



## Information Update: Curriculum – Phase 5 subjects

<b>To:</b>	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	22 April 2025	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security Level:</b>	In-Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1345245
<b>Drafter:</b>	Anya Pollock	<b>DDI:</b>	9(2)(a)
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<b>Seen by the Communications Team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Request

This information update sets out the Phase 5 (Years 11-13) subjects that we will develop draft curriculum content for this year.

### Alignment with Government priorities

This report helps to progress actions in the delivery plan for the Achievement Target under the 'clearer curriculum' and 'smarter assessment and reporting' priorities.

### Information

1. To achieve greater coherency and consistency in what is taught and assessed (including curriculum driving teaching and learning programmes rather than NCEA), you have decided that subjects will be brought into the curriculum at senior secondary level (Years 11, 12, and 13) [SOU-24-MIN-0051 refers]. This approach means there will be a curriculum document developed for each senior secondary subject in Phase 5 of the national curricula. Credentialling assessments for the subject would be based on the relevant curriculum document. This will also mean that some of the existing NCEA supports, such as the Learning Matrices and Subject Learning Outcomes, can be retired.
2. Annex 1 sets out the Phase 5 (Years 11-13) subjects that we will develop draft curriculum content for this year. We have also included commentary on changes from what the sector is currently anticipating in terms of NCEA Achievement Standard subjects. A draft of the updated list of subjects was tested with the NZC Coherence Group and the Chair and some members<sup>1</sup> of your Professional Advisory Group (PAG). Feedback was generally supportive of the draft proposals but suggested some minor adjustments which are reflected.

<sup>1</sup>9(2)(a)

3. Some adjustments to the subjects on this list may need to be made once further work to develop the content has been progressed (e.g. naming improvements, opportunities for consolidation where there is a significant overlap in learning outcomes).
4. To develop the list of subjects we plan to draft as part of this year's curriculum writing process, we reviewed the pre-existing Achievement Standards subject lists and created a new list of subjects that reflect expectations for knowledge-rich and internationally comparable curricula. As part of this process, we reviewed the NCEA Level 1 criteria<sup>2</sup> and Level 2/3 principles<sup>3</sup> used to develop the pre-existing lists. The criteria for curriculum subjects are that they:
  - a. build on prior teaching and learning that is part of earlier phases of the national curricula
  - b. provide for coherent knowledge-rich packages of teaching and learning
  - c. support pathways in and beyond school or kura
  - d. reflect current and future demand, including new and emerging areas of knowledge
  - e. support national and international credibility.
5. In reviewing and updating the pre-existing lists, we considered feedback from previous public engagements, insights gained from the implementation of Level 1, insights from work on learning area and wāhanga ako position and knowledge papers, and the current context for subjects previously deferred for development in the future. We also examined selected international jurisdictions' senior secondary education subject lists, along with those available in selected internationally available qualification systems.
6. There is a narrower range of subjects at Year 11 reflecting that, while beginning to specialise is appropriate, Year 11 students benefit from continuing to build a broad knowledge base. A larger number of subjects are proposed for Years 12 and 13, providing students with more opportunities for specialisation that builds up a deeper knowledge base in areas relevant to their interests and future pathways.
7. The table on the next page shows how the number of subjects compares to what is available as curriculum-derived Achievement Standards subjects now, and to selected international jurisdictions and qualifications.

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<sup>2</sup> [Annex B Technical Report NCEA Level 1 clean 8.5.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> [2-v2.-signed-BN-NCEA-L2-3-Subject-List-for-NZC-and-approach-to-Tech-Report-f.. \(1\).pdf](#)

Table: Number of subjects offered at NZ equivalent of Year 11 and Year 12/13

Jurisdiction	Number offered at NZ equivalent Year 11 (pre-qualification)	Number offered at NZ equivalent Year 12/13
NZ - current	46 (36 NZC-derived, 9 TMoA-derived, 1 designed for use in either context)	53 (45 NZC-derived, 8 TMoA-derived, and 1 designed for use in either context)
NZ – future (based on list in Annex 1)	36 (18 NZC-derived, 8 TMoA-derived, and 10 designed for use in either context)	56 (26 NZC-derived, 6 TMoA-derived, and 24 designed for use in either context)
NSW	33 (Years 7-10)	89 (Years 11-12)
QLD	24 (Years 7-10)	78 (Years 11-12)
British Columbia		Over 80
Ontario	Over 150 (Year 10)	Over 240 (Years 11-12)
Wales		51 (GCSE) – all available for use in Welsh Immersion Schools
Hawaii	Approximately 5 core subjects and 5 elective subjects (varies by school)	11 Overarching Learning Areas 2 Core Subjects (English and Mathematics) – all available for use in Hawaiian Immersion Schools)
Singapore <sup>4</sup>	Approximately 6 core subjects and 9 elective subjects (Sec 3)	Dependent on the students' post-secondary pathways
Cambridge International	27 (IGSCE)	43 (A level), 45 (AS level)
International Baccalaureate® (IB)		57

