

Review of University Entrance 2016

Terms of Reference

Purpose

To undertake a review of the requirements for the common standard for entrance to New Zealand universities, known as university entrance, to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date.

Background

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is required under section 247 of the Education Act 1989 to set a common standard for entrance to university. In doing so it must consult with the Council of each university and Universities New Zealand (UNZ)¹. NZQA regularly reviews the university entrance requirements (2005/6 and again in 2010).

University entrance is intended to provide evidence that a student has a reasonable chance of success at degree level study at New Zealand universities. The current university entrance requirements² are an outcome of NZQA's review of university entrance 2010. The changes came fully into effect in March 2014. At the end of the 2010 review, NZQA committed to another review in 2016.

The 2016 review will allow NZQA to examine the current university entrance requirements to ensure that they are working as intended and are relevant and up to date.

Process

NZQA will establish an external advisory group, which will be supported by an internal project working group with assistance from the Ministry of Education. The external advisory group will provide expert advice to NZQA on the current university entrance requirements and it will consider the nature, impact and timing of any proposed changes to the current requirements.

The external advisory group will be chaired by NZQA and membership will include representatives from:

- Ministry of Education
- Tertiary Education Commission
- Universities New Zealand
- Two individual universities
- Polytechnics
- Wānanga
- Private Training Establishments
- Secondary education (English and Māori-medium)

¹ Referred to as the Vice-Chancellors' Committee in the legislation, but now trading as Universities New Zealand.

² See Appendix A.

NZQA will also develop separate mechanisms for involving students in the review.

The internal project working group will support the external advisory group through the development of an evidence base and, as required, options for change.

The governance arrangements for the review are attached as Appendix B.

A detailed project plan with timelines will be produced, which will cover the following:

- Gathering information
 - Data analysis
 - Qualitative analysis through engagement with stakeholders
 - Environmental scanning
- Analysis and, as required, the design of options for change;
- Preparation of consultation material
- Consultation activities
- Analysing submissions
- Preparation of advice to NZQA as decision maker by the end of 2016
- Communicate implementation plan

Implementation

Any changes to university entrance will be communicated to the senior secondary schooling and tertiary education sectors well in advance, e.g. before students begin their Year 11 study in 2018. This would ensure students, schools and universities have sufficient time to prepare for full implementation of any changes in 2020.

Interdependency

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and University Entrance

NZQA is working with the Ministry of Education and the university sector on the incorporation of learning and achievement derived from Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMOA) curriculum into the current university entrance requirements. If agreed, this would require some changes to the approved subjects list. The scope of these changes will be taken into account as part of the review of university entrance 2016.

Literacy and numeracy

The Ministry of Education are assessing the NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements for relevance. The scope of any changes, especially to NCEA numeracy requirements, will be taken into account as part of the review.

Appendix A: Current University Entrance Requirements

- NCEA Level 3
- Three subjects - at Level 3, made up of:
 - 14 credits each, in three approved subjects
- Literacy – 10 credits at Level 2 or above*, made up of:
 - 5 credits in reading
 - 5 credits in writing
- Numeracy – 10 credits at Level 1 or above, made up of:
 - achievement standards – specified achievement standards available through a range of subjects, or
 - unit standards - package of three numeracy unit standards (26623, 26626, 26627- **all** three required).

* From specified achievement standards available through a range of subjects, or through two Level 4 English for Academic Purposes unit standards.

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE REVIEW 2016 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

