

## DERIVED GRADE PROCESS GUIDELINES

The **application form** for a derived grade is to be given to a candidate who has been clearly disadvantaged through illness or misadventure, or who considers that their performance in an external assessment has been seriously impaired because of exceptional circumstances beyond their control. This includes the death of a family member or close acquaintance, or national representative duties which have prevented them from sitting examinations or otherwise presenting materials for external assessment.

### Overview of Process

1. Refer to guidelines and scenarios and decide whether the candidate's situation appears to meet New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) guidelines. If you are uncertain, consult your School Relationship Manager (SRM).
2. Distribute information and application forms to likely applicants.
3. Collect completed applications from the candidate.
4. Confirm that the documented evidence meets NZQA guidelines. Contact your SRM if you are in doubt.
5. Gather valid, standard-specific evidence of achievement for each standard applied for from your teachers' markbooks. No application can be processed in the absence of evidence, or where the evidence may not be authentic.
6. Make an online application.
7. File all evidence from all applications (including any you may not have forwarded because they did not meet the NZQA guidelines).
8. Anticipate a request from NZQA for documentation in support of some applications.
9. Prepare for a possible systems audit in term 1, including:
  - a. all evidence from all applications which you did not forward to NZQA for processing
  - b. evidence of quality assurance processes applied to practice assessments such as mock exams and end-of-topic tests.

### Advice to candidates

At the pre-examination briefing with candidates, please emphasise the following:

- Derived Grade applications must be made through the Principal's Nominee.
- Candidates should contact the Principal's Nominee as soon as possible if an application is likely.
- Candidates must collect or download an application form **before** consulting a medical practitioner. Applications cannot be processed without the correct documentation and a medical certificate may not be sufficient as it may not cover all requirements.
- Derived Grade application forms must be returned to the Principal's Nominee by **Monday, 7 December**.
- The school may decline to forward to NZQA any application which does not meet NZQA guidelines.
- NZQA will decline applications which do not meet its guidelines.
- An application cannot be made for any standard for which there is no pre-existing standard-specific evidence held by the school.
- A review of the decision to decline any application is possible.

### Approving applications

To assist Principal's Nominees in processing applications, a list of scenarios in which a candidate's application should be investigated further or not forwarded to NZQA for processing is available.

When the school is satisfied an application meets NZQA guidelines (e.g. illness on the day of the examination), the application should be processed and its associated documentation must be retained by the school for one year. This material may be checked by a School Relationship Manager as part of an audit of the school's Derived Grade processes during the Managing National Assessment or other school visit.

Schools should not process any application which does not meet NZQA guidelines. The school must retain any declined applications, with all their documentation, for one year in case of an appeal by the candidate.

Please contact your School Relationship Manager if you are unsure about an application, e.g. a long-term impairment such as a head injury which may be exacerbated by the strain of study, or where the decision is difficult.

### **Guidelines**

- 1 The overriding principles for the award of a derived grade are:
  - fairness to the applicant and to all other candidates
  - whether the candidate was able to perform on the day of the examination to the level of **actual measured performance during the school year** based exclusively on pre-existing standard-specific evidence held by the school.
- 2 Applications must refer to events of a medical or non-medical nature that have clearly had **an effect on the candidate during the examination.**
- 3 **Significant conditions or events in the month prior** to the start of the examination period that interfere with preparation for the examination might be accepted, as well as **temporary illness or trauma occurring during the actual examinations.**
- 4 Candidates suffering a temporary illness, trauma or other serious event should be encouraged to sit the examination and apply for a derived grade if they consider their performance was compromised. If the application is approved, the best result will be awarded.
- 5 Where a candidate suffering a temporary illness, trauma or other serious event does not sit the examination, a derived grade may be applied for where independent professional evidence is produced showing that a serious situation on the day of the examination, and beyond the candidate's control, made it impossible for them to sit the examination.
- 6 **The temporary illness, trauma or other serious event must be of a significant nature.** Applications will not be granted on grounds such as minor ailments, stress due to examinations, parents being on holiday, or day-to-day family disturbances. Contact your School Relationship Manager if you have any questions.
- 7 Where a candidate does sit the examination but believes that some temporary illness, trauma or other serious event occurred to impair their examination performance, a derived grade may be applied for.

**Events occurring on the day of the examination** must be independently verified and reasons for their alleged impact on performance clearly described.

**Events occurring in the month leading up to the examination** may be relevant if they impaired the candidate's ability to prepare adequately or left a **significant residual effect** on the day of the examination. The applicant must clearly demonstrate that effective preparation was not possible in the week before the examinations and **provide evidence that they were under continuous and well-documented care by a registered professional**.

8 The following conditions alone are **not** acceptable grounds (except as outlined below) for a derived grade application:

- long-term and ongoing illnesses and conditions (e.g., physical disability, epilepsy, depression, anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders)
- chronic relapsing conditions (e.g., glandular fever, ME)
- ongoing personal trauma.