8. In Phase 5, schools and kura also include other vocational and general courses based on Unit and/or Skills Standards in their teaching and learning programmes. <sup>9(2)(f)(iv)</sup>

At the Vocational Pathways deep dive on 5 March, we discussed the potential for industry-led curriculum subjects to be developed in the future. The timeline for this work was set out in an earlier Information Update [METIS 1344565 refers].

<sup>4</sup> Singapore's secondary education qualification (Singapore-Cambridge Secondary Education Certificate) is for students aged 13-16 and post-secondary education is for students aged 16+. In post-secondary education, Junior College, Polytechnic, or Institute of Technical Education have different subject choices and requirements.

### **Next steps**

9. If you are comfortable with the Phase 5 subject list we will begin work on developing content for these subjects and will formally seek your agreement through an Education Report. That report will speak in more detail to the approach taken and also show the VET subjects.

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## Annex 1: Subjects to be developed this year for Phase 5 of the national curricula

The tables below show the Phase 5 national curricula subjects planned for development this year. Each of the Year 12 and 13 subjects would be able to be credentialled through NCEA Level 2 and 3. Credentialling of Year 11 subjects depends on final decisions about the future of Level 1 and any foundational qualification you may decide to introduce.

This list is based on a review of the pre-existing list of curriculum-derived Achievement Standards subjects for NCEA which are currently available at Level 1 and anticipated by the sector as what will be available for Level 2 and 3 (in 2028 and 2029 respectively). Minor adjustments from that list are indicated in *italics*, and more substantive changes are discussed after the tables.

The subjects-based approach in Phase 5 means that the offering can be easily adjusted over time in response to emerging needs. Additional industry-led subjects will be added through work to strengthen vocational education in secondary schools and kura [METIS 1344565 refers].

Teal shaded, NZC-derived

Red shaded, TMoA-derived

Purple shaded, developed for delivery in either curriculum pathways (and in either English or te reo Māori)

\* next to a subject indicates that it also builds on knowledge from other learning areas and wāhanga ako than the one it is grouped under

Phase 4 Learning areas and wāhanga ako	Phase 5 subjects	
	Year 11	Year 12 and 13
<b>English and Te Reo Rangatira</b>		
English	English	English Literature <i>split</i> English Language <i>split</i> <sup>6</sup>
Te Reo Rangatira	Te Reo Rangatira	Te Reo Rangatira
<b>Mathematics &amp; Statistics and Pāngarau</b>		
Mathematics & Statistics	Mathematics & Statistics	Applied Mathematics & Statistics <i>split</i> <sup>7</sup> Mathematics <i>split</i>
Pāngarau	Pāngarau	Statistics <i>split</i>
<b>Science and Pūtaiao</b>		
Science	Science <i>consolidated</i> <sup>8</sup>	Agriculture & Horticulture Science* Biology* Chemistry* Earth & Space Science*
Pūtaiao	Pūtaiao	Physics* Tātai Arorangi (Māori traditional system of astronomy)* <i>new</i>
<b>Health &amp; Physical Education and Waiora</b>		
Health & Physical Education	Health & Nutrition* <i>name change</i> <sup>9</sup> Physical Education*	Health & Nutrition* <i>consolidated</i> <sup>10</sup> Physical Education*
Waiora	Kori Tinana (movement)* <i>split</i> <sup>11</sup> Waiora (health & nutrition)* <i>split</i>	Waiora* <i>name change</i> <sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> As content is drafted for the learning area and wāhanga ako, consideration will need to be given to whether some subjects need to start as specialisations earlier than Year 11 (i.e. that some constrained choice in what each student studies at Year 9 and 10 may be provided instead of having to teach all parts of the learning area or wāhanga ako to every student). This is most likely to be needed in Technology, Hāngarau, The Arts and Toi Ihiihi.

<sup>6</sup> English Language will be developed as an academically rigorous and equally demanding subject that provides for students who may find a focus on applied aspects of the English language more useful for their future pathways (including tertiary studies) than studying literature. Discussions with the Coherence Group and PAG members indicated that people could see value in having a choice, particularly if a core subjects list is created or English is required at Year 12 [METIS 1342670 refers]. They identified risk that one subject could be wrongly perceived as a less demanding option. Mitigations include careful naming of both subjects, explicitly designing for (and communicating) equivalent levels of challenge in both curriculum content and assessments, and guidance to support good choices for each student's needs.

