



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS

AUTHORITY



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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THE BASICS

What is NCEA?

NCEA stands for National Certificate of Educational Achievement. NCEA is the most common qualification you will be working towards in Years 11 to 13.


Why should I work towards NCEA?

NCEA and other national certificates are recognised by employers and used for selection into courses by universities and polytechnics. NCEA is also accepted by employers and universities overseas.

Independent research* has shown that if you do well in NCEA, you are likely to do well in your first year at university.

- This guide is for students new to NCEA. Ask your parents/ guardians to read this guide so that they understand how NCEA works. In particular, get them to read the **Tips for parents** section on page 9.

* *The Predictability of Enrolment and First Year University Results from Secondary School Performance* (Starpath, University of Auckland, 2008).



“I’ve employed a lot of young people over the last couple of years, and reading through their papers and credits, you do get a good indication of where they’re at, just going with the credits they have, the marks they’ve got. NCEA tells you a bit more about the person; if they’re hands-on or computer skilled or good at fault finding.”

JUD DWYER, MANAGER AT WESTLAND MILK PRODUCTS

How do I get NCEA?

NCEA is gained by building up credits. Credits are awarded for each standard you achieve in the course you are studying.

- **Standards** are the skills or knowledge that you are expected to achieve or know in a course. For example, a Mathematics standard is: *Apply numeric reasoning in solving problems.*
- **Assessments** measure how well you meet these standards. Assessments can be internal (a test, activity or assignment) or external (an end-of-year exam or portfolio).
- When you achieve a standard, you also achieve a number of **credits** for that standard.
- When you achieve a certain number of credits, you gain NCEA. There are **three different levels of NCEA** you can get, depending on the difficulty of the standards you achieve.



THE DETAILS

How do I enter for NCEA?

Your school will enter you for NCEA and tell you when to finalise your entries and pay your fees (\$75 each year).

NCEA is administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). You can use your unique National Student Number (NSN) to look up information NZQA holds about you sent in by your school, including your entries, results and *Record of Achievement*. For more information see www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea or phone NZQA on 0800 697 296.

How should I choose my courses?

In year 11, you will probably take a broad range of courses that can lead on to more specialised 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, check out what courses you will need with your teachers or the place where you intend to study.

How do I achieve a standard?

When you study a programme or course, your work is measured against pre-set standards using **assessments**.

As you study a new topic your teachers will explain to you what is going to be assessed. Teachers will tell you if you are on the right track or help you to improve your work.

An assessment programme for a Mathematics course at level 1 may look like this:

STANDARD	ASSESSMENT	NAME OF STANDARD	CREDITS
1.1	Internal	Apply numeric reasoning in solving problems	4
1.6	External	Apply geometric reasoning in solving problems	4
1.13	Internal	Investigate a situation involving elements of chance	3
1.2	External	Apply algebraic methods in solving problems	4
1.3	External	Investigate relationships between tables, equations or graphs	4
Total			19

Types of standards

Schools assess two types of standards:

- **Achievement standards** can be assessed internally at school by teachers or assessed externally at the end of the year in national exams or by portfolios
- **Unit standards** are assessed internally at school by teachers.

Levels of standards

Standards are organised into levels of increasing difficulty. The standards assessed in schools are usually at **levels 1, 2 and 3**. Most year 11 students start at level 1, and progress to level 2 in year 12, and level 3 in year 13. A certificate is awarded according to the level of the standards you achieve. For example, if you achieve a certain number of level 1 standards, you will gain level 1 NCEA.

Multi-level study

Schools may allow you to study a mix of standards at different levels, depending on your ability. For example, in year 12 you may do most courses at level 2, but start a new course at level 1 or study another course at level 3 because you are good at it.

How will my work be assessed?

Assessments measure your performance against the standards in your programme or course. If your work meets the requirements of the standard, then you achieve that standard and you gain **credits** towards your qualification.

Many standards are **internally** assessed by your teachers during the year. NZQA checks that there is consistency in assessment across all schools. Most **external** assessments are by exam at the end of the year, although for some subjects (e.g. Technology, Visual Arts) you will need to submit a portfolio of your work.

How will I be graded in each standard?

Your grade will depend on the type of standard being assessed.

- For **achievement standards** you can get: Achieved (A) for a satisfactory performance, Merit (M) for very good performance, Excellence (E) for outstanding performance or Not Achieved (N) if you don't meet the requirements of the standard.
- For **unit standards** all grades may be available, but usually you can just get Achieved (A) or Not Achieved (N).

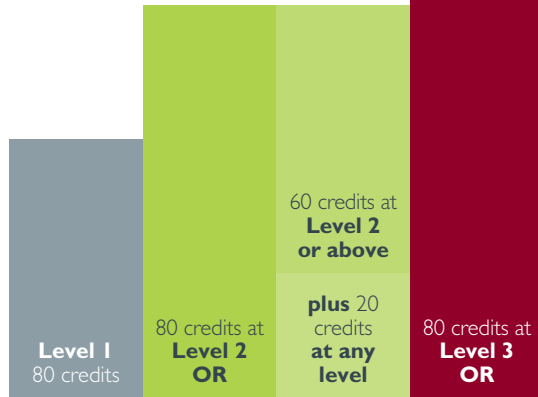
What happens if I don't achieve a standard?

