

REGISTERED NATIONAL STANDARD

UNIT OF COMPETENCY



Title:	Prepare surfaces for plastering¹				
TQF Level:	3	Credits:	3	Version:	1
National standard code:	NS150-03				
Associated qualification (and code):	National Certificate in Bricklaying and Blocklaying Level 3 QR-03-NQ-028-01-1005-26-01 National Certificate in Wall and Floor Tiling Level 4 QR-04-NQ-028-04-1005-26-01				
Approval date:	10 September 2026		Review date:	10 September 2031	
Purpose:	This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to prepare a range of substrates for plastering applications. This includes planning and preparing work activities, patching and filling holes or depressions, preparing different surface types, and applying sealers or primers. The unit applies to routine plastering support tasks performed under supervision in residential and commercial construction environments, and must be completed in compliance with work health and safety, environmental, and industry regulatory requirements. In successfully completing this unit standard, learners are able to: • Read and interpret work instructions, drawings, and specifications to determine plastering preparation requirements • Plan work sequences that comply with Tonga National Building Code, OHS, environmental and workplace requirements • Apply workplace quality policies and standards when preparing surfaces • Identify workplace hazards and implement risk control measures, including signage and barricades • Apply job safety analysis (JSA), safe work method statements (SWMS), and safety data sheets (SDS) requirements • Select and use personal protective equipment (PPE) for each stage of plastering preparation • Select and use surface preparation materials • Determine the characteristics, applications, and limitations of these materials				

¹ Due to safety issues inherent in working with electricity and combustible substances, all training and assessment activities must be in accordance with Tonga National Building Code.

	• Estimate material quantities required for patching and preparing surfaces • Assess surface conditions and determine appropriate preparation techniques • Patch holes, depressions, and defects based on surface type, compatibility, and required finish • Remove loose or protruding materials and prepare substrates for plastering • Apply primer or sealing coats to ensure proper adhesion and surface performance • Determine suitable patching methods based on the extent of damage and desired finish quality • Select, use, check, maintain, and store appropriate tools and equipment • Identify faults in tools and report issues according to workplace procedures • Dispose of waste materials, reuse, or recycle in accordance with environmental requirements and codes of practice • Minimise environmental impact during plastering preparation tasks • Work under supervision while following workplace instructions and coordinating with experienced workers
Learning Outcome 1 (LO1)	Plan and sequence tasks to prepare surfaces for plastering
Performance standards	1.1 Read and interpret work instructions and plan sequence of work; 1.2 Plan and sequence all work to comply with regulations, Tonga National Building Code, work health and safety, environmental and workplace requirements; 1.4 Select and use personal protective equipment (PPE) for each stage of the task; 1.3 Inspect work site and assess hazards; 1.5 Apply risk controls, including required signage and barricades; 1.6 Select tools and equipment, check for serviceability and report any faults.
Learning Outcome 2 (LO2)	Patch holes and depressions
Performance Standards	2.1 Determine patching methods and materials relevant to material surface and size of hole or depression; 2.2 Determine compatibility of materials and planned finish; 2.3 Prepare material and position ready for use; 2.4 Apply materials using appropriate application methods.
Learning Outcome 3 (LO3)	Treat surface for plastering work.

Performance standards	3.1 Determine method of preparation of surface to suit the type of plaster finish; 3.2 Remove protruding and loose materials; 3.3 Prepare surface for plastering; 3.4 Apply sealing or primer coat to prepared surface.
Learning Outcome 4 (LO4)	Clean up work area
Performance standards	4.1 Clear the work area, and dispose of, reuse or recycle materials following workplace and environmental requirements; 4.2 Clean tools and equipment and check for serviceability; 4.3 Report damage or faults to relevant personnel; 4.4 Store and secure tools, equipment and materials following workplace procedures.
Pre-requisites	NS133-03 Apply <i>Occupational Health and Safety</i> (OHS) requirements, policies and procedures
Co-requisites	N/A
Underpinning skill and knowledge	The following skills and knowledge underpin this unit standard: <u>Skills:</u> Planning and Organising • Reading and interpreting work instructions, drawings, and specifications • Sequencing tasks logically to prepare surfaces efficiently • Identifying materials, tools, and equipment required for surface preparation Workplace Safety and Compliance • Applying OHS requirements, including hazard identification and risk controls • Selecting and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) • Following job safety analysis (JSA) or safe work method statements (SWMS) • Using safety signage and barricades where required

