

11 October 2016

Catherine Newson  
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Dear Catherine

Thank you for your comments on the 2016 common assessment task for Level 1 Mathematics and Statistics 91027 (MCAT).

We have received considerable feedback about this year's MCAT and the concerns about the difficulty that this presented for students.

We fully acknowledge that our communication processes were not adequate to ensure schools were well informed of the changes to align the assessment to the standard. We are reviewing the way we communicate changes to ensure that this works as it should for schools. We are committed to supporting teachers and students.

In this year's MCAT assessment, each question was divided into several parts. Each question had several opportunities for students to answer at Merit or Excellence level. Even if students did not attempt all parts of each question, it is still possible for them to gain Merit or Excellence grades.

After students have sat the MCAT assessment, there are steps that we take after every assessment to make sure the marking process is fair to them, even if the assessment was found to be difficult. These steps are called "benchmarking", and they are done before teachers start to mark their students' MCAT papers.

You proposed providing schools with an option of derived grade. It is important that we continue with the marking process for MCAT and we believe that this is in the best interests of students and schools. The derived grade process is not designed for this situation and it is important for the overall fairness of external assessment that there is a consistent and careful use of this provision.

If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Kristine Kilkelly  
Deputy Chief Executive, Assessment