However, an application might be appropriate if there is a **sudden change in a managed chronic condition/illness** which impairs a candidate's ability to perform **on the day of the examination** to the level they have been able to perform in that standard during the year. For example, a change in medication might cause a **documented and observable change in the way that a chronic condition/illness is managed and it has a clear and observable effect upon the candidate**. In this case, the impairment is deemed to be temporary and can be dealt with through the derived grade process in the normal way with an appropriate detailed report by a registered professional.

Candidates suffering from long-term or recurring conditions will have to accept that their results will be affected because the ongoing effects of their condition may have compromised their performance throughout the year.

### **Processing applications for special cases**

For candidates who you know in advance will be applicants for a derived grade because they will be absent from the examination (e.g. New Zealand representative duties, illness requiring hospitalisation, scheduled operation, death of a relative) you may process an application before their examination session/s. Where appropriate, as long as the relevant information is provided, applications can be sent to NZQA before the examinations commence. This will help speed up processing.

If an event occurs that is likely to lead to applications from a group of candidates (e.g. a local emergency, or group trauma as a result of the sudden death of a student), do not issue the application forms to individual candidates until you have contacted your School Relationship Manager, as other processes may apply.

### **Instructions for making online applications (available from 9 November 2009):**

- Login to the school's web pages on the NZQA website: [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)
- Select *Process Derived Grade Applications* from the high-security area menu.
- Search for the candidate by surname/first names or National Student Number (NSN), and select the candidate from the list.
- Enter the reason, with details, for the derived grade application and enter confirmation of available evidence supporting the application.
- Once this has been confirmed, the sessions which a candidate has entered will be activated.
- Click on the session name that the application relates to and the standards the candidate has entered for that examination session will be displayed.

- Schools must provide a grade based on pre-existing standard-specific evidence for each standard for which a derived grade is being sought. No derived grade is possible if the school holds no standard-specific evidence.
- Click the “Submit” button to save the application and return to the candidate application screen.
- You may hit the “Cancel” link at any stage. However, any application information entered will not be saved.

Your assistance in submitting these applications as quickly as possible is appreciated.

## **Scenarios to assist decision-making for the Derived Grade process applications**

The following scenarios will assist schools to make applications which should be approved.

### **School does not support application**

*Do not apply.* The school should not make an application if they do not support it.

### **Application relates to a Scholarship examination.**

*Do not apply.* Scholarship is not eligible for a Derived Grade because it is a competitive performance based award and in fairness to all other candidates, actual results must be compared.

### **Application after results are issued**

*Do not apply.* No applications are accepted after the results are available.

### **Ongoing conditions**

*Do not apply.* Any illness or chronic condition or trauma that has been affecting the candidate for longer than the 4 weeks prior to the beginning of the examination period is regarded as ongoing, ie, previous to 19 October 2009.

### **Candidate becomes ill during the examination**

*Investigate.* Refer to Examination Centre Manager (ECM). Then *Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

### **Candidate suffers from a temporary illness, trauma or other serious event which impairs the candidate’s ability to perform in the examination**

*Apply.* Health professional’s evidence must be within a day or two of each examination for which an application has been made. Supporting information meets criteria.

### **Candidate suffers an injury or undergoes an operation in the weeks leading up to examinations**

*Investigate.* Effects on student are monitored leading up to the examination and student is still affected. Medical information is required for the examination period.

See above: “Candidate suffers from a temporary illness, trauma or other serious event which impairs the candidate’s ability to perform in the examination”.

*Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

**Medical evidence does not cover the examination period**

*Do not apply.* Health professional's evidence from consultation(s) does not match examination dates. Consultation dates must be within a day or two of each examination for which an application has been made. Clinical examination must have been made on each occasion or the report covers each of the applicable examination sessions.

**Medical professional indicates 'None' or 'Mild' on Section B**

*Do not apply.*

**Appointment with medical specialist or scheduled surgery**

*Investigate.* If notified prior to examination period, check if appointment can reasonably be moved. Then *Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

**Candidate says illness stopped their studying**

*Investigate.* If the applicant applies for a derived grade because they could not study for their examinations there needs to be supporting evidence from a registered health professional that they were very sick and could not study. The illness **MUST** be of a significant nature, e.g. pneumonia, vomiting and diarrhoea, not just 'I had a cold and could not study'. Then *Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

**Death of a relative or close friend**

*Investigate.* If, because of emotional stress associated with the death of a relative or close friend, the applicant applies for a derived grade for examinations that take place over more than a week of the examination season there needs to be supporting evidence of clinical care and/or monitoring from a registered health professional. *Then Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

*Investigate.* The sudden death of a student at the school which affects a group of students.  
*Contact NZQA for advice.*

*Investigate.* If the candidate applies for a derived grade because they will be out of town attending the funeral. Wherever possible, candidates should be encouraged to attend their examination sessions at the local secondary school. Liaise with the PN at the school to make a late request for papers if appropriate and there is an examination session being held there. *Then Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

*Apply.* If the funeral itself, or travel to attend the funeral, is on a candidate's examination day, evidence is required.

