



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

18 October 2016

Hilary McNaughten
hilarymcnaughten@gmail.com

Dear Hilary

Thank for your email outlining your concerns about the 2016 MCAT. The Minister of Education, Hon Hekia Parata, has forwarded your email to NZQA for response. This letter responds to both of your communications.

We do regret the concerns that the assessment caused this year. We are clear, and we fully acknowledge that our communication of the changes to align the assessment to the standard since 2015 (circulars in late 2015 and May 2016 outlining changes in the Assessment Specifications) wasn't adequate to ensure schools were well informed of the changes. I was sorry to read your comments as we know the work that teachers put in to engage students in mathematics and to build their early confidence in undertaking external assessment.

We are reviewing our approach to ensure that we get this right in future, and improve the way we communicate changes of this nature. This will include what we can do to provide better supporting information, particularly in the form of exemplars. There has been considerable feedback from teachers about this.

I do appreciate that your concerns are about the paper itself and not specifically about the information provided to outline the changes. Your letter raises particular concerns about the difficulty and complexity of a number of questions. We will review and comment on these, though as you will appreciate, NZQA's process is to do this once marking and related processes have been completed. We would be happy to discuss the specific questions then. In the meantime, we do intend to review and address all the feedback, including the specific points raised in your letter, as part of the work we will do to prepare the Assessment Report for MCAT (this will be published early next year). The Assessment Report will inform the development of the 2017 MCAT.

You enquired about the possibility of students resitting a new examination. In our view, it would not be feasible for schools or NZQA, nor fair on students, to offer a further unplanned national assessment at this time of the year when the students' focus is on preparing for end of year examinations. Schools are well underway with the MCAT marking and it is important that this should continue.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristine Kilkelly'.

Kristine Kilkelly
Deputy Chief Executive, Assessment