must be engaged in the development of standards or learning outcomes. The industry experts constitute what is generally referred to as the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC provides professional input in the development of standards or learning outcomes that constitute a unit of learning.

This document is a compilation of the standards of the Micro-Qualification in Developing Assessment Instruments and is called the *Unit Standards Booklet*. The title, level, credit, purpose, learning outcomes, performance criteria and other relevant details of each unit standard of the micro-qualification is outlined. The document should be used together with the *Qualifications Document* for this micro-qualification.



## Unit Standard 1

Title	Create an Assessment Plan				
Level	7	Credits	5	Status	
Purpose	Learners credited with this unit standard are able to explain the key concepts, purposes, principles and methods of assessment in teaching and learning create an assessment blueprint and evaluate an assessment blueprint.				
Registration Date		Planned Review Date			
Classification	Education > Assessment and Evaluation> Assessment.				
Pre-requisites	Teaching experience, industry expertise, curriculum and assessment development experience.				

## Special Notes

### 1. Definitions

- Assessment – The process of gathering data for the purpose of making decisions.
- Industry experts – Personnel who have specialised skills and knowledge in a particular area. Also known as subject matter experts.
- Assessment instruments – Commonly referred to as examination papers and test papers.
- Blueprint – A plan that outlines content coverage, distribution and weighting of scores/ marks. Also known as a Table of Specifications.
- Stakeholders – Representatives from government, institutions and professional organisations who have an interest in the endeavour.
- Test item – Commonly known as a question.
- Learning outcome – A Statement of the result of the learning process.
- Bloom’s taxonomy – A Classification of levels of cognitive skills based on the theory by Bloom (1967).
- SOLO taxonomy – The Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes, which is a framework for classifying learning outcomes into a developmental hierarchy using the skills in the verbs.
- Curriculum – The plan for learning, usually of different levels of generality, and designed and developed by an organisation to guide the learning or training for its clients.
- Performance criteria – A statement indicating the expected performance and the criteria for assessment of the performance of a learner.
- Range – A list of options to guide the scope of the performance criteria.

## **2. Legislation**

- Education Act
- OHS Act
- Public Service Act
- Act(s) of the qualification authority or quality assurance agency
- Policy on Curriculum and Assessment
- Policy on Inclusive Education
- Guiding statements of Sustainable Development Goal 4
- Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF)
- Professional Standards and Code of Ethics/Conduct

## **3. Resources Required for Assessment**

- Relevant source documents (e.g. curriculum and assessment documents)

## **4. Recommended Skills and Knowledge**

- ICT skills, particularly word processing skills
- Analytical skills

## **5. Assessment Requirements**

- A blueprint

# Outcomes and Performance Criteria

## **Outcome 1**

Explain the key concepts, purposes, principles and methods of assessment in teaching and learning.

### **Performance Criteria**

1.1 Key concepts of assessment are explained.

Range Key concepts may include but are not limited to criterion referenced, norm referenced, summative, formative, continuous, internal and external assessments.

1.2 Purposes of assessment are explained.

Range Purposes may include but are not limited to formative purposes (for improvement of learning and teaching), and summative purposes (for selection and placement).

1.3 Principles of assessment are explained.

Range Principles of assessment may include, but are not limited to, fairness, validity, reliability, authenticity, appropriateness, relevance, legal and ethical considerations.

1.4 Methods of assessment are explained.

Range Methods may include, but are not limited to, paper and/or online tests, projects, presentations and practical activities.

## **Outcome 2**

Create an assessment blueprint.

Range Blueprint structure may include either a two-way or a three-way format.

## **Performance Criteria**

2.1 Relevant documents are consulted to guide assessment planning and selection of content.

Range Documents may include, but are not limited to, examiners reports, syllabi and prescriptions, guidelines for content/training packages, curriculum and assessment policies and guidelines, moderation reports, examination reports, item analysis reports, copies of previous assessment instruments and related curriculum documents.

2.2 Specific learning outcomes are unpacked from general learning outcomes/objectives where necessary and according to prescribed guidelines.

2.3 Learning outcomes are matched to appropriate levels of cognition based on a selected taxonomy.

Range Taxonomies may include Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO), Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and the Five Stage Model of Skills Acquisition.

2.4 Scores are appropriately distributed across content and skill levels.

2.5 Number of items and item types are determined from the blueprint.

Range Item types may include, but are not limited to, multiple-choice, true–false, matching, and short- and long-answer questions.

## **Outcome 3**

Evaluate the assessment blueprint.

## **Performance Criteria**

3.1 The number of content components (topics) is checked against the syllabus.

Range Content components in the blueprint should match the areas (topics) that were taught during the period of study.