**Candidate arrived at the wrong time for the examination session**

*Do not apply.* The timetable has been available all year.

**Candidate arrived late for the examination (after 30 minutes and cannot enter the examination room)**

*Do not apply.* The timetable has been available all year. Any transport problem caused by individual car problems is not covered by the Derived Grade process.

*Investigate.* Transport delay, for example a bus breakdown, car accident or motorway blockage. Check the evidence available from police and other agencies. This may involve a number of candidates. *Contact NZQA for advice.*

**Candidate misses examination because the school made an error in the entry**

*Do not apply.* There has been adequate time for the school/candidate to inform NZQA of entry requirements throughout the year.

**Anxiety and stress problems**

*Do not apply.* This is the nature of examinations; they cause stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety problems cannot be approved, even with medical evidence, unless they arise from a significant non-examination related traumatic event at the time of the examination.

*Investigate.* Existing post-traumatic stress exacerbated by further events at the time of the examinations. Health professional's evidence provided. *Then Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

**Candidate suffers from anorexia nervosa or some other chronic eating disorder and could not study.**

*Do not apply.* Any illness or chronic condition or trauma that has been affecting the candidate for longer than the past 4 weeks is regarded as ongoing. However, if there is a sudden change in a managed chronic condition/illness, then they may be eligible.

*Investigate.* The candidate has a crisis or requires hospitalisation during the examinations. Do not apply if the crisis is related to examination stress. (See anxiety and stress problems.) *Then Apply if the application meets the criteria.*

**Candidate loses equipment/admission slip etc and becomes stressed before the examination**

*Do not apply.* This is within the candidate's and school's control. Schools should have strategies to provide candidates with replacement admission strips to reduce possible stress. (See anxiety and stress problems.)

**There is prolonged disturbance (eg fire evacuation) during the examination.**

*Do not apply.* NZQA will investigate the Exam Centre Manager's report on the incident.

**A candidate is concerned about the quality of the technology used to record or play information during the examination session.**

*Investigate.* Discuss with ECM. *Contact NZQA for advice.*

**School states that the translated examination paper did not arrive**

*Apply. Only* if there was a confirmed request for a translated paper (see Key Indicator Checklist). *Contact NZQA for advice.*

**Candidate is required to work or look after children so cannot study**

*Do not apply.* This is a family-related matter that should be planned for in advance.

**Candidate breaks up with girlfriend or boyfriend**

*Do not apply.* This is viewed as a day-to-day family related matter.

**Religious festivals coincide with examinations or examination preparation**

*Do not apply.* This is a family-related matter that should be planned for in advance.

**Candidate states examination was difficult and did not get special assessment conditions**

*Do not apply.* For example, if a colour blind candidate says they cannot see the colour in examination paper resource to answer a question. An application for special assessment conditions should have been made.

**Candidate claims school did not teach them or tell them some vital information**

*Do not apply.* Any candidate could suggest that a school or teacher had disadvantaged him or her in some way. Acceptance would be unfair to other candidates.

**Candidate loses some or all data or material related to an examination portfolio and becomes stressed before the submission of the examination portfolio**

- Visual Arts Level 1 & 2: *Do not apply*. School procedures are applied and standard-specific evidence held by the school will be used to award the final grade. See information on the NZQA Visual Arts webpage for Level 1 & 2 verification. *Contact NZQA for advice*.
- Visual Arts Level 3: See information on the Derived grade for illness and misadventure process for Level 3 on the NZQA Visual Arts webpage. Use that process; do not apply online. *Contact NZQA for advice*.
- Education for Sustainability, Graphics and Technology external portfolios: *Investigate*. Candidates and schools need to take responsibility for the safeguarding of all material that may be submitted as a part of an examination portfolio, including backup of electronic material. *Contact NZQA for advice*.

**Candidate did not supply portfolio material to the ECM at the start of the Scholarship Music examination**

*Do not apply*. Scholarship is ineligible for a Derived Grade. The teacher and student should have been aware of the assessment specifications regarding the examination requirements.

**Candidate attends court and misses an examination**

*Investigate*. Courts understand the need for candidates to sit examinations.

Candidate is called for jury service or as a witness. Can the appointment be shifted or exemption applied for? *Contact NZQA for advice*.

**Candidate is selected for national representation**

*Investigate*. Send your SRM a copy of documented proof from the national body that the candidate is representing a nationally selected event or team, and dates involved in travel and competition. Discuss with SRM. *Then Apply if the application meets the criteria*.