

Introduction

Waihangara Ara Rau would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the BCATS (Building Construction and Allied Trades Skills) skill standards.

The focus of this project was to review the Building Construction and Allied Trade Skills (BCATS) qualifications and standards to ensure they are fit for purpose.

- New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (Level 1) [Ref: 3843]
- New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (Level 2) [Ref: 3844]
- New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (Level 3) [Ref: 3845]

At the same time, we have developed a suite of new skill standards better suited to the needs of ākonga (learners) and the BCATS industries. All new skill standards will include achieved/merit/excellence grades to differentiate a student's level of performance and achievement.

We've prepared this document to share the feedback that Waihangara Ara Rau received during wider consultation of the draft skill through until Wednesday 19 November. It also shows how we responded to your feedback with guidance from our Technical Advisory and Steering Groups (TAG).

The process so far

Initial consultation

Waihanga Ara Rau consulted with tangata whai mana (interested parties) from across Aotearoa New Zealand between June to October 2023 via in-person conversations, phone calls, online meetings, and email communications. The purpose of this consultation was to analyse the gaps and issues with the current BCATS qualifications and standards used by secondary schools and training providers and identify opportunities for improvement. Feedback from the consultation was considered by the project's Steering Group via face-to-face and online meetings held between October to December 2023.

Skill standard development and wider consultation

The development of the mandatory skill standards was completed by Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) for each level, and alignment with the qualifications was overseen by the project Steering Group. The TAGs met face-to-face in November and December 2023, and subsequently via online meetings and email. It was agreed in December 2023 to pursue the inclusion of achieved, merit and excellence grades for the mandatory skill standards and a specialist technical advisory group was involved in the development of the grade criteria. We sought and received BCITO's confirmation that they would support the use of the graded standards as part of any redevelopment of teaching, learning and assessment materials.

The draft skill standards were distributed for wider industry consultation through an online survey distributed to key stakeholders, including providers and industry representatives between October to November 2024. All feedback was considered and actioned where appropriate by the project's Steering Group.

The survey was shared with all BCATS providers to test wider support for the inclusion of grading. The results of the surveys confirmed they were largely supportive of the inclusion of graded criteria. The survey also identified the concerns and potential risks that were raised by providers.

We finalised the proposed skill standards and reviewed qualifications by compiling the feedback and support received from the Steering and Technical Advisory Groups. The qualifications and skill standards are now ready to be submitted to NZQA for approval.

Feedback relevant across the BCATS skill standards

The feedback we received during consultation on the BCATS skill standards focused on the following:

Why have achieved, merit, and excellence grades been added?

Achieved, merit, and excellence grades have been added to recognise ākongā practical ability. From what you've told us, it's important that the standards remain focused on the practical projects ākongā undertake, and the industry entry-level skills that they will grow. To maintain this focus, the step-ups between grades reflect a progression of the skill being assessed.

For vocational learners, the inclusion of achieved, merit and excellence grades are a way to support parity and perception with other subject/career choices, particularly in upper secondary education.

The standards contribute to overall NCEA endorsement and the certificate level, which may have a significant impact on future training and career prospects.

These skill standards are industry skill standards and are not aligned to National Curriculum subjects. This means BCATS is not an approved subject course for University Entrance/UE.

What support will be available?

Waihanga Ara Rau and BCITO are committed to supporting the transition to the new suite of skill standards once they are available.

In addition to the skill standards, you'll be able to access the Programme Guidance document with grade commentary for each standard, and updated learning resources and assessments. We're using your feedback to inform additional support activities. More details of the planned support will be shared early in 2025.



How will we maintain consistency?

Your feedback emphasised to us that one of your concerns was about consistency: consistency of marking, grading, and projects that are being undertaken. To ensure consistency, grade commentary has been developed for each standard. The commentary includes indicators and examples for achieved, merit, and excellence grades, and will be supported by exemplars. This will support consistency of both the grading judgements, and of the kinds of projects completed at each level.

We're also developing a project library that sit across Levels 1-3. This will include specific projects, as well as the kinds of techniques and components that we can expect to see at each level.

When can I start using the new standards?

You'll be able to start assessing the new standards in 2026. We're working with BCITO to support implementation, and BCITO are developing material to replace the existing BCATS material. You'll have resources, assessments, and the new standards available in time for you to plan for 2026.

While you can start using the standards from 2026, there will be an overlap in the use of the skill standards and unit standards. The current unit standards are likely to expire in December 2027.

