

NCEA Option Information 2018 Secondary School Qualifications

The National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) is New Zealand's main national qualification for secondary school learners in Years 11, 12 and 13.

Schools can also offer a wide range of specialised National Certificate courses that may be a starting point for further study or may simply broaden general education.

For further information refer to the NCEA Handbook for Learners found at www.wgpcollege.school.nz or visit <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/>

- The 'standards and credits' information given for each course in this booklet, may be varied at the start of the course in 2018. Such variation would be made to best suit learner and class needs once learners have made option choices and the classes have been established. Any such variation in 'standards and credits' will be communicated to learners and parents at the beginning of the year before the course starts.
- Each course described in this booklet includes a table of information about 'standards and credits' connected with the course. In these tables the letters 'E' and 'I' and 'AS' and 'US' are used. These letters mean :

KEY

E	An Externally assessed standard.
I	An Internally assessed standard.
AS	An 'Achievement Standard' for which the grades of Not Achieved, Achieved, Merit or Excellence are available.
US	A 'Unit Standard' for which the grades of Not Achieved and Achieved are available.

- Both Unit Standard and Achievement Standard assessments are 'worth' credits (usually between 2 and 6 credits). If learners reach the standard required they gain the credits for that standard.

Secondary school qualifications

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How is NCEA assessed?

For assessment purposes, the skills, knowledge and understandings that are gained when studying subjects are described in detail by 'standards'. Standards come in a range of levels reflecting how demanding they are. Level 1 is the beginning level and Levels 2 and 3 are progressively more demanding. Some standards are assessed internally at school while others are assessed externally in end-of-year exams.

A full year course in a subject is usually assessed with sets of standards worth in total between 18-24 credits.

Standards

In NCEA there are two types of standards: 'achievement standards' and 'unit standards'. Learning programmes taught at Whangaparaoa College will be assessed using achievement and unit standards most appropriate to the learning and courses that have been followed.

Achievement standards: for every Achievement Standard learners will receive a grade of Not Achieved, Achieved, Merit or Excellence. A learner who receives Achieved, Merit or Excellence will gain the credits for that achievement standard. The number of credits does not increase for gaining Merit or Excellence, but the prestige of the award does. In level 3 courses (usually studied in Year 13) Merit and Excellence may have a significant effect on whether or not a learner is eligible to enter certain university courses.

Unit Standards: for every Unit Standard, learners will receive a grade of either Not Achieved or Achieved. A learner who receives Achieved will gain the credits for that unit standard. There are no Merit or Excellence grades for Unit Standards.

Credits gained from Achievement and Unit Standards are of equal value and both count towards NCEA qualifications.

Levels and Credits: Learners usually start in Year 11 with courses that are assessed using Level 1 standards and progress on to Level 3 courses and standards in Year 13. Some learners study at a mix of levels depending on their ability in particular subjects. Teachers will explain what has to be done to achieve each standard in the courses taken. Every standard that is 'achieved' by a learner is worth a set number of credits. Credits are like points towards a qualification, and they mount up until national qualifications are achieved. There are particular requirements for national qualifications at each level of NCEA, and these are described in the section that follows.

How are NCEA qualifications gained?

NCEA Level 1

When a total of 80 credits at Level 1 have been gained from different subjects being studied there is the award of the NCEA Level 1 National Certificate. To gain this certificate eight of the 80 credit total must be from numeracy standards and eight of the credits must be from literacy standards. Numeracy credits come from courses in Mathematics and Literacy credits can be gained from English or Te Reo Māori standards or a combination of these.

NCEA Level 2

To gain the award of the NCEA Level 2 National Certificate a total of 80 credits is required. Of these, a minimum of 60 credits must be at Level 2 or above and with another 20 credits at any other level. Credits can be used for more than one qualification, so some NCEA Level 1 credits can count towards NCEA Level 2. For NCEA Level 2 there are no specific literacy or numeracy requirements.

NCEA Level 3

To gain the NCEA Level 3 National Certificate 80 credits need to be gained, of which 60 must be at Level 3 or above, and 20 at Level 2 or above. The 20 you gain from level 2 can have already been counted for your level 2 certificate.

Certificate endorsement

Learners can gain a merit or excellence certificate in level 1-3, by gaining 50 or more credits at either merit or excellence. Credits counting towards endorsement may be gained over more than one year and more than one level but must be gained at the level of the certificate or above. For example, Level 2 credits will count towards endorsement of a Level 1 NCEA, but Level 1 credits will not count towards endorsement of a Level 2 NCEA.

Course endorsement

A course endorsement provides recognition for a student who has performed exceptionally well in an individual course. The key objective of a course endorsement is to motivate students to achieve their potential in one or more courses.

Students will gain an endorsement for a course if, in a single school year, they achieve:

- 14 or more credits at Merit or Excellence at the lower level that supports the endorsement
- at least 3 of these credits from externally assessed standards and 3 credits from internally assessed standards. Note, this does not apply to Physical Education, Religious Studies and level 3 Visual Arts.

University Entrance and University Study

See pages 15-21 for detail.

Scholarship

Scholarship exams and Scholarship Awards are available in many Level 3 subjects studied for NCEA. Scholarship is externally assessed. It is designed to extend and challenge top-level learners and to financially assist the most able learners to attend university. It is not part of the NQF (National Qualifications Framework). No credits are gained from scholarship exams.