For internally assessed standards, your school may allow you (and others in your class) to be assessed one more time. For some standards your school may delay your assessment until the final term, taking into account most of your year's work.

For externally assessed standards, there is only one opportunity to achieve the standard each year – the exam or other external assessment at the end of the year.

How many credits do I need for an NCEA Certificate?

Each standard is worth a set number of credits. When you achieve a standard, these credits count towards NCEA. They may also contribute towards other national certificates, such as a National Certificate in Business Administration. Credits can be gained over more than one year.



“There is recognition of whether you can do it. So, you can be rewarded for achieving it, just the standard a little bit better (achieved with excellence, that is, that you're really good at it).

TONY GUILLILAND, PRINCIPAL OF WESTLAND HIGH SCHOOL

What if I miss out on level 1 NCEA?

It is possible to study at level 2 before achieving a level 1 certificate. Any credits you earn at level 2 will count towards level 1; at the same time you can begin work towards level 2. This means the credits you earn may contribute to more than one qualification at the same time. You may study some courses, or standards, at a higher level than others. Your school can help you decide what courses to study.

What you need for NCEA Certificates

Level 1 80 credits at any level, including literacy and numeracy requirements*

Level 2 – 80 credits – a minimum of 60 credits at level 2 or above and 20 credits at any level

Level 3 – 80 credits – a minimum of 60 credits at level 3 or above and 20 credits at level 2 or above.

* Ask your teacher to explain the literacy and numeracy requirements.

60 credits at
**Level 3
or above**

plus 20
credits
**at Level 2
or above**

to it [the standard] well, or excellently, just reaching the standard, or achieving (with merit), or achieving the standard with distinction at that particular aspect of that course.”

“When you get your first credit, you feel like you’re growing up, you’re not a little kid anymore. It’s like climbing stairs, so your first set of credits is the first set of stairs, your second set is the next step...”

JESSIE SKIPWORTH, STUDENT AT PORIRUA COLLEGE

Recognising high achievement

NCEA can be ‘endorsed’ to reflect high achievement in a significant number of standards. There are two types of endorsement: Certificate Endorsement, and Course Endorsement which will be introduced in 2011.

Certificate Endorsement: If you gain 50 credits at Excellence your NCEA will be endorsed with Excellence. If you gain 50 credits at Merit (or a mix of Merit and Excellence) your NCEA will be endorsed with Merit.

In 2009, 8% of Year 11 students gained level 1 NCEA with Excellence and 27% gained level 1 NCEA with Merit.

Course Endorsement: If in a single year you gain 14 or more credits at Merit and/or Excellence for a course, you will gain endorsement in that course. At least 3 credits must be from externally assessed standards and 3 credits from internally assessed standards in that course. (Note: this condition does not apply to Physical Education, Religious Studies or level 3 Visual Arts).

What do I need to gain University Entrance?

To gain entry to a New Zealand university, you will need to have 42 credits at level 3 or above from a list of approved subjects, as well as meeting some literacy and numeracy requirements. University Entrance requirements are being reviewed in 2010 but any changes won't be introduced until 2013. See the NZQA website or ask your teachers for more details about University Entrance requirements.

University Entrance is the minimum requirement to go to university. Many universities and other tertiary course providers in New Zealand also have specific course entry requirements. Merit and Excellence grades may give you a greater chance of getting into your chosen course. You may need to pass particular level 2 or 3 standards as an entry requirement for some tertiary courses.

What other qualifications can I aim for at school?

Your school may offer other national certificates as well as NCEA. Some of the most popular ones include: Business Administration, Computing, Hospitality (Food and Beverage Service), Mechanical Engineering Technology, Te Waharoa (Māori) and Tourism and Travel. Ask your school what national certificates they offer in areas that interest you.

Credits from some work may count towards more than one qualification and all credits count towards the NCEAs. Some qualifications can be completed at school and others you may start at school and then finish in the workplace or at a tertiary provider.

"The transition from school to uni was very smooth. Under NCEA, you're working hard all through the year, so you're always aware of your assessments you've got at the moment, and then the next ones. You've got a plan and you know that there's more coming, which is quite similar to uni, where you know when your assessments are and when they're due."

OLIVIA BURT, STUDENT AT AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY



GETTING YOUR NCEA RESULTS

How will I get my results?

Your school should provide you with the results of your internal assessments as they are completed. Once they have reported these results to NZQA you will be able to see them by logging in to your learner home page on the NZQA website www.nzqa.govt.nz/login/, using your unique National Student Number (NSN).

The results of external assessment for NCEA are released in January and in February for Scholarship. In 2011 you will be able to see these results on your learner home page and you will receive a printed *Result Notice* shortly afterwards. The award of University Entrance is also recorded on the *Result Notice*.

