

Derived Grades

Information for Schools and Principal's Nominees

This information aims to:

- clarify the requirements for a derived grade
- clarify the eligibility criteria for a derived grade
- assist schools to provide sufficient information when making applications
- assist schools to provide clear information to candidates and their caregiver(s) regarding eligibility criteria.

These guidelines do not represent further [rules](#) and procedures but aim to guide schools to make appropriate applications.

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NZQA web links

Derived grade [guidelines](#)

Information for [Principal's Nominee](#)

Information for [candidates](#)

Instructions for making [online applications](#)

Information on [Emergency Grades](#)

Forms for derived grade and National Selection applications can be downloaded from the above links.

Derived grade process at a glance

Run practice assessments for external standards to gather authentic, standard-specific evidence during the year.

Ensure emergency grades are submitted in your monthly data file.

National Selection requires **pre-approval**. Applications must be submitted to NZQA by 1 November. If approved an on-line application is still required

Brief candidates on derived grade process prior to exams including who to contact for questions, advice and application forms.

Provide application forms to candidates/parents. Track who requests one for later possible follow-up.

Ensure applications for **portfolio-based** subjects are submitted by the November closing date.

Collect completed application forms. Check they are complete, with information and supporting documents as appropriate.

Check application against NZQA derived grade eligibility criteria.

Go online to the high security derived grade link and enter application information. Ensure this is completed by the December closing date.

Provide additional information as requested by the NZQA Derived Grade Team to support a candidate's application

Candidates and the Principal's Nominee are notified when an application is declined.
Candidates appeal a declined decision to the Manager of School Quality Assurance and Liaison.

WHAT IS A DERIVED GRADE, WHO CAN APPLY AND WHAT ARE EMERGENCY GRADES?

What is a derived grade?

Candidates can apply for a derived grade if:

- they believe their preparation for, or performance in, an external examination was impaired, OR
- they were unable to sit an exam for reasons beyond their control.

The reported grade must be based on (or *derived* from) **pre-existing authentic, standard-specific evidence** (such as practice exams or formal tests) produced during the year by the candidate.

The overriding principles for the derived grade process are:

- being fair to both the applicant and to all other candidates
- that the derived grade is based upon authentic, pre-existing standard-specific evidence that has been subject to a [quality assurance process](#).

Who can apply for a derived grade?

Candidates can apply for a derived grade if, **for an approved reason**, they:

- have been unable to attend an examination
- attended an NZQA external examination session and believe their performance was **significantly** affected
- are unable to submit a completed portfolio (Design and Visual Communication, Technology, Level 3 Education for Sustainability or Level 3 Visual Arts)
- have been selected for national representation in a sport or approved activity. (Note: This has a pre-approval process with a separate application form).

Derived grades are for candidates who **just before or during the examinations**, suffer:

- a temporary illness or injury
- trauma (i.e. a deeply distressing or disturbing experience)
- misadventure (i.e. an event beyond their control).

The illness, trauma or event must have a **clear, observable detrimental effect** on the candidate's performance and/or attendance.

Candidates should be encouraged to sit the examination wherever possible. Where the candidate's derived grade application is approved and they also sat the examination, the better result will be awarded.

Note: Candidates must have an entry for the externally assessed standard for a derived grade to be reported.

What are derived grades not available for?

- Scholarship examinations.
- Level 1 and 2 Visual Arts, MCAT and Verified Languages. Schools apply their **missed and late assessment procedures** for these requests. The grade submitted by the school is to be derived from valid, authentic, standard-specific evidence:
 - contained in the candidate's submitted portfolio for Level 1 and 2 Visual Arts
 - gathered prior to the sitting of their language examination or the first MCAT assessment.

See the relevant NZQA subject pages for further information on MCAT, Level 1 and 2 Visual Arts and Verified Languages procedures.

Note: Derived grades are not emergency grades. Derived grades are intended to be used for individual students and must be applied for. Emergency grades will generally be applied to groups of students affected in a similar way by a common single event and are applied at the discretion of NZQA.

What are emergency grades?

Where an exceptional event occurs that is beyond the control of students, which stops them from attending an examination or impairs their performance, NZQA may invoke the **emergency grade** process in line with the [Assessment \(including Examination\) Rules, 7.1.6](#): “NZQA reserves the right to apply an emergency grade where a group of Candidates is significantly disadvantaged by extraordinary circumstances beyond their control.”

The process can be applied to an individual student or to a **whole group** of candidates who are all affected in the same way. Unlike a derived grade, there is no application form for an individual student to complete.

For example, following an earthquake a school will have to be checked for safety, and exam sessions may be cancelled until it is declared safe. In such a case, **all** candidates at the school would be treated in the same way and considered eligible for emergency grades.

