

# Courses and programmes

## Facts

- A course
  - is a coherent package of learning and assessment that should contribute to the school curriculum programme and support student pathways
  - can vary in length depending on the time needed to deliver the specific learning outcomes and expected standards of achievement, but standards contributing to endorsement must be assessed within one academic year
  - should offer students a variety of potential assessment opportunities to meet their pathway needs and may contribute to an Individual Education Plan
  - can include Achievement or Unit Standards from a mix of NCEA levels and subjects, and assessing providers
  - can include off-site practical or workplace assessment provided the Consent and Moderation requirements of the standard are met
  - does not need to offer an opportunity for endorsement
- Endorsement acknowledges the range and depth of understanding, skill and experience a student has achieved in a course.
- NZQA awards a Course Endorsement
  - where students achieve 14 or more credits at Achieved or Merit or Excellence within a single year, with a minimum of three of these credits coming from externally assessed standards, and three credits from internally assessed standards. (Courses comprising standards from the NCEA

## Myths

- “Students must take a course for a full academic year.”
- “Standards assessed in a course must come from a single NCEA Level and subject area.”
- “Every student in a course must complete the same assessments.”
- “A student achieving 14 credits in a Level 3 course will meet the requirement for one UE approved subject.”
- “A course must provide the opportunity for endorsement.”
- “Schools can group standards that have already been assessed into a course to allow a student to gain an endorsement.”
- “Course endorsements can include standards achieved over multiple years.”
- “Students who change schools can’t get course endorsements.”

subjects of Physical Education, Religious Studies and Level 3 Visual Arts are exempt from the second requirement.)

- at the NCEA Level of the lowest-level standard achieved in the course.
- Students can gain a Course Endorsement independently of achieving an NCEA Level certificate.
- A school course might not be the same as a [UE Approved Subject](#), whose standards are determined by NZQA and universities.

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## Some other things to think about

- Courses can be tailored for individual students who may engage in different combinations of assessment standards for the same course.
- The [Consent to Assess](#) guidelines (Part D section 2.5) require schools to systematically design and develop teaching and learning programmes that:
  - meet New Zealand Curriculum and TITO and other SSB requirements where appropriate
  - are based on the needs of learners and other stakeholders and do not present unreasonable barriers to learning
  - specify the learning outcomes and expected standards of achievement
  - provide for learning outcomes that are achievable within the timeframe of the programme
  - have appropriate content, teaching and learning strategies, teaching and learning resource requirements and assessments
  - address equity issues
  - integrate any off-site practical or workplace components.
- Students transferring from one school to another during an academic year should not be disadvantaged in relation to course endorsement. The new school of enrolment should set up the student's courses to accommodate standards already achieved at their previous school, wherever possible.
- As a student's NZQA achievement record reads, "Course name" endorsed with "grade", give careful thought to the naming of courses so they are clear, meaningful and do not include proprietary or sponsorship names.



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## More information

### Assessment opportunities

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/assessment-opportunities](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assessment-opportunities)

### Gathering evidence

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/gathering-achievement-evidence](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/gathering-achievement-evidence)