



**Te Tāhuhu o  
te Mātauranga**  
Ministry of Education



**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Proposed changes to NCEA: what you need to know as employers



**Evidence shows us that the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) isn't working as well as it could for students, families, teachers, and employers. It's more confusing and less reliable than it needs to be, and we're proposing changes to give New Zealanders confidence in our national qualification.**

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**We want to make sure that the qualifications students leave school with set them up well for what comes next – whether that be work, training, or study.**

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Learn more about the changes below, and remember to let us know what you think.



## Why we need to make changes



NCEA was introduced in 2002 as a flexible and standards-based national senior secondary qualification. It offered a wider range of assessment opportunities, including for students looking for future work in vocational pathways like trades, hospitality, and tourism. The changes were designed to have a positive impact on students, but recent national and international evidence show us that the current system is far from perfect:

- › The quality of a student's education is too inconsistent. Schools and kura decide which NCEA standards they offer, meaning students can miss out on important learning that keeps them in school, engaged, and prepared for life after school.
- › International data shows that young adults in New Zealand have below average literacy and numeracy achievement despite many of them having an NCEA qualification – suggesting that it doesn't accurately represent students' understanding of those foundational skills.
- › Less than a third of employers believe that NCEA works well, meaning the qualification is not as useful as it needs to be for students looking to transition into future work, training, or study.

**The changes we're proposing will help us build a more trustworthy, consistent qualification system so that you can be confident that potential employees' skills are accurately represented by their school qualifications.**


# The proposed changes

## KEY

-  What we want to change
-  How it will help

## Working with industry to integrate vocational education and training (VET) subjects into the senior secondary qualification

### Designing subjects with industry experts


-  At the moment, NCEA assessments don't always do a good job of setting up students for a successful future working in vocational pathways. By designing consistent programmes of learning and high-quality assessments for those pathways, led by Industry Skills Boards, we can be sure that they align with the relevant knowledge and skills needed in those industries.

That means:

- › students will be learning industry-critical skills, making their transition into vocational pathways easier for them and the employer
- › more meaningful pathways exist to keep students engaged in their learning and in school longer
- › you can trust that students are well-prepared for a career in your industry
- › skills standards will align with tertiary qualifications giving students better pathways into work-based training or further tertiary study.

## Introducing a new Foundational Award and national senior secondary qualifications for Years 12 and 13

### Removing NCEA Level 1

-  Taking away NCEA Level 1 means that Year 11 students have another full year of study, making it more likely that they will be successful in Years 12 and 13. This would also bring us in line with other countries we compare ourselves to, who have fewer years of high-stakes assessment.

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## Replacing NCEA Levels 2 and 3 with new qualifications

- ✓ With all of the ways we want to strengthen the current qualifications system, it makes sense to replace it with two new qualifications reflecting all the improvements that come with change. You can trust that the proposed New Zealand Certificate of Education for Year 12, and the proposed New Zealand Advanced Certificate of Education for Year 13, show you how prepared a student is for work or training.

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## Adding in a new award that specifically assesses students' foundational literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau skills

- ✓ It's critical that students leave school with strong literacy and numeracy skills (for those learning in English) and te reo matatini and pāngarau (for those learning through te reo Māori). The proposed **Foundational Award** would more reliably assess those skills at a high level, meaning it will give you a true picture of students' abilities.

The Foundational Award would be a standalone award that builds on the current Co-requisite assessments that students currently sit as a part of NCEA.

- ✓ We know it's important for students to experience progress and success at school, that is why we are proposing to elevate the literacy and numeracy co-requisite to a Foundational Award at Year 11.

## Shifting focus to a structured subject approach and introducing required subjects in the curriculum

### Increasing consistency with a focus on subjects (instead of individual standards).

- ✓ Under NCEA, students can put credits from a mix of unrelated standards towards their qualification. That inconsistency makes it hard to understand students' knowledge and skills based on their qualification.

#### **Arranging important learning into specific subject areas would mean:**

- › you can trust the new qualifications are a true picture of what students know and can do
- › students and teachers are incentivised to think about what subjects matter most for their plans after school, meaning they will come more prepared for work in your industry
- › deep and consistent learning happens in each subject area to better prepare students for future study and work.

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### Simplifying the grading system

- ✓ We have heard from parents and caregivers that it can be hard to understand exactly how successful students are in specific subject areas under the current system. With specific, clear marks out of 100 for each subject, and total A, B, C-style grades, it will be easier to know how ready they are for employment.

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### Introducing required subjects at Year 11

- ✓ We are proposing to require English and Maths, or Te Reo Matatini and Pāngarau at Year 11. This will help to ensure students have good literacy and numeracy and set them up for success at Year 12.
- ✓ Making sure that students leave school with strong **literacy or te reo matatini**, and **numeracy or pāngarau skills**, means you can be confident they have the foundational knowledge needed for work or training.

## Strengthening the achievement requirements

### Requiring students to take five subjects and achieve at least four subjects to leave with new qualifications

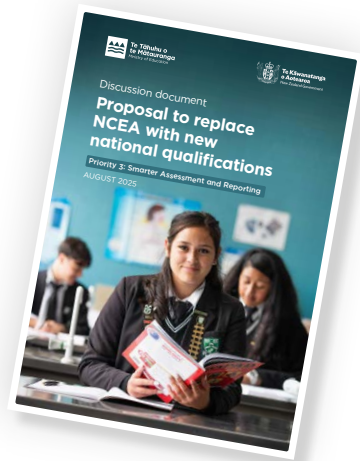
- ✓ Making sure that students have a strong set of knowledge and skills across multiple subjects improves the credibility of the qualifications. You will be able to trust that they're fully prepared for employment in your industry.



# Get the full picture

You can get a complete understanding of all the proposed changes in the full discussion document here:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/consultation-ncea>



## Have your say

We're proposing these changes because we want to better set children up for success in life and work after school. As their potential employers, it's important for us to hear what you think about the changes. We're also looking for feedback from students, their parents and caregivers, and their teachers.

**Use the QR code or the link below to have your say before consultation closes 15 September!**

<https://www.education.govt.nz/consultation-ncea>



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ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

We shape an education system that delivers  
equitable and excellent outcomes.

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