



# STUDY IN NEW ZEALAND

A guide for students considering  
secondary school study

**NZQA**

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
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# Coming to study in New Zealand

New Zealand offers an excellent choice of schooling at the secondary level. You will be taught in an English-speaking environment, sharing classes with New Zealanders and other international students, and encouraged to participate in all areas of learning.

You can trust that a New Zealand education will give you the skills and knowledge you need for both your future career and life in the world today.

Secondary study usually lasts five years between the ages of 13 and 18. Most secondary schools in New Zealand are government schools, and teach a national curriculum. International students generally enter into New Zealand's National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) with students of a similar age. The school's decision on an international student's entry will also consider the student's prior learning and English language ability.

New Zealand's secondary schools offer nationally and internationally recognised qualifications. All national secondary qualifications are monitored and checked by government and education agencies.

New Zealand's education system is considered world class. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) compares the educational performance of teenagers in over 70 countries through their Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The results show New Zealand students are continuing to score above the OECD average in mathematics, science and reading. Our higher achieving students are comparable to the best in the world.



See:  
[www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand)



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## National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA)

NCEA is the main qualification for secondary school students in New Zealand. You can be confident that you can use NCEA towards future study either in New Zealand or another country.

NCEA is awarded at three levels; 1, 2 and 3. Students usually gain NCEA Level 1 in year 11 (aged 15), Level 2 in year 12 (aged 16) and Level 3 in year 13 (aged 17–18).

NCEA is a very flexible qualification and can be personalised according to each student's ability and interests. You may study one or more subjects at a higher level if you are very good at those subject(s). For example, if you are studying at Level 2 but are very good at Mathematics, you can study Mathematics at Level 3.

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## NCEA offers many subjects to suit you

Each year, you can choose from a wide range of over 40 subjects, depending on what is offered at your school. In year 11, you will probably take a broad range of subjects which might include English, Mathematics and Science and two or three other subjects. In years 12 and 13 you will start thinking about what areas you need to focus on for your future study or career.

If you have a particular career in mind, you can start to match subjects to suit your future career choice. Find out which subjects you will need from your school or the university, polytechnic, institute of technology or private training establishment (higher education providers) where you intend to study.

NCEA allows schools to develop programmes of learning to suit students' needs and then assess what they know against standards (the skills and knowledge that you are expected to know). Most students will be tested, or assessed, with a mixture of internal assessment (work that is set and marked by individual schools), and with external assessment – end-of-year external examinations that are set and marked by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). NZQA checks that assessment is fair across all secondary schools in New Zealand.



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## NCEA recognises excellence

Students are recognised for high achievement at each level by gaining NCEA with Merit or NCEA with Excellence. High achievement in an individual subject is also recognised with Merit or Excellence grades.

Merit and Excellence grades will help you gain entry into a university programme and are viewed positively by employers.

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## Other awards

University Entrance is the minimum requirement needed for making an application to study at a New Zealand university. To gain University Entrance students need to achieve credits in subjects/courses that are on the list of approved subjects for University Entrance. Students also need to meet literacy and numeracy requirements.

A full list of requirements and approved subjects for University Entrance is available on the NZQA website: [www.nzqa.govt.nz/UE](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/UE)

The very best students are encouraged to do the end-of-year New Zealand Scholarship examinations. The material is the same as NCEA Level 3, but the standard of performance required is much higher.

New Zealand Scholarship requires students to demonstrate high-level critical thinking within complex situations and is well regarded both within New Zealand and internationally.



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## Using NCEA after leaving school

You need to ensure the subjects you study for NCEA are appropriate for entry into university and other higher education providers both in New Zealand and in other countries. Your teachers can help you with subject choices. For further information see: [www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea)

NCEA is a national school-leaver qualification and well recognised overseas. It is well regarded by employers and used for selection by universities, both in New Zealand and other countries. Independent research has shown that if you do well in NCEA, you are likely to do well in your first year at university.

New Zealand has equivalency arrangements with Australia and Germany for NCEA Level 3, and Thailand for NCEA Level 2, which means they accept students with NCEA qualifications.

Students with NCEA Level 3 have gained access to universities around the world. Prestigious universities, like Oxford University in the United Kingdom and Harvard University in the United States of America accept applications from students with New Zealand's University Entrance certificate and NCEA Level 3 endorsed with Excellence.

New Zealand is a signatory to the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas Leading to Admission to Universities. This supports your ability to seek recognition of your NCEA results with education providers and employers in European Union member states.



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## Getting your results

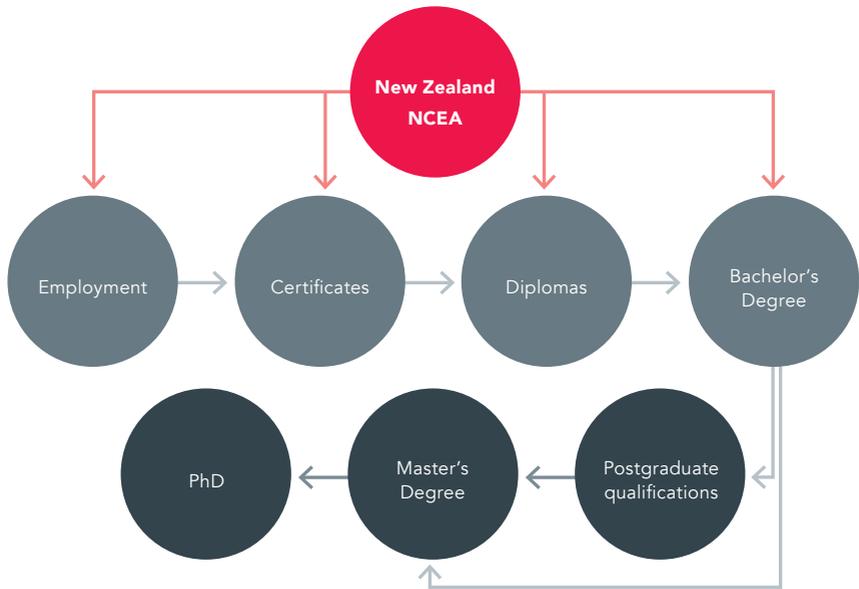
NZQA administers NCEA and holds a database of all results. You can access your results via the NZQA website, download official results notices and request printed copies.

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## Support for English language learners

Students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are supported in schools. English Language (EL) programmes build on the students' language skills and provide a bridge, enabling students to participate in New Zealand schools.

# NCEA Pathways



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# More information



## **New Zealand Qualifications Authority**

Details on NCEA and other qualifications

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea)



## **Study in New Zealand**

Links and information about living and studying in New Zealand

[www.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz](http://www.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz)



## **Ministry of Education**

Full information on education in New Zealand

[www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)



## **Education New Zealand**

Information about New Zealand's international education promotion and representation worldwide

[www.enz.govt.nz](http://www.enz.govt.nz)



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English  
Published 2017

New Zealand Government