Learners sitting Scholarship are assessed on their ability to think laterally, critically and in the abstract. The exams cover similar content and/or subject understanding as the Level 3 achievement standards, but the standard of answer required to gain a scholarship award is much higher than for Level 3.

Remember the following:

- Keep the course you choose a broad one - across a range of subjects and curriculum areas.
- Make sure you continue studying English, Mathematics and Science for as long as you can.
- Do NOT make a choice based on what your friends are doing or who the teacher is.

University Entrance

Students are qualified for entrance to a university in New Zealand when they have obtained:

- NCEA Level 3
- Three subjects at Level 3 made up of 14 credits each in 3 approved subjects
- Literacy – 10 credits at Level 2 or above made up of 5 credits in reading and 5 credits in writing
- Numeracy – 10 credits at Level 1 or above made up of achievement standards – specified achievement standards available through a range of subjects, or unit standards – package of three numeracy unit standards (26623, 26626, 26627) – **all** three required).

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I enter for NCEA?

All learners must enter for NCEA through an 'accredited provider', usually a secondary or area school, or wharekura. If you're not enrolled at a school - for example, if you're home schooled – you need to find a school to link with.

Schools send candidate entries for NCEA to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) during the year. Entries may be changed, if necessary, later on in the year. Schools inform learners when entries need to be finalised.

During the year the NZQA website **www.nzqa.govt.nz** can be accessed and learner entries for NCEA and personal details of candidates can be checked.

Do I need to enter for whole subjects?

No - NZQA records entries by separate standards, not by subject.

Schools run a variety of courses and often use combinations of Achievement and Unit Standards for assessment. Staff will give advice and guidance to learners about entries for NCEA standards.

How will my work be assessed?

Each standard is either internally assessed in the school during the year, or externally assessed. Most external assessments are by examination at the end of the year, though for some subjects a portfolio is submitted for assessment or a visiting assessor comes into the school.

Exam dates

External exams for NCEA start in mid-November and end in mid-December. These dates are published at the start of each year on the NZQA website: **www.nzqa.govt.nz** There will be exam timetables displayed within the school.

How will I know what to do to achieve a standard?

As new skills or topics are learnt, teachers will explain what is going to be assessed, how it will be assessed and also the level of performance / quality of answer required to reach the standard required.

Teachers will provide feedback during the learning to both indicate the standard of work being achieved and where improvements are required to reach the standard. Examples of assessment materials in some subjects can be found at <http://www.tki.org.nz/e/community/ncea/support.php>. You can search for the actual standards used to assess your work at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/assessment/index.html>.

How will I know that my internal work is marked at the same standard as at other schools?

During the year, all schools have samples of their internal assessments and learner answers in each subject checked by NZQA's independent moderators. These moderators evaluate work from schools and learners all around the country.

The moderator judgements and comments are sent to teachers and the principal at the school, so they know whether they are correctly applying the national standard.

What happens if you do not achieve a standard?

The school and teachers will indicate what, if any, opportunities there will be for further assessment.

If a standard is internally assessed, there is often a chance for reassessment, though not in every case. For some standards, the school can finalise assessment in the final term, taking into account most of the year's work.

Remember: Teachers will be working hard to help learners achieve each standard. They will explain what is needed for achievement in the standard, progress being made towards that achievement and any work improvements that are necessary.

For externally assessed standards, there is only one assessment opportunity - the exam or other external assessment at the end of the year.

How does NCEA recognise excellence?

Achievement Standards do not just set out expectations and requirements for gaining Achievement. The standards also state the level of performance required to meet the 'Merit' or 'Excellence' criteria. Excellence criteria are demanding and learners who 'Achieve with Excellence' for all or most of their standards will be doing very well. Merit and Excellence should be the aim of all learners in NCEA. They are a target to aim for and a standard to aspire to.

Results

In December, the **NZQA website** can be accessed by logging on to it. Here the results of the internally assessed standards that the school has sent to NZQA can be seen.

In January, an **Interim (Provisional) Result Notice** is sent out to all candidates by NZQA. This shows provisional results from the year for both internal and external assessments.

In April each year a personal **Record of Achievement (ROA)** is sent to all candidates by NZQA. This records, all standards achieved so far. The standards achieved each year will be added to it. Even after learners leave school, and perhaps go on to study for other certificates on the NQF, achievements can still be added to the personal ROA of the learner. Candidates can access their own ROA on the NZQA website and can also order a paper copy whenever they wish.

Choosing subjects (option choices)

Choosing subjects to study in the senior school should be based on three things:

1. ABILITY – how good you are at subjects.
2. INTEREST – which subjects you enjoy most.
3. CAREER, OCCUPATION AND FUTURE STUDY INTENTIONS – If you know what career or tertiary course you want to follow, find out what subjects you need to enter these career areas or courses.

The NQF and NCEA are widely recognised qualifications both nationally and internationally

The NQF and NCEA results are recognised by employers, and used as the benchmark for entry selection by universities and polytechnics. NCEA is New Zealand's national school leaver qualification. It is included in the publication International Qualifications for Entry into Higher Education, which is used in the UK and internationally for tertiary entrance and selection. A Level 3 NCEA with University Entrance gained is equivalent to 'A level' results in the UK.

Level 3 NCEA results have been accepted as for replacement for University Bursaries results in the Interstate Tertiary Index used for entrance to all Australian universities. If candidates give permission on their entry forms, NZQA will send candidate results to Australian authorities early in January.