Do I need to apply for consent to assess?

The existing BCATS standards sit in the Base Scope of Assessment for Schools. The new BCATS standards will sit in the same domain as they do currently – meaning that they'll still exist in schools' base scope of assessment. If you're a school, there's nothing extra you have to do.

If you are a provider and already have Consent to Assess for the BCATS domains, consent is being extended to the new suite of skill standards. The details will be confirmed by NZQA when the Change Report is published. [Qualifications and Assessment Standards Approvals](#)

Concerns and potential risks

Topic	Concern/risk identified	Commentary or Action
Being “too academic”	Achievement standards are academic by nature. The majority of BCATS students are not. Unfortunately, most academics look down at trades not just the unit standards so it may be a lot of effort, time and resources for nothing.	Clear messaging in external communication and transitioning information that these are skill standards (not achievement standards). The step-ups relate to the progression of the skill in the title of the standard. It is an opportunity to recognise construction trades excellence through skill standards. Grade commentary will support consistency of practical skills being recognised.
Confusion with achievement standards	How will the new standards fit in with the Achievement Standards?	Complimentary Not intended to align to the National Curriculum. They reflect skills and knowledge valued for BCATS industries.
Disadvantages poor literacy skills	<i>“I find the level of my students is good for the practical, but the level of literacy and numeracy is weak.”</i>	The skill standard describes the progression of skill. Good practice assessment design will enable learners to demonstrate their competence of the skill without out their literacy skills preventing higher award (unless directly related to the Learning Outcomes). The progression between achieved, merit, and excellence is not related to ... Supporting commentary reflects Resources will support literacy and numeracy development.
Restricted construction trades	There are limited opportunities to cover trades other than carpentry and landscaping. The only place to do anything “allied” is in the BCATS project standard, but this is so broad as to what you can do. If BCATS standards are going to be offering merit and excellence, there needs to be more standards that can be used in a metalshop setting(welding) and there more standards around design, such as CAD standards.	BCATS is primary purpose for use in schools. The projects included are suitable for the school environment and require resources for delivery that most schools have access too. The open projects standards are available for schools that have access and resource to other project types. These skill standards will be included in the Base Scope of Assessment for Schools. This does not prevent us investigating the need for new skill standards supporting pathways to other specialist trades in the future.

Topic	Concern/risk identified	Commentary or Action
Consistency of project types	“Appropriate projects could be added to the BCATS areas which also have plans and relevant materials associated to assist within each area, so projects are consistent across areas and levels.”	This is an ongoing concern irrespective of adding the graded commentary. Having the open Level 3 Project standard is a balance of choice and prescription. Grade criteria, graded commentary and exemplars will support consistency without reducing choice.
Consistency of grading projects	Keeping marking and judgement consistent throughout the school system making sure they are doing the same consistent marking.	Actions to address are the same as concerns above.
Ambiguity in criteria	Words like “proficiency” or “precision” are ambiguous and maybe interpreted differently, leading to inequity in requirements placed on students (which vary from teacher to teacher). Recommend finding a way to minimise (or better yet, eliminate) subjective wording in the standards.	Commentary is helpful for indicators and examples that provide supporting guidance for the criteria. Cluster moderations intend to continue to support community of practice through the moderation. The value of the cluster moderations was reinforced through the survey. Programme Guidance is available and can be added to where required to address any specific concerns. There will be a transition plan to support the implementation of the skill standards.
Drawing skill standard – no progression from LI-3	This standard appears to be an outlier with no comparable Level 1 or 3 standard. Including this within the Level 2 certificate will make it problematic to achieve this within already tight time frames.	Not required in programmes leading to the qualification, however, it can be included in courses if schools want to (<i>optional</i>). This was based on feedback that some learners have an interest in developing drawing skills alongside the practical construction skills.
Moderation requirements	Will 6 samples be required for post moderation?	No, not necessarily as this encourages practices that do not align with good assessment practice (such as scaling).
PD requirements for teachers and assessors	Need to provide more P.D for people to be able to pick up your courses and deliver them in schools.	Waihangara Ara Rau and BCITO are working together to support a transition plan to support the implementation of the skill standards, which includes opportunities for PD and connect and network with each other.
Course/Programme Design	The credits available to students during their time within the BCATS environment far outnumber the time that they spend at course and the actual work requirements set out.	Schools and providers can select which standards they include in their courses and the number of credits that they offer. If offering the qualifications, the skill standards expected to be used are set out in the qualification document.