What are the principles used in the awarding of emergency grades?

- Only the NZQA Chief Executive can approve the application of the Emergency Grade process.
- A school can apply for emergency grades where a valid entry exists for a student on the date of the external examination.
- The emergency grade is based on authentic, standard-specific evidence collected by the school prior to the start of the external examination period.
- An emergency grade of Not Achieved must be reported where the student has had an adequate opportunity for assessment.
- Where the student attends the examination, the better of the emergency grade or examination grade will be awarded. If the examination result is a 'Void' grade, this will take precedence over a 'Not Achieved' emergency grade.
- The emergency grade will be applied, irrespective of examination attendance.
- Students can appeal an emergency grade. The appeal is made to the school as they reported the grade.

Further information on emergency grades can be found [here](#).

CLARIFICATION FOR EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE EXAMINATIONS THAT IMPAIR PERFORMANCE OR PREVENT ATTENDANCE

Significant conditions or events within one month of the examination that the candidate is applying for which have a **significant and observable detrimental effect** on the candidates performance and/or attendance, might be accepted. The candidate must clearly demonstrate that **effective** preparation was not possible and provide evidence they were under continuous and well-documented care by a registered or independent professional.

Significant conditions or events could include:

- a life-threatening illness e.g. meningitis diagnosis
- accident causing a concussion diagnosis
- hospitalisation for a serious medical condition
- death of close family member e.g. parent/sibling.

In **exceptional** circumstances, a significant event after 1 September that impacts on a candidate's performance which cannot be managed through special assessment conditions or adjusting a candidate's assessment programme may be considered. Please contact your School Relationship Manager.

A temporary illness or trauma occurring during or immediately prior to an examination that interferes with preparation for that examination(s) or attending the examination might be accepted. **Independent professional** evidence is required confirming that the temporary illness, trauma or other serious event had a **significant detrimental effect** on performance or attendance in the examination, and was beyond the candidate's control. Immediately prior would normally be within a week.

Temporary illness or trauma could include:

- gastroenteritis
- chickenpox
- hospitalisation of a parent with a serious medical condition.

NOTE The following are not considered grounds for approving a derived grade

- minor ailments, such as a cold or headache
- stress or anxiety due to having to sit examinations
- parents being on holiday
- day-to-day family or school based disturbances
- death or euthanasia of a pet
- minor traffic incidents.

Refer to the Appendix pages 12-14 for guidelines and scenarios to assist with providing advice to candidates.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC TYPES OF APPLICATIONS

Ongoing illness

The following conditions **alone are not** acceptable grounds for a derived grade:

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

These conditions are better managed by requesting special assessment conditions and/or modifying the candidate's assessment programme.

Candidates suffering from long-term or recurring conditions will have to accept that their results may be affected because the ongoing effects of their condition have compromised their performance throughout the year. Provision of [special assessment conditions](#) can help mitigate these effects.

Where there is a **sudden change in a managed chronic condition/illness** that is **documented by a registered medical professional** then NZQA will consider an application. For example, a change in medication might cause a **documented and observable change in the way that a chronic condition/illness is managed and have a clear and observable effect on the candidate**. In such a case, and where the change is supported by a medical professional at **the time of the examinations**, the impairment is seen as temporary and outside the management of the condition/illness.

Outbreak of a notifiable disease such as measles, mumps or whooping cough

When a school or region is experiencing an outbreak of a highly infectious viral disease the safety of other students, teachers and examination staff must be ensured.

Students should contact their school immediately if they suspect they have the disease. Where a student is excluded from school and is unable to attend an examination because they have the disease, or have been in close contact with someone who has and are not immune through vaccination, they can apply through their school for a derived grade.

Injuries to an arm or hand prior to a candidate's first examination

Where the injury occurs:

- **within one month of a candidate's first examination:**
 - the candidate should apply for a derived grade
 - if the candidate chooses to sit the examination, their best result will be reported
 - special assessment conditions, such as **extra time or a writer/computer are not usually available.**
- **more than one month in advance of the candidates first examination:**
 - this must be managed through Special Assessment Conditions
 - an application for Writer/Computer or Extra Time must be made
 - the candidate will need to practice completing work using the writer/computer
 - **a derived grade is not available.**

Portfolio Submissions

A derived grade may be applied for by a candidate who, **within one month of the portfolio submission date**, has suffered a temporary impairment or non-permanent disability, including a physical injury or an emotional trauma, which has impaired the candidate's preparation for the submission. Derived grades are available for the following portfolio submissions:

- Level 1, 2 and 3 Design and Visual Communication
- Level 3 Education for