	Techniques - Inspecting and preparing different surface types (masonry, sheet, floors, and ceilings) - Selecting appropriate patching materials based on substrate type and finish - Patching and filling holes, depressions, and minor surface defects correctly - Removing loose, protruding, or contaminated materials - Applying sealers or primers evenly and in accordance with manufacturer specifications Tools, Materials, and Equipment Handling - Selecting, checking, and safely using hand and power tools - Handling materials safely and calculating quantities accurately - Identifying faulty tools or equipment and reporting issues Cleaning and Housekeeping - Cleaning and maintaining tools and equipment - Disposing of waste materials safely and sustainably - Reusing or recycling materials in line with environmental requirements <u>Knowledge:</u> Regulatory and Compliance Requirements - Tonga National Building Code requirements relevant to plaster surface preparation - Workplace quality assurance policies and procedures Workplace Safety and Environment - OHS legislation and site safety requirements - Hazard control measures related to plastering preparation tasks - Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for plastering materials - Environmental protection requirements, including waste management and dust control Materials Selection - Characteristics, uses, and limitations of: - Primers and sealants - Plaster compounds and finishing coats
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	○ Additives such as plasticisers, waterproofing agents, and colourants Technical Processes and Techniques • Methods for preparing different substrates for solid plastering • Techniques for patching surface defects • Surface preparation based on required finish type • Correct application methods for sealers and primers Tools, Equipment, and Documentation • Types and uses of hand tools and equipment used in surface preparation • Maintenance and storage requirements for tools and equipment • Interpretation and use of plans, drawings, and specifications relevant to plastering tasks This knowledge ensures that practical skills are applied safely, consistently and in compliance with industry expectations.
Assessment requirements	<u>Assessment methods</u> may include more than one of the following: Direct Observation Assessment of learners while they are performing tasks in real time in a real simulated environment. • The learner performs practical tasks. • The assessor watches the learner complete these tasks against a checklist or performance standards. Assessor Requirements • Use a structured observation checklist aligned to performance standards • Observe multiple occasions to ensure consistency of competence. • Record evidence of safe work practices, correct use of equipment, etc. • Provide immediate feedback where appropriate. • Ensure conditions reflect real workplace standards. Oral Questioning Verbal questions asked to assess the learner's understanding of knowledge and reasoning. • Conducted during or after practical tasks. • Can be structured (planned questions) or informal (follow-up probing).

	Assessor Requirements • Ask questions that test underpinning knowledge • Use open-ended questions • Confirm learner understanding where practical performance is not enough. • Record responses clearly (notes or checklist). • Adjust language to suit learner literacy levels. Written Test A structured assessment requiring learners to provide written responses. • Short-answer questions, multiple choice, or case scenarios. • Typically conducted off-site or in a classroom environment. Assessor Requirements • Design questions that assess knowledge. • Ensure the test is clear, aligned to unit requirements and appropriate for language, literacy, numeracy levels • Mark responses using a marking guide or model answers. • Provide feedback and identify gaps in knowledge. • Ensure results reflect the learner’s independent performance. Work-Based Activity Assessment conducted in a real workplace while the learner performs actual job tasks. • Learners complete normal workplace duties. • Evidence is collected over time. Assessor Requirements • Coordinate with workplace supervisors. • Gather evidence such as - Observation reports, Supervisor feedback, etc. • Verify that tasks meet unit performance standards. • Ensure authenticity (learner’s own work). • Confirm competence across different situations and timeframes. Assessment should use a combination of the above methods to ensure sufficient, valid, authentic, and current evidence of competence in both skills and knowledge, in line with unit requirements.
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	<u>Context of Assessment:</u> Competency is to be assessed in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment that accurately reflects a real workplace setting. Assessment is to comply with relevant regulatory or relevant standards' requirements. Assessment of essential knowledge will usually be conducted in an off-site situation.
Moderation arrangements	1. Training providers must have their own moderation system approved by TNQAB before accreditation is granted: a) Relevant internal moderation processes are documented; b) Assessment is planned for each unit, and moderation processes are integrated into such plan. 2. Unless specified elsewhere, external moderation is conducted by the National Qualifications unit of TNQAB for all unit components of a national qualification: a) Samples of assessed activities are submitted for moderation; b) Moderation (external) forms are available on request.
Resource requirements	1. Power point presentations 2. Trainer's Guide 3. Learner's Guide 4. Tonga National Building Code 5. Videos 6. Plans and Specifications 7. Materials for plaster: • sand • cement 8. Fillers 9. Plastering tools: • shovel • wheelbarrow 10. Structured assessment and evidence-collection tools
Requirements to complete this unit	There are four (4) Learning outcomes and eighteen (18) Performance Standards to measure competence. To demonstrate competence, the person studying this unit is:

	a. Required to demonstrate all LOs to the expected standards; b. Required to attain an Achieved Grade (Competent) to fulfil the requirements of the Unit Standard; c. Eligible to three (3) attempts to achieve the required competency within 14 days of the first attempt. Failure to achieve the required competency after three (3) attempts on the specific part of the assessment will require the person studying this Unit to re-enrol for the same Unit.
Important notes and definitions	<u>Notes:</u> 1. All training and assessment activities must be in accordance with Tonga National Building Code. 2. Assessors must comply with the Tonga national assessment and moderation requirements. <u>Definitions:</u> 1. <i>Additives</i> refer to substances added to plaster mixes to enhance properties such as workability, colour and water resistance 2. <i>Compatibility</i> refers to the suitability of materials to work together without causing defects such as cracking, peeling, or poor adhesion. 3. <i>Depressions</i> refer to surface imperfections due to poor alignment. 4. <i>Environmental Requirements</i> refer to regulations and workplace procedures aimed at reducing environmental impact, including waste management and recycling. 5. <i>Finish</i> refers to the final surface texture or appearance achieved after plastering 6. <i>JSA (Job Safety Analysis)</i> refers to a systematic process to identify hazards and determine appropriate control measures before starting work. 7. <i>Patch</i> refers to the repair of damaged areas such as holes, cracks, or depressions using suitable materials before plastering. 8. <i>Plaster</i> refers to a building material applied to walls and ceilings to create a smooth or decorative finish.

	9. <i>Plaster Compounds</i> refers to a pre-mixed or site-mixed materials used for patching, levelling, or finishing surfaces prior to plastering. 10. <i>PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)</i> refers to protective clothing and equipment (e.g., gloves, masks, goggles) used to minimise exposure to hazards. 11. <i>Primer</i> refers to a preparatory coating applied to improve adhesion of plaster 12. <i>SDS (Safety Data Sheet)</i> refers to a document that provides information on hazardous substances, including safe use, handling, storage, and emergency measures. 13. <i>Sealer</i> refers to a coating used to reduce surface porosity and control moisture absorption 14. <i>Substrate</i> refers to the underlying surface (e.g., masonry wall, ceiling, sheet wall) to which plaster is applied. 15. <i>Substrate Defects</i> refers to imperfections such as cracks, holes, loose materials, or uneven surfaces that must be corrected before plastering. 16. <i>Surface Preparation</i> refers to the process of cleaning, repairing, and treating a substrate to ensure proper adhesion and durability of plaster. 17. <i>SWMS (Safe Work Method Statement)</i> refers to a document outlining the safe procedures for high-risk construction work. 18. <i>Tonga National Building Code</i> refers to a set of technical standards governing the design and construction of buildings in Tonga. 19. <i>Workability</i> refers to the ease with which plaster or patching material can be mixed, applied, and finished. 20. <i>Work area</i> refers to the particular section where tasks are performed at the work site.
Public comments on unit	Please contact TNQAB National Qualifications Unit (email EnquireNQ@tnqab.to or Telephone 28136) if you like to discuss or suggest changes to the details of this unit.