<sup>7</sup> Applied Mathematics & Statistics will be developed as an academically rigorous and equally demanding subject that provides for students who may find a focus on applied aspects of maths more useful for their future pathways (including tertiary studies). As with the English Language subject, discussions with the Coherence Group and members of the PAG indicated that people could see value in having a choice, particularly if a core subjects list is created, but there are perception risks that will need to be managed.

<sup>8</sup> Currently there are four science subjects at Level 1, **Agriculture & Horticulture Science, Science, Chemistry & Biology, and Physics, Earth & Space Science**. A single general science subject is proposed at Year 11 as this builds on the general science learning at Phase 4 (and earlier) and keeps student pathways open longer as specialisation doesn't start until Year 12.

<sup>9</sup> Previously indicated to be called **Health Studies**. Changed to make clear food and nutrition are covered and align with the consolidated subject at Year 12.

<sup>10</sup> Consolidates two subjects (Health; Food & Nutrition) into one **Health & Nutrition** subject to provide a holistic understanding of health, showing how all aspects of health, including nutrition, impacts physical, mental, and social well-being, and equips individuals to make informed, healthier lifestyle choices. Note that separate consideration will be given to the approach to practical food preparation skills as part of work on vocational subjects and subject packages.

<sup>11</sup> Previously there was one TMoA-derived **Hauora** subject at Level 1. This has been split into two subjects (**Kori Tinana** and **Waiora**) to mirror the NZC-derived subjects, providing equitable access to specialisation. The previous Government had decided that Hauora should split into two subjects at Level 2 and 3, with a **Hākinakina** (sports) subject identified for deferred development. While we consider separate Physical Education and Kori Tinana subjects are required at Year 11 for each curriculum context, at Years 12 and 13 we consider there is enough overlap in the knowledge for there to be single subject.

<sup>12</sup> Was previously indicated to be called **Hauora**. **Waiora** is more accurate in relation to the breadth of knowledge covered as it focuses on being physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, culturally, and spiritually well, therefore being holistically well.

Phase 4 Learning areas and wāhanga ako	Phase 5 subjects Subjects	
Year 9 and 10 <sup>5</sup>	Year 11	Year 12 and 13
<b>Technology and Hāngarau</b>		
Technology	Materials & Processing Technology	Processing Technologies* <i>name change</i> <sup>13</sup> , <i>split</i> Electronics & Mechatronics* <i>split</i> <sup>14</sup> Materials Technologies*
	Digital Technologies*	Digital Solutions* <i>name change</i> <sup>15</sup> Computer Science*
Hāngarau	Spatial & Product Design* <i>name change</i> <sup>16</sup>	Spatial & Product Design* <i>name change</i>
	Hāngarau* (indigenous structures & mechanisms)	Hāngarau* (indigenous structures & mechanisms) <i>adjusted approach</i> <sup>17</sup>
<b>The Arts and Toi Ihihi</b>		
The Arts	Drama*	Drama*
	Music*	Music* <i>combined</i> <sup>18</sup>
	Visual Arts	Design
		Painting
Photography & Moving Image		
Dance	Dance	
Toi Ihihi	Te Ao Haka	Te Ao Haka
	Toi Ataata (Māori visual arts)	Toi Ataata (Māori visual arts) <i>combined</i> <sup>19</sup>
	Toi Pūoro (Māori music)	Toi Pūoro (Māori music)
	Toi Rehia (Māori traditional arts) <i>name change</i> <sup>20</sup>	Toi Rehia (Māori traditional arts) <i>combined</i> <sup>21</sup>
<b>Social Sciences and Te Ao Māori</b>		
Social Sciences	History	History Classical Studies*
	Religious Studies	Religious Studies
	Social Studies	Pacific Studies*
		Media Studies*
		Psychology*
	Accounting* <i>split</i>	Accounting*
Commerce* <i>split</i>	Agribusiness* Business Studies* <i>adjusted approach</i> <sup>22</sup> Economics*	
Te Ao Māori	Geography*	Geography*
	Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) <i>name change</i> <sup>23</sup>	Matawhenua* (environment & society) <i>reframed</i> <sup>24</sup>
		Te Takanga o te Wā (Māori history) <i>name change</i> <sup>25</sup>
		Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) <i>name change</i>

<sup>13</sup> Previously indicated to be called **Processing and Systems Technologies**. Name change as electronics & mechatronics is being split out as its own subject.