There are two important documents that NZQA can provide. The *School Results Summary* (SRS) is generally intended for school leavers. It lists all the standards for

which you have been assessed with the results, including Not Achieved results, grouped by year, subject and level. It also contains a detailed summary of your credits by subject and level.

The *Record of Achievement* (ROA) is intended to be a life-long record of your achievement and will grow as you gain new standards through tertiary study and industry training.

These documents detail your achievements in a way that should be easily understood by employers and tertiary education providers. You can use them by themselves or use information from them for your Curriculum Vitae.

From 2011 certificates for NCEA and University Entrance will be printed on request, and they will be available from January.



Can I appeal my results?

If you have a question about the marking of an internal assessment, you should discuss this with your teacher at the time your work is returned.

You can ask NZQA to review results from most external assessments after you get your results and your exam papers are returned. NZQA will send you detailed information about this along with your result notice.

The quotes used in this brochure are from a 2009 DVD "Understanding NCEA." Your school has a copy or see the NZQA website.



MORE INFORMATION

The Qualifications & Standards area on the NZQA website www.nzqa.govt.nz is a useful source of information, including:

- the exam timetable
- past exam papers.

NCEA	Talk to your school or contact NZQA: www.nzqa.govt.nz 0800 697 296
Careers Advice	Talk to a careers advisor at your school or contact Career Services: www.careers.govt.nz 0800 222 733
Qualifications	Compare all qualifications: www.nzqf.govt.nz Contact an industry training organisation: www.itf.org.nz
Study skills	Find what you need for NCEA study: www.studyit.org.nz



TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Ask your son/daughter how NCEA works – most students understand it well.
- Provide support (e.g. time, space, homework help) to help your son/daughter study – remember they will be assessed throughout the year, not just in final examinations.
- When helping your son/daughter choose subjects, encourage them to take a broad range at level 1, but to start thinking about what areas they might focus on for future study or career at levels 2 and 3.
- Encourage your son/daughter to aim for higher grades – Merit and Excellence. These may help them to get the job they want, or get into the tertiary course of their choice.
- If your son/daughter has a particular career or tertiary course in mind, check out what level 2 or level 3 standards they may require with the university or polytechnic where they intend to study.
- Ask your son/daughter's school or teachers for guidance on how they are progressing. Most schools also hold very helpful qualification information sessions for parents.
- See the NCEA information on the NZQA website www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea

 See the NZQA website www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea

GUIDE TO THE RESULT NOTICE

National Qualifications Framework
RESULT NOTICE

NZQA
NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Another Learner
123 Small St
Suburville
Rural Town

NZN: 123456789
Academic Year: 2010
Issued: January 2011

Qualification and Achievement Summary for 2010

National Certificate in Educational Achievement - Level 3
New Zealand University Entrance

Qualification Achieved
13/0/10
13/0/10

Standards Achieved in 2010

Where the result achieved is the best possible result for that standard the result will be shown in bold type.

A - Achieved
M - Achieved with Merit
E - Achieved with Excellence

N - Not Achieved
(nt) - Internally Assessed
(it) - Internally Assessed

Economics

Level 3	Standard	Description	Grade	Credits
	5880	Demonstrate and explain the basis for trade, and the impact of a trade policy (nt)	6	A
	5881	Describe and measure inflation, its causes and effects, and the impact of a policy to reduce inflation (nt)	6	A
	90794	Describe inflation and its causes and effects using economic models (nt)	4	M
	90795	Describe international trade and its causes and effects using economic models (nt)	4	N
	90796	Describe economic growth and its causes and effects using economic models (nt)	4	A
Total credits achieved in 2009 in Economics at level Level 2:				30

English

Level 2	Standard	Description	Grade	Credits
	12420	Read transactional written text closely (nt)	4	A
	12426	Present static images combining verbal and visual features (nt)	3	A
	90374	Deliver a presentation using oral and visual language techniques (nt)	3	E
	90375	Produce crafted and developed creative writing (nt)	3	E
	90376	Produce crafted and developed formal transactional writing (nt)	3	E
	90377	Analyse extended written text(s) (nt)	3	M
	90379	Analyse a visual or oral text (nt)	N	
	90380	Read unfamiliar texts and analyse the ideas and language features (nt)	3	M
Total credits achieved in 2009 in English at level Level 2:				22

Geography

Level 3	Standard	Description	Grade	Credits
	90702	Analyse a cultural process (nt)	4	M
	90704	Select and apply skills and ideas in a geographic context (nt)	N	
	90705	Carry out and present geographic research with consultation (nt)	3	E
	90707	Analyse a geographic topic at a global scale (nt)	3	E

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New Zealand Qualifications Authority PO Box 140, Wellington 6140, Telephone 04 463 3300 www.nzqa.govt.nz

- The results' year
- Qualifications gained and endorsements (if any) – Merit or Excellence
- Explanation of abbreviations
- Subjects studied
- What the standard covered
- Grade: A – Achieved
- Credits gained
- Grade: M – Merit
- Total credits for a subject
- Grade: N – Not Achieved (no credits gained)
- Grade: E – Excellence

Tel: 0800 697 296

Email: helpdesk@nzqa.govt.nz | www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea

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