3.2 Weighting allocated to each content area and to each skill level is checked.

Range Weighting is calculated against time allocation during teaching and the perceived importance of the content area, and must be limited to the total skill score of the assessment blueprint.

3.3 Appropriateness of item types to learning outcomes, as allocated in the blueprint, is checked.

Range Item types may include, but are not limited to, multiple-choice, true–false, matching, and short- and long-answer questions, and must align with the skills targeted in the learning outcome.

## Unit Standard 2

Title	Create Assessment Instruments			
Level	7	Credits	6	Status
Purpose	Learners credited with this unit standard are able to develop assessment items in accordance with the blueprint; carry out a probe analysis to show the alignment between each assessment item and corresponding learning outcomes and the syllabus; create a scoring rubric that shows different levels of responses; and format the assessment instrument according to prescribed guidelines and communicate to relevant administrator(s).			
Registration Date		Planned Review Date		
Classification	Education > Assessment and Evaluation > Assessment.			
Pre-requisites	Teaching experience, industry expertise, curriculum and assessment development experience.			

## Special Notes

### 1. Definitions

- Assessment – The process of gathering data for the purpose of making decisions.
- Industry experts – Personnel who have expertise in a particular subject area. Also known as subject matter experts.
- Assessment instruments – Commonly referred to as examination papers and test papers.
- Blueprint – A plan that outlines content coverage, distribution and weighting of scores/ marks. Also known as a Table of Specifications.
- Probe analysis – The process of matching learning outcomes and their skill levels to assessment items and their skill scores.
- Scoring rubric – Commonly referred to as the scoring guide.
- Test item – Commonly known as a question.
- Learning outcome – A statement of the result of the learning process.
- Bloom's taxonomy – A classification of levels of cognitive skills based on the theory by Bloom (1967).
- SOLO taxonomy – The Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes, which is a framework for classifying learning outcomes into a developmental hierarchy using the skills in the verbs.
- Curriculum – The plan for learning, usually of different levels of generality, and designed and developed by an organisation to guide the learning or training for its clients.
- Administrator – The supervisor or a relevant ministry official.
- Performance criteria – A statement indicating the expected performance and the criteria for assessment of the performance of a learner.
- Range – A list of options to guide the scope of the performance criteria.

## **2. Legislation**

- Education Act
- OHS Act
- Public Service Act
- Act(s) of the qualification authority
- Policy on Curriculum and Assessment
- Policy on Inclusive Education
- Guiding statements of Sustainable Development Goal 4
- Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF)
- Professional Standards and Code of Ethics/Conduct

## **3. Resources Required for Assessment**

- Content and curriculum documents

## **4. Recommended Skills and Knowledge**

- ICT skills, particularly word processing skills
- Analytical skills

## **5. Assessment Requirements**

- Create three documents: draft instrument, probe analysis and the scoring guide

# Outcomes and Performance Criteria

## **Outcome 1**

Develop assessment items in accordance with the blueprint.

Range	Assessment items may include but are not limited to multiple-choice, true–false, matching, and short- and long-answer questions.
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### **Performance Criteria**

- 1.1 Assessment item types are aligned to the blueprint and measure performance against the prescribed learning outcomes.
- 1.2 Assessment items are created in accordance with established item writing conventions and principles of good assessment practice.
- 1.3 Items are reviewed based on the item analysis report.

### **Outcome 2**

Carry out a probe analysis to show the alignment between each assessment item and corresponding learning outcomes and the syllabus.

### **Performance Criteria**

- 2.1 The probe analysis table showing the alignment between the learning outcome, its skill level and each item is generated.

### **Outcome 3**

Create a scoring rubric that shows different levels of responses.

### **Performance Criteria**

- 3.1 Scoring rubric is created.  

Range	Rubric must include expected responses (or key evidence), checklists, and analytic and holistic rating scales.
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### **Outcome 4**

Format the assessment instrument according to prescribed guidelines and communicate to relevant administrator(s).

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| Range | Guidelines may include, but are not restricted to, those that are relevant to ministerial or organisational requirements. |
|-------|---|

### **Performance Criteria**

- 4.1 The assessment instrument is formatted according to prescribed guidelines.
- 4.2 Final drafts of all relevant documents are submitted to the administrator.  

Range	Documents must include but are not limited to the draft instrument, the blueprint, the probe analysis and the scoring rubric.
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## Unit Standard 3

Title	Conduct Moderation of Assessment Instruments				
Level	7	Credits	4	Status	
Purpose	Learners credited with this unit standard are able to evaluate the alignment of the probe analysis to the assessment blueprint; evaluate item quality and instrument formatting in terms of alignment to item writing conventions, learning outcomes, and formatting specifications; evaluate the scoring rubric; and record and discuss moderation decisions.				
Registration Date		Planned Review Date			
Classification	Education > Assessment and Evaluation > Assessment.				
Pre-requisites	Teaching experience, industry expertise, curriculum and assessment development experience.				