<sup>14</sup> **Electronics and Mechatronics** is split out from Processing & Systems Technologies to provide a future-focussed programme that reflects that these technologies are a growth area and greater opportunities for specialisation are desirable. Note that PAG members identified risks in terms the ability of schools and kura to access a skilled workforce and the necessary equipment. There were views that it may be prudent to delay the development of the subject until the enabling conditions are in place, but there were also views the creation of a subject could accelerate those barriers being addressed.

<sup>15</sup> Was previously indicated to be called **Digital Technologies**. Name change to better indicate the more specialised focus at Year 12 and 13.

<sup>16</sup> Was previously called **Digital and Visual Technologies**. Name change to better reflect what is being taught as the subject becomes more future focussed.

<sup>17</sup> The previous Government had decided that **Hāngarau** should split into two subjects at Level 2 and 3, with a **Hāngarau Matihiko** (digital technologies) subject identified for deferred development. There is an opportunity to provide more equitable access to specialisation sooner by developing most technology and hāngarau subjects for delivery in either curriculum pathway. There is, however, a need to enable specialisation in indigenous structures & mechanisms.

<sup>18</sup> It had been agreed that **Music** would become two separate subjects at Level 2 and 3 by the previous Government – **Making Music** (more music performance based) and **Music Studies** (more composition and music knowledge based). At this stage we recommend starting from a position that it will be one subject, noting that constrained choice may be a way to enable students to focus more in one area than the other without going as far as separate subjects. This recognises that current uptake of **Music** (in terms of students doing at least 14 credits) indicates that spitting the subject could result in two subjects with relatively low usage.

<sup>19</sup> The pre-existing list agreed by the previous Government had identified **Raranga** (Māori weaving) for deferred development. We consider that this can be included in **Toi Rēhia**, potentially with some constrained choice to enable students to focus more strongly on their specific interests.

<sup>20</sup> Previously indicated to be called **Ngā Mahi a te Rēhia**. New name is shorter.

<sup>21</sup> The pre-existing list agreed by the previous Government had identified **Te Ao Tū Taua** (Traditional Māori Martial Arts) for deferred development. We consider that this can be included in **Toi Rēhia**, potentially with some constrained choice to enable students to focus more strongly on their specific interests.

<sup>22</sup> Previously **Tauhokohoko** (marketing) had been indicated as a potential TMOA-derived achievement Standards subject at Level 2 and 3, but it was removed from the final pre-existing list so that further engagement could be undertaken. Instead we are now planning to develop **Commerce**, **Economics** and **Business Studies** for use in either curriculum context.

<sup>23</sup> Previously indicated to be called **Tikanga ā-iwi**. Name change to better recognise the broad scope of this subject.

<sup>24</sup> Replaces the previously planned NZC-derived Achievement Standards subject **Environment & Societies** (which was a replacement for the existing **Education for Sustainability** subject. Developing this subject for use in both curriculum pathways (instead of it being developed as a TMOA specific subject) recognises that an understanding of key concepts from mātauranga Māori is useful for students planning to go into environmental pathways post-school.

<sup>25</sup> Previously indicated to be called **Te Hītori o Aotearoa**. Name change to connect more clearly with Te Takanga o te Wā having been made mandatory within the wāhanga ako. Developing this subject for use in both curriculum pathways (instead of it being developed as a TMOA specific subject) could support rebalancing of the Aotearoa New Zealand's histories curriculum. The general NZC-derived **History** subject will have a much broader focus.

## Learning Languages, Te Reo Pākehā and Ngā Reo

Learning Languages and Ngā Reo are both optional, with schools and kura choosing when to offer additional language learning opportunities. Te Reo Pākehā is compulsory for those learning through TMoA, but there is flexibility in relation to when it begins being taught. Because of this, we have just listed the subjects rather than showing the progression from Phase 4 and through Phase 5. We propose that, in most cases, the subjects for the curriculum are based on language groups rather than individual languages. While this approach focuses on the language commonalities and may not fully acknowledge unique aspects of each language, it will enable greater efficiency in the preparation of the curriculum documents. Grammar and vocabulary lists have been developed for all languages offered as part of NCEA, which will be included as part of the curriculum.

