



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

Children's education and care services with an Exceeding National Quality Standard (NQS) quality rating have been assessed as going above and beyond what is expected at the Meeting NQS level.

That higher level of quality is assessed against each of the 15 NQS Standards using three Exceeding themes.

Exceeding practice is:

1. **embedded** in service operations
2. **informed by** critical reflection
3. **shaped by** meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

These themes are explored in detail within the [Guide to the NQF](#).

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

The case studies are now hosted on a new ACECQA 'Exceeding the NQS' webpage.

September 2020

DEMONSTRATING AND ASSESSING EXCEEDING NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting consistency, reliability and transparency in quality rating decisions, and informed by sector feedback including requests for more information about what each theme might look like in practice, and across different service contexts, we have updated our Exceeding NQS guidance.

Additionally, new resources have been developed for both the sector and state and territory authorised officers.

These updates and resources have been developed in collaboration with all state and territory regulatory authorities.

The first new resource is a series of case studies that offer practical and illustrative examples of what high quality practice may look like for each Standard. The case studies provide examples within a variety of settings including prior to school age and school aged centre-based services, as well as family day care services.

The case studies are collections of layered, detailed examples of how high quality practice relating to each Standard could look across a service. They focus on particular aspects of practice, within a particular service context. They are not intended to serve as a template or a benchmark for all services to follow, nor do they exhaustively describe all the ways that may be possible for all types of services to demonstrate Exceeding practice.

More case studies will be developed over time, and it is hoped they will support increased understanding and confidence in recognising and demonstrating Exceeding level quality, and inspire discussion and reflection on ways that practice can be improved. The Exceeding guidance in the [Guide to the NQF](#), which includes the indicators for Exceeding

practice, the reflective questions for Exceeding practice at the Standard level, and the questions used by authorised officers to establish Exceeding practice against each Exceeding theme, may be used to consider the case studies and facilitate this discussion and reflection.

The case studies are now hosted on a new [ACECQA 'Exceeding the NQS' webpage](#).

In addition, we have updated Exceeding guidance in the [Guide to the NQF](#). This includes translating guidance against each Standard previously presented as Exceeding 'indicators' into reflective questions for all Standards. The aim of this change is to make the guidance more relatable and engaging by posing questions for service leaders, educators and other staff to ask of their own practices, complementary to the self-assessment and Quality Improvement Plan processes. The change also aligns with other NQS guidance in the Guide to the NQF.

Finally, a new resource for authorised officers to further promote consistency in assessing and rating at the Exceeding NQS level has been developed. The resource is a series of questions for authorised officers to consider against the evidence that has been gathered during the quality rating process, to help determine if all Exceeding themes are demonstrated for each quality Standard.

After analysing the evidence, authorised officers need to determine an answer of 'yes' against each question in all Exceeding themes for any Standard to be rated Exceeding NQS.

The questions are now being used by authorised officers across Australia, and are included in the [Guide to the NQF](#) to offer further clarity and transparency for providers, service leaders and educators.