## Special Notes

### 1. Definitions

- Assessment – A process of gathering data for the purpose of making decisions.
- Industry experts – Personnel who have expertise in a particular subject area. Also known as subject matter experts.
- Assessment instruments – Commonly referred to as examination papers and test papers.
- Blueprint – A plan that outlines content coverage, distribution and weighting of scores/ marks. Also known as a Table of Specifications.
- Probe analysis – The process of matching learning outcomes and their skill levels to assessment items and their skill scores.
- Scoring rubric – Commonly referred to as the scoring guide.
- Test item – Commonly known as a question.
- Learning outcome – A statement of the result of the learning process.
- Bloom’s taxonomy – A classification of levels of cognitive skills based on the theory by Bloom (1967).
- SOLO taxonomy – The Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes, which is a framework for classifying learning outcomes into a developmental hierarchy using the skills in the verbs.
- Curriculum – The plan for learning, usually of different levels of generality, and designed and developed by an organisation to guide the learning or training for its clients.
- Administrator – The supervisor or a relevant ministry official.
- Moderation – The process of quality assurance of assessment items and assessment instruments.
- Performance criteria – Statement indicating the expected performance and the criteria for assessment of the performance of a learner.
- Range – A list of options to guide the scope of the performance criteria.

## **2. Legislation**

- Education Act
- National Curriculum and Assessment Policy
- Inclusive Education Policy
- Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF)
- SDG4 Guiding Statements
- Professional Standards and Code of Ethics/Conduct
- Public Service Act – e.g. Fiji Public Service Act, 1999
- Qualifications Authority Acts
- Higher Education Qualifications Framework Guidelines

## **3. Resources Required for Assessment**

- Relevant curriculum and assessment documents
- Relevant policies
- Internet

## **4. Recommended Skills and Knowledge**

- ICT skills, particularly word processing skills
- Analytical skills

## **5. Assessment Requirements**

- Moderated instrument
- Moderation report

# Outcomes and Performance Criteria

## **Outcome 1**

Evaluate the alignment of the probe analysis to the assessment blueprint.

### **Performance Criteria**

- 1.1 Alignment of the assessment blueprint is checked with the organisation's training (curriculum) requirements.  
Range Checking may include, but is not limited to, the total weightings of strands, the distribution of weights and the matching of items to weights.
- 1.2 Alignment of the probe analysis is checked against the blueprint and the instrument.  
Range Checking may include, but is not limited to, the alignment of items, skill level and learning outcome, and the tally of skill scores with the weightings in the blueprint.
- 1.3 Refinements are considered and, when appropriate, incorporated into the probe analysis and instrument.

## Outcome 2

Evaluate item quality and instrument formatting in terms of alignment to item writing conventions, learning outcomes and formatting specifications.

### Performance Criteria

2.1 Item quality is evaluated in terms of alignment to writing conventions and learning outcomes.

Range Item writing conventions may include, but are not limited to, the following for each question type:

- Multiple choice questions: The clarity of the stem, randomisation of the key, relationship between the stem and options, logical order of options, verbal clues, verbiage, length of the distractors and there must only be one correct response.
- True–false questions: Absolutely true or false.
- Matching questions: Homogeneity, one-to-one matching and more responses than premises.
- Short-answer questions: Clarity of the item, accuracy of information, item difficulty level matches the allocated score and quality of the stimulus materials.
- Long-answer questions: Word limit, and clarity of the skills and levels to be assessed.

2.2 Paper formatting is evaluated in terms of alignment against the guidelines.

Range Evaluation may include, but is not limited to, checking and making suggestions for improvement of the format of the paper against the set guidelines for the layout of the cover page, clarity of instructions, splitting of items over two pages, quality of visual resources, page numbering, font size and type, footnotes where necessary, line spacing and alignment.

2.3 Refinements are incorporated where appropriate into the items and paper formatting.

## Outcome 3

Evaluate the scoring rubric.

### Performance Criteria

3.1 Scoring rubric is evaluated against appropriate guidelines.

Range Evaluation includes, but is not limited to, checking that the scoring rubric table is appropriately set up with item numbers, skill levels, accurate evidence and an expected range of responses.

3.2 Refinements are considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the scoring rubric.

## Outcome 4

Record and discuss moderation decisions.

### Performance Criteria

4.1 Moderation findings and refinements are recorded and discussed.

Range Recording includes, but is not limited to, the accuracy of the blueprint, items, format, probe analysis, and the scoring rubric and the revisions made.

