

The Future of Assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Overview



- Introducing NZQA's role and responsibilities
- Clarifying the pressures on the current assessment system
- Outlining the proposed new assessment structure
- Connecting global assessment trends and opportunities for Aotearoa's future
- Describing the key challenges in shaping a coherent, equitable, future-ready assessment landscape



NZQA's purpose is to ensure New Zealand has trusted qualifications and credentials that enable people and communities to flourish.

We work with other education agencies to:

- make sure education is high-quality and secondary assessments are running well in New Zealand
- help learners make informed choices about their education
- maintain correct and timely records of each learner's educational achievements
- support government strategies to improve education in New Zealand.



Our responsibility is to ensure that New Zealand qualifications and credentials are credible and robust

NZQA:

- manages the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework
- runs the assessment system for secondary schools
- independently checks the quality of tertiary education providers, except universities
- administers the Code of Pastoral Care
- recognises overseas qualifications
- manages standard-setting for some unit standards and qualifications.



Where we are now



NCEA remains robust and credible

However:

- New Zealand's system is under pressure
- Major changes are coming to both curriculum and assessment
- The use of digital assessments is increasing
- AI and other technologies are creating challenges and opportunities.



Replacement of NCEA



The intention is to:

- strengthen the good aspects of the current system. This includes keeping a wide range of subject areas available to students and continuing to assess students against common criteria
- simplify the structure so that it makes more sense to students, teachers, whānau and employers – including more consistent assessment of what students know and can do
- increase international comparability.



Proposed changes consulted on in 2025

Proposal 1



- Work with industry to integrate VET learning into the senior secondary qualification system
- Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) will design clear and consistent subjects

Proposal 3



- Introduce a subject approach to achievement with straightforward marks out of 100 and letter grades, such as A, B, and C for each subject

Proposal 2



- Replace NCEA Level 1 with a Foundational Award
- Introduce the New Zealand Certificate of Education (Year 12) and the New Zealand Advanced Certificate of Education (Year 13)

Proposal 4



- Achieve at least 4 subjects and the Foundational Award to achieve the qualifications
- An overall mark out of 500

Current state of proposals



Proposal 1



- **Progressing** – work is underway with ISBs to develop industry-led subjects. These will contribute towards the qualification the same as other subjects, and students can get the same types of grades.
- **TBC** – Assessments could be skill standards too.

Proposal 3



- **Confirmed by cabinet** – subject based approach to qualifications, with results based on an aggregate of all assessments within the subject.
- **TBC** – whether there will be numeric marks and/or letter grades; what constitutes a pass; exactly how aggregation works.

Proposal 2



Confirmed by cabinet –

- Replace NCEA Level 1 with a Foundational Award at Year 11, focused on lit/num
- Two levels of qualifications at years 12 and 13

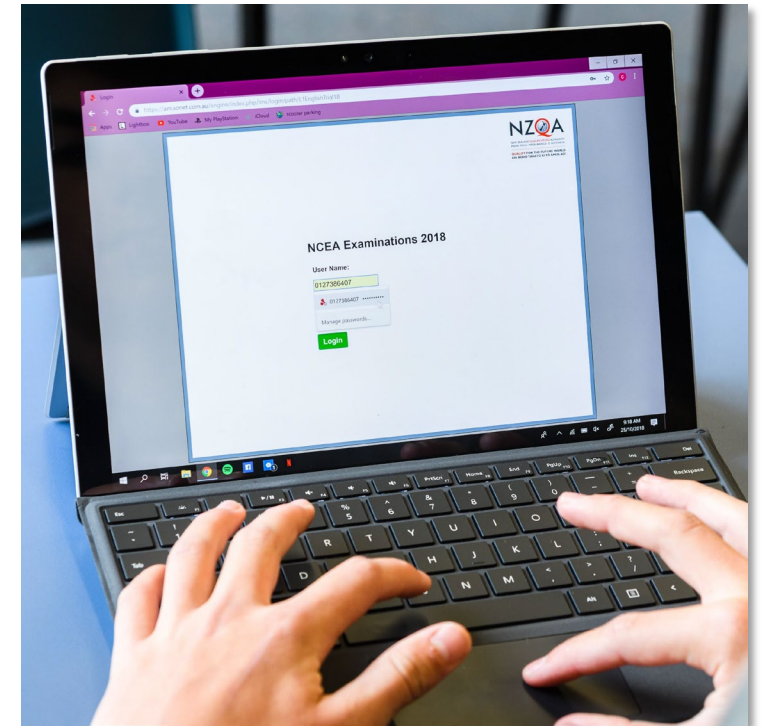
TBC – whether there are overarching qualifications

Proposal 4



- **TBC** – achievement requirements for qualifications, including whether there is an overarching qualification
- **TBC** – whether students get an overall mark out of 500, and how endorsements (if any) work

- Structured pathways and coherence
- AI integration in assessment
- Focus on foundational skills
- Increase in authentic, performance-based tasks



NZQA's Role in the Future System



- Ensuring assessment design follows curriculum
- Assessment Design with AI utilisation
- Digital assessment platform improvements
- Scaling AI-assisted marking



Challenges and Risks

- Reform fatigue
- Equity concerns
- Public understanding and political cycles



A Vision for the future



- AI-human hybrid marking
- Digital accessibility
- Learning analytics integration
- Culturally sustaining assessment
- Balanced internal / external / authentic tasks





Conclusion

- NZ education is at an inflection point
- Opportunity for coherence, fairness, and future proofing
- Invitation to sector collaboration

Kia ora Thank you

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