Appendix A – All BCATS Skill Standards

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<i>Health, safety & wellbeing</i>	Use safe work practices for a BCATS project or related tasks	Work safely in a BCATS environment	Contribute to a health and safety culture in a BCATS environment
<i>Planning and communication</i>	Communicate information for a BCATS project or related tasks	Actively communicate to complete a BCATS project	Communicate to work effectively in a BCATS environment
		Plan and monitor the process of completing a BCATS project	Plan and monitor stages of a BCATS project
<i>Measurement and calculations</i>	Apply basic measurement and calculations to a BCATS project or related tasks	Measure and calculate to solve problems for a BCATS project	Apply mathematical processes to a BCATS project
<i>Drawings and specifications</i>		Create sketches and drawings for a BCATS project	
<i>BCATS Trades</i>	Identify BCATS trades involved in the construction of a residential building	Identify employment opportunities within BCATS industries	Incorporate other parties into a BCATS project schedule
<i>Tools</i>	Use hand tools for a BCATS project or related tasks	Use power tools for a BCATS project	Manage the use of tools, equipment, and machinery for a BCATS project
	Use basic power tools for a BCATS project or related tasks	Use fixed machinery for a BCATS project	
<i>Materials</i>	Use basic materials for a BCATS project or related tasks	Select and use materials for a BCATS project	Work with materials for a BCATS project
<i>Building methods</i>	Apply processes for a BCATS project or related tasks	Construct timber furniture as a BCATS project	Create and evaluate a BCATS project
	Use hardware and fastenings for a BCATS project or related tasks	Complete concrete work as a BCATS project	
	Create joints for a BCATS project or related tasks	Construct a timber deck as a BCATS project	
	Place basic concrete as a BCATS project	Construct a utility building as a BCATS project	
		Lay paving blocks as a BCATS project	
		Construct a retaining wall as a BCATS project	
		Make a cupboard with a drawer as a BCATS project	
		Construct a timber fence as a BCATS project	
	Complete a BCATS project		

Appendix B – Revised BCATS qualifications L1-3

English title/Taitara Ingarihi		New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills [3843]	
Version number/Te putanga		2	Qualification type/Te momo tohu Certificate
Level/Te kaupae		1	Credits/Ngā whiwhinga 40
Strategic Purpose statement/ Te rautaki o te tohu			
<p>This qualification is for people who wish to gain an introduction to basic skills relevant to the building, construction, and allied trades sectors.</p> <p>Graduates will have foundational knowledge and skills relevant to a wide range of trade occupations, that may also assist with the achievement of NCEA. This qualification is not intended to recognise the level of commercial competence required of trade professionals.</p> <p>Graduates will be able to safely perform basic tasks and complete Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (BCATS) projects in highly structured contexts, under direct supervision, in school workshops or training establishments.</p>			
Qualification outcomes/ Ngā hua		Credits/Ngā whiwhinga	Conditions/Ngā tikanga
1	Maintain safety while completing a BCATS project or related tasks.	5 credits	Skill standard BCATS-1 <i>Use safe work practices for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 4)
2	Recognise, and safely use, materials for a BCATS project or related tasks	5 credits	Skill standard BCATS-2 <i>Use basic materials for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 5)
3	Apply, and evaluate, fundamental processes to complete a BCATS project or related tasks.	20 credits	Skill standard BCATS-5 <i>Apply processes to a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 8) Skill standard BCATS-6 <i>Use hardware and fastenings for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 2) Skill standard BCATS-7 <i>Create joints for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 4) Skill standard BCATS-8 <i>Apply basic measurement and calculations to a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 3) Skill standard BCATS-9 <i>Communicate information for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 4)
4	Use, and care for, hand and power tools for a BCATS project or related tasks.	10 credits	Skill standard BCATS-3 <i>Use hand tools for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-4 <i>Use basic power tools for a BCATS project</i> (Level 1) (credits 5)

