



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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

10 October 2016

Margaret Priest
Head of Department Mathematics
Wellington Girl's College
mpriest@clear.net.nz

Dear Ms Priest

Thank you for your emails of 24 and 26 September providing detailed comments on the 2016 common assessment task for level 1 Mathematics and Statistics 91027 (MCAT). The Minister of Education, Hon Hekia Parata, has forwarded your email of 24 September 2016 to NZQA for response. This letter responds to both of your communications.

We do regret that the changes in this year's MCAT have caused concern for students and teachers, and for parents. 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. We are reviewing the way we do this to ensure that this works effectively for teachers in future. As you and other teachers have noted, it is important that NZQA support changes with good exemplars as well as other information, and this will be a focus in future.

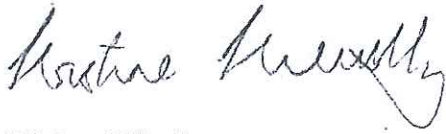
I appreciate that your concerns centre on the structure and format of the assessment. We do intend to address your detailed comments in relation to the assessment questions, though it is appropriate for NZQA to do this once the marking and examination processes are completed and to defer our detailed response until then. We would be happy to discuss the key issues that you outlined in your email at that time. I can assure you that your comments will be thoroughly reviewed and we will address these as we undertake an assessment report for the 2016 MCAT which will be available to schools in early 2017. We will also ensure that your views and other feedback we have received are reviewed as part of the development of the 2017 MCAT.

You have asked for standard 91027 be reviewed to investigate de-emphasising problem solving. The Ministry of Education is the standard setting body for curriculum derived standards so we will pass on your request to them.

Finally, your email communication quotes views which you understand are those I have expressed. This may be a matter of context but these certainly do not reflect what I thought had been conveyed in the context you reference. Our view on whether a derived grade is appropriate in these circumstances is based on the longer term and wider best interests of students and schools bearing in mind that the rules for derived grade are not designed for this situation. It should not in any way be taken to suggest that this is to do with the number of credits. We consider the MCAT to be an important assessment for students undertaking mathematics, and for that reason we understand and respect the concerns that teachers have conveyed to us about the impact on students who found the assessment unexpectedly difficult. We want to make sure in the future that we have much better processes to ensure changes are well communicated effectively to teachers.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything you would like to discuss in the meantime.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kristine Kil Kelly". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kristine Kil Kelly
Deputy Chief Executive, Assessment