

# First Aid unit standard review 2025

## Sector consultation report

28 July 2025

## Background

NZQA approved the Toitū te Waiora-developed micro-credential [\*Manage First Aid in an Emergency Situation\*](#) in November 2024. Concerns were raised by NZQA during the approval process about potential over-crediting of unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402. They directed that the requirement in *Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR) for First Aid (version 5)* that states minimum duration of training for unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 should be reviewed.

The specific requirement is:

*The minimum duration of first aid training and assessment for training based on standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 is 12 hours of training and assessment, and for standards 6401 and 6402 or standards 26551 and 26552 it is eight hours of training and assessment.*

NZQA consider that the 12-hour minimum duration is at odds with the 50 notional hours of teaching, learning, and assessment that the combined credit value of standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 would suggest.

Toitū te Waiora engaged with all providers who have Consent to Assess for the 6400 series unit standards (approximately 1400 providers). We invited all providers to complete an online survey (Appendix 1) and to engage with us in one-to-one kōrero.

As part of the review, we also canvassed views on refresher courses for 6400, 6401, and 6402 and potential credit reporting, the future of unit standard 33319, and the desirability of developing a national curriculum for first aid training.

The results of the consultation are presented below in themes.

## Insights

43 people responded to the online survey, and we met with 12 providers in May 2025. Questions centred around the following themes:

- Appropriateness of credit weightings.
- Appropriateness of course duration.
- Refresher training.
- Usefulness of unit standard 33319.
- Developing a national curriculum.
- Impact of credit change on small first aid providers.

***Appropriateness of credit weightings*** – in the online survey, more than half of the respondents were happy for credit values to be closer to the 12-hour minimum duration of training. Comments included:

- *Reducing the credits will not affect our delivery as our clients just want to learn the skill sets of first aid – the credits don't mean anything.*
- *We can accommodate any reduced crediting as we deliver first aid within a larger body of study.*

However, some respondents expressed a strong preference for the current credit weightings to remain. Comments included:

- Lowering the credit value would devalue first aid as a skill.
- Lowering credits may lead to a decline in uptake.
- Decline in uptake will be detrimental to New Zealand as a whole as fewer people will have these important skills. In particular, survival of cardiac arrest may decline.
- Programme delivery with these units embedded would be adversely impacted, in particular high school students may drop first aid as an option if it doesn't provide the necessary 5 credits for NCEA.

**Appropriateness of course duration** – few respondents thought increasing course duration to better match the combined 5 credits of the 6400 series was the best approach. Comments included:

- Less people will do First Aid if more than 12 hours are required for the training.
- Businesses who place staff on courses do not want staff using more time to complete First Aid nor want any more costs for courses as a result of changes.
- We can only accommodate the two unit standards in the time we have available 9-3 x 2 days. This works for students, school and our employers.
- This is a unique set of standards. Having to ensure each credit relates to a longer period of learning will reduce the chances of students sitting this qualification and schools offering it
- By increasing hours for the training no-one will want to do this.
- Class sizes range from 7 to 20 for one instructor. The larger the class, the longer it takes to complete the training/assessment.

Suggestions for increasing course duration to nearer 50 hours included:

- Stipulate pre-requisite learning to ensure the 50 hours can be met. 12 hour is sufficient contact time for a course but relies on prior knowledge.
- Account for the skills required of life saving techniques and increase the credit values i.e. knowledge base prior to the training and life skills that have been obtained.
- Could require pre-classroom learning which is submitted and assessed to get the hours up. But adds complexity and costs to how courses are delivered.

**Refresher training** – some respondents thought that revalidation of units should be visible on a learner's NZQA Record of Achievement but thought the proposal to develop a single skill standard to revalidate all three unit standards would be difficult. Comments included:

- Refresher course maintains current knowledge but is not re-assessed. This is reflected in certificate wording 'this remains current'. Could be more difficult with a new single skill standard as it may not distinguish whether they had one or all US previously.
- No support for 1cr refresher skill standard as this would undermine everything that has been done to date.
- Don't see a need for separate skill standard.
- Refresher courses can be problematic as clients present a previous certificate thinking it is a Unit Standard but cannot be confirmed as not registered on the framework.

**Usefulness of US 33319** – this unit standard has had little usage since NZQA listing in January 2024, with only one provider assessing against it in March 2025. The majority of survey respondents thought it should be retired, some had no opinion. Comments included:

- It is fit for purpose but the marketing of this and the new unit standards was not undertaken as planned. Very few people know about the unit existing.
- Doesn't meet WorkSafe requirements for most employers. It's for a niche group but needs an entirely different standards structure. Grey area where injuries that may be aggravated by

*practice or assessment of CPR skills may be reluctant to demonstrate in training environment in classroom but could perform in real life situation.*

- *It is difficult to deliver both a 6400 series and 33319 together if someone for example advises an injury that prevents them from kneeling down to perform CPR. Needs to be standalone but also there is not a lot of demand for 33319 so not really fit for purpose.*

A compromise suggestion was:

- *Consider merging 33319 with 6402 and allow all learners to demonstrate competence through an alternative method. Practical methods can still be used by able learners though this approach would also offer an opportunity for individuals with impairments to be awarded the unit standard, ensuring inclusivity and a broader assessment of competence. The chosen assessment method would be at the discretion of the assessor at the time.*

**National curriculum** – during kōrero, participants were asked for their views on the development of a national curriculum for first aid training by TTW. This was universally approved:

- *Yes, positive to hear that.*
- *Yes, if it provides clarity on what is required.*
- *Would be useful to have a standardised curriculum across all providers or guidance from TTW on what should be covered for the units and how it should be spread across online and classroom.*
- *Very good idea.*
- *Agree that a national standard or curriculum on how First Aid is delivered should be developed so every provider is delivering the same content and level of First Aid.*

**Impact on small businesses** – there was disquiet amongst some smaller providers that changes to the current balanced model of credits and hours would adversely impact on their business:

- *If we reduce the credits that will affect my business as we deliver many courses to high schools.*
- *Smaller providers struggle to compete with bigger entities so any changes may make that divide larger.*

## Findings

### 1. Credit Weightings vs Course Duration

- General view - most respondents were open to aligning credit values more closely with the 12-hour training duration, despite the current credits implying 50 notional hours.
- Split opinions -
  - Supporters of lower credits: credits aren't meaningful to learners; training outcomes matter more.
  - Opponents of lower credits: fear it may devalue first aid, reduce uptake (especially in schools), and negatively affect public health outcomes.

### 2. Course Duration

- Consensus - Strong resistance to increasing training duration to match the 50 notional hours implied by 5 credits.
- Reasons include:
  - Higher costs and time burden for learners and businesses.
  - Potential decline in participation and delivery in schools.

- Alternative suggestions: use pre-learning, blended delivery, or life experience to help meet learning hour expectations without increasing classroom time, though these add complexity.

### 3. Refresher Training

- Mixed views:
  - Support for tracking refresher activity on a learner's NZQA Record of Achievement.
  - Little support for a new, single-credit refresher standard – concerns it would undermine existing achievements and be confusing to implement.
  - Ongoing confusion around what counts as valid evidence for refresher training.

### 4. Unit Standard 33319

- Low uptake and limited utility:
  - Most agree it should be retired or reworked.
  - Was noted by several respondents that the sector wasn't aware of it, which could or would affect uptake.
  - Seen as niche, not meeting employer needs, and difficult to deliver alongside other standards.
  - Compromise idea: Merge it with 6402 and allow for alternative assessments to improve inclusivity.

### 5. National Curriculum

- Strong support for developing a national First Aid curriculum:
  - Would ensure consistency across providers.
  - Desirable for clarity, quality assurance, and guidance on delivery methods.

### 6. Impact on Small Providers

- Concerns that changes to credits or course structure could harm small providers, especially those relying on school-based delivery.
- Fear of losing business to larger first aid providers better equipped to adapt to changes.

## Proposed outcomes

1. Unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 will be replaced by three one-credit skill standards that share the same content.
2. Unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 will be set to expire on 31 December 2027.
3. The 12-hour minimum duration of training and assessment for 6400, 6401, and 6402 will remain as is for new skill standard assessment and award.
4. Refresher training and certification will remain as is, with no new skill standard development.
5. TTW has considerable reservations about expiring unit standard 33319 given it was designed to offer tangata whaikaha an opportunity to demonstrate CPR skills. Equally, very low uptake of the

standard might suggest that either a) providers are wary of offering it, or b) that they are simply not aware of it. TTW intends to re-advertise 33319 in Q3 2025; the Industry Skills Board that will take over first aid standard setting on 1 January 2026 will make a decision on its future in Q4 2026 or Q1 2027.

6. There was considerable support for developing a national curriculum (referred by NZQA as a 'national programme' and tied in with micro-credential delivery and award) for sector consultation. However, discussion with NZQA in July 2025 following the first round of consultation suggested that a national programme would not be suitable for micro-credential awards. Therefore, we will focus our efforts on editing *First Aid as a Life Skill* to present proposed curricula.
7. The existing *Manage First Aid in an Emergency Situation* (Micro-credential 5084) will be set to expire on 31 December 2027.
8. *Manage First Aid in an Emergency Situation* (Micro-credential - 5084) will be replaced with a new three credit micro-credential assessed by the three one-credit skill standards.
9. A new two credit micro-credential covering CPR and basic first aid will be listed on the NZQCF, provisionally titled *Foundation First Aid*. It will be assessed by the two new skill standards which assess competency in basic first aid and CPR.
10. TTW canvassed the need for a new one credit micro-credential potentially titled *Manage first aid in an emergency situation*, assessed by the new skill standard. Based on feedback, we are not proposing to develop it – learners will have the opportunity of taking either the three-credit or two-credit micro-credential (points 8 and 9, above).
11. TTW will submit applications to NZQA for three new one-credit skill standards in August 2025, and for two new micro-credentials. We would hope they are listed on the DASS / NZQCF prior to our disestablishment on 31 December 2025. If they are not, the applications will transfer to the new Industry Skills Board from 1 January 2026.
12. A new version of *First Aid as a Life Skill* will reflect the proposed outcomes listed above, and will be published for sector consultation in September or October 2025.

## APPENDIX 1- Online survey

### 1. Register your interest

Name:

Your organisation:

Your email address:

### 2. What applies to you?

(Select all that apply)

First Aid training provider/ NZQA-registered Tertiary Education Organisation

School

Employer

Industry peak body or association

Trade union or professional association

Other: Please state

### 3. Your areas of interest

(Select all that apply)

First Aid training provider

Workplace First Aiders

School-based First Aid learners

Other: Please state

### 4. Ways to get involved

(Select all that apply)

I am interested in having a one-on-one kōrero in May 2025.

I would like to stay up to date on the project via the mailing list.

### 5. What do you think is the best way to manage weighting of the 6400 series unit standards?

**Potential options include:**

(Select preferred option)

Reduce the credit values of the unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 to be closer to the 12-hour minimum duration of training

Increase the minimum duration of training for the unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 to be closer to the credit values (5 credits in total)

Another approach: Please outline your suggestion below

### 6. What do you think should happen to unit standard 33319, bearing in mind it has not been well used. Potential options include:

(Select preferred option)

Retire the unit standard.

Review the unit standard to check if it is still fit for purpose.

Another approach: Please outline your suggestion below