English title/Taitara Ingarihi		New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills [3844]	
Version number/Te putanga		2	Qualification type/Te momo tohu Certificate
Level/Te kaupae		2	Credits/Ngā whiwhinga 45
Strategic Purpose statement/ Te rautaki o te tohu			
<p>This qualification is for people who wish to develop basic skills and knowledge relevant to various building, construction, and allied trades contexts.</p> <p>Graduates will have essential skills and knowledge of building, construction, and allied trades, that may also assist with the achievement of NCEA and future employment. This qualification is not intended to recognise the level of commercial competence required of trade professionals.</p> <p>Graduates will be able to perform tasks to complete Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (BCATS) projects, under general supervision, within a range of learning environments such as school workshops, training establishments, outdoor areas, and industry placement workplaces.</p>			
Qualification outcomes/ Ngā hua		Credits/Ngā whiwhinga	Conditions/Ngā tikanga
1	Apply safe work practices in a BCATS environment.	5 credits	Skill standard BCATS-12 <i>Work safely in a BCATS environment</i> (Level 2) (credits 4)
2	Use materials, tools, and fixed or portable machinery to complete a BCATS project.	15 credits	Skill standard BCATS-13 <i>Select and use materials for a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-14 <i>Use a range of power tools for a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 5) One elective skill standard listed in the general conditions for programmes
3	Plan, communicate and progress the completion of a BCATS project.	20 credits	Skill standard BCATS-16 <i>Measure and calculate to solve problems for a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 3) Skill standard BCATS-17 <i>Create sketches and drawings for a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-18 <i>Actively communicate to complete a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 4) Skill standard BCATS-19 <i>Plan and monitor the process of completing a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 6) One elective skill standard listed in the general conditions for programmes
4	Identify the requirements and responsibilities of BCATS industries	5 credits	Skill standard BCATS-20 <i>Recognise employment opportunities within BCATS industries</i> (Level 2) (credits 4)



<p>General conditions for programme/ Ngā tikanga whānui o te hōtaka</p>	<p>Programmes must use mandatory skill standards in the Conditions relating to the graduate profile below. </p> <p>Candidates must also undertake at least two of the following assessment standards during the course of study, culminating in the overall assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Skill standard BCATS-15 <i>Use fixed machinery for a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 5)- Skill standard BCATS-21 <i>Construct timber furniture as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 6)- Skill standard BCATS 22 <i>Complete concrete work as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 4)- Skill standard BCATS-23 <i>Construct a timber deck as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 6)- Skill standard BCATS-24 <i>Construct a utility building as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 6)- Skill standard BCATS-25 <i>Lay paving blocks as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 4)- Skill standard BCATS-26 <i>Construct a retaining wall as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 4)- Skill standard BCATS-27 <i>Make a cupboard with a drawer as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 6)- Skill standard BCATS-28 <i>Construct a timber fence as a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 4)- Skill standard BCATS-29 <i>Complete a BCATS project</i> (Level 2) (credits 6)
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English title/Taitara Ingarihi		New Zealand Certificate in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills [3845]	
Version number/Te putanga	2	Qualification type/Te momo tohu	Certificate
Level/Te kaupae	3	Credits/Ngā whiwhinga	40
Strategic Purpose statement/ Te rautaki o te tohu			
<p>This qualification is for people who wish to further develop underpinning skills and knowledge of building, construction, and allied trades.</p> <p>Graduates will have skills, knowledge, and experience of building, construction, and allied trades that may also assist with the achievement of NCEA and future employment. This qualification is not intended to recognise the level of commercial competence required of trade professionals.</p> <p>Graduates will be able to perform construction tasks and undertake a Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (BCATS) project, under limited supervision, within a range of learning environments such as school workshops, training establishments, outdoor areas, and industry placement workplaces.</p>			
Qualification outcomes/ Ngā hua		Credits/Ngā whiwhinga	Conditions/Ngā tikanga
1	Work safely and contribute to a health and safety culture in a BCATS environment.	5 credits	Skill standard BCATS-30 <i>Contribute to a health and safety culture in a BCATS environment</i> (Level 3) (credits 5)
2	Use materials, tools, and machinery to undertake a BCATS project.	10 credits	Skill standard BCATS-31 <i>Work with materials for a BCATS project</i> (Level 3) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-32 <i>Manage the use of tools, equipment, and machinery for a BCATS project</i> (Level 3) (credits 5)
3	Plan and communicate to undertake a BCATS project and evaluate the finished product.	25 credits	Skill standard BCATS-33 <i>Apply mathematical processes to a BCATS project</i> (Level 3) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-34 <i>Communicate to work effectively in a BCATS environment</i> (Level 3) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-35 <i>Plan and monitor stages of a BCATS project</i> (Level 3) (credits 5) Skill standard BCATS-36 <i>Incorporate other parties into a BCATS project</i> (Level 3) (credits 2) Skill standard BCATS-37 <i>Create and evaluate a BCATS project</i> (Level 3) (credits 8)