NZQA data shows that uptake of specific languages (in terms of students studying 14 credits or more) is generally quite low, with Te Reo Māori being the most studied. Consolidating the learning languages subjects would require decisions about which languages we do and do not support as an education system, noting there are diplomatic and community interests in having specific languages available. The recent addition of Lea Faka-Tonga (Tongan), Te Reo Māori Kūki 'Āirani (Cook Islands Māori) and Vagahau Niue (Niuean) reflects New Zealand's special relationship with these countries, support for Pacific languages revitalisation, and that these countries use NCEA as their qualification system. There is also community demand for more languages (e.g. Hindi), reflecting that over 160 languages are spoken in New Zealand.

Curriculum subject	Access to credential for target language
Te Reo Māori	Currently available through NCEA as Achievement Standards.
English as an Additional Language <i>new</i> <sup>26</sup>	Currently available through NCEA as Unit Standards.
Asian languages	Current languages available through NCEA as Achievement Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese (Mandarin)</li> <li>• Japanese</li> <li>• Korean</li> </ul>
European languages	Current languages available through NCEA as Achievement Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French</li> <li>• German</li> <li>• Spanish</li> </ul>
Pacific languages	Current languages available through NCEA as Achievement Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gagana Sāmoa (Samoan)</li> <li>• Lea Faka-Tonga (Tongan)</li> <li>• Te Reo Māori Kūki 'Āirani (Cook Islands Māori)</li> </ul> Current languages available through NCEA as Unit Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gagana Tokelau (Tokelauan)</li> <li>• Vagahau Niue (Niuean)</li> </ul>
New Zealand Sign Language <sup>27</sup>	Currently available through NCEA as Achievement Standards.
Te Reo Pākehā (English for te reo Māori speakers)	Appropriate standards are not currently available. Currently some students are studying subject English as a proxy so that they receive a credential, but this is not designed for language learning or to meet the needs of students learning to be bilingual in English and te reo Māori.

### Substantive adjustments from what the sector are currently anticipating

- **Art History** is currently available as an Achievement Standards based subject at Level 2 and 3. Uptake of existing Achievement Standards is very low (322 students doing 14+ credits at Level 2 and 675 students doing 14+ credits at Level 3 in 2024), so we plan to discontinue this a standalone subject and integrate the knowledge into the remaining specialist arts subjects. This approach will help strengthen those specialist arts subjects as students would be learning the historical knowledge relevant for their specialist area rather than missing out on it or having to do an entire separate subject. While this may be perceived as reducing the depth of study possible in art history, New Zealand is an outlier in the jurisdictions and international qualifications we examined in terms of offering it as standalone subject.
- **Outdoor Education** is currently Unit Standards based but had been agreed to become an Achievement Standards based subject (i.e. redesigned as a more academically rigorous subject) at Level 2 and 3 by the previous Government. With the introduction of subject packages and a focus on greater parity between pathways, including the inclusion of more vocational learning in the curriculum, we plan to revisit the approach to this subject and whether it is best developed as a general curriculum subject, industry-led vocational curriculum subject or a subject package.
- **Toiora** (Māori health models) had been agreed to become a new Achievement Standards based subject at Level 2 and 3 by the previous Government. We plan instead that this content is built into the **Health & Nutrition** and **Waiora** subjects rather than being standalone.
- **Tourism** is currently Unit Standards based but had been agreed to become an NZC-derived Achievement Standards based subject (i.e. redesigned as an academically rigorous subject) at Level 2 and 3 by the previous Government. Given this subject is closely associated with a specific industry, and with the focus on greater parity between pathways, we instead plan to explore this as an industry-led vocational curriculum subject. Note that Hon Matt Doocey as the former Minister of Tourism and Hospitality expressed strong support for the development of the Achievement Standards and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) had made plans with financial provisions for the creation of supporting implementation material. We will discuss with MBIE the rationale for the change in approach and the timing and process for working towards an industry-led vocational subject.

Note that we considered deferring development of **Agriculture & Horticulture Science** and **Agribusiness** and progressing these instead as industry-led vocational curriculum subjects. As these are existing curriculum aligned Achievement Standards subjects for NCEA, we decided it would be less disruptive to develop them as part of this year's curriculum writing process. Over time, these subjects may shift to being industry-led vocational subjects.

<sup>26</sup> Supports students from non-English speaking backgrounds (particularly international students, recent migrants and refugees) in developing academic writing skills and vocabulary. Helps students succeed in other subjects taught in English and bridges the gap to tertiary education and career pathways. Risks were identified by the PAG it may be offered to students whose first language is English to provide an 'easy subject' instead of being restricted to those who are learning English as an additional language. Further consideration will need to be given to whether any mechanisms beyond clear naming and purpose descriptions, guidance and monitoring are needed to mitigate this risk.

<sup>27</sup> This is planned to be developed for use in both curriculum pathways due to the increasing demand for trilingual interpreters.