



**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 teachers and kaiako



Evidence shows us that NCEA isn't working as well as it could for you, your students, their families, 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.

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.

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 reliable qualification pathway that incentivises important learning and sets your children up for success in their lives beyond school.

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 from schools and kura into vocational pathways easier
- › meaningful pathways exist to keep students in school longer, and more engaged in the learning happening in your classroom
- › employers can trust that students are well-prepared for a career in those industries
- › 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.



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. The proposed New Zealand Certificate of Education for Year 12, and the proposed New Zealand Advanced Certificate of

Education for Year 13, would give your students a chance to leave school with a more credible consistent qualification based on an internationally comparable national curriculum.

Adding in a new awards 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 employers will have a true picture of students' abilities.

The Foundational Award would build on the current co-requisite assessments, but would exist as a standalone award for school leavers.

- ✓ We know it's important for students to experience progress and success in their learning, that is why we are proposing to elevate the 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 their knowledge and skills from their qualification alone.

Arranging important learning into specific subject areas would mean:

- › students leave with qualifications that are clear about what they know and can do
- › you and your students are incentivised to think about what subjects matter most for their plans after school
- › Deep and consistent learning happens in each subject area to better prepare students for future study and work.

Simplifying the grading system

- ✓ We have heard from parents and caregivers that it can be hard for families to understand achievement under the current system. With specific, clear marks out of 100 for each subject and grades from A-E, it will be easier for parents and caregivers to see how their children are going and help them reach their goals.

Introducing required subjects at Year 11

- ✓ We are proposing to require English or te reo matatini, maths or Pangarau to be taken at Year 11. Numeracy and literacy happens across the curriculum but ensuring students are taking English and maths is a good foundation.
- ✓ Making sure that students are spending time on their literacy or te reo matatini, and numeracy or pāngarau skills, means you can be confident that they have the tools to access all of the teaching and learning you have prepared for them in their final years of school.

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. That makes them more valuable, because employers can trust that students are fully prepared for work or training. Tertiary institutions can be assured students have the required knowledge and skills in each subject for future study.

What this might mean for you and your students

At the moment – nothing. These are proposed changes, and we want to make sure that everyone gets the opportunity to let us know what they think before any final decisions are made. When we've had a chance to analyse all of the feedback, you can be sure that we'll give you the time, resources, and support to confidently make the change. There will be plenty of time for you to familiarise yourself with the updated curriculum, understand the new qualification pathway, and implement them both in a way that works for you and your students.

When would the changes come into effect?

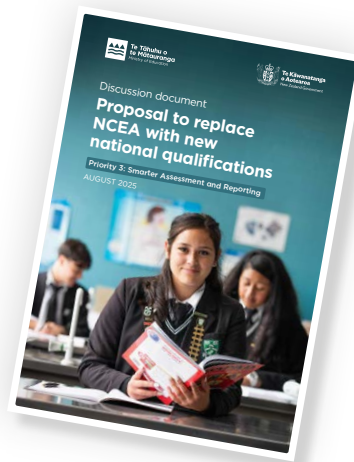
We are looking to start implementing the changes in 2028 for Year 11 students. Those young people would be the first cohort with the opportunity to use the new qualification system, starting with the Foundational Award in 2028, followed by the new qualifications in 2029 and 2030. Students would be assessed through the new qualifications pathway aligned with the updated curriculum.

That timeline would give us the time to make sure you and your students have the resources, support, and guidance to make the change successfully and confidently.

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 make sure that students are working towards a qualification pathway that keeps them engaged in their learning for longer, and sets them up for a successful transition into further work, education, or training. As the educational experts, we want to hear from you about the impacts the changes might have on you and your students

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

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



He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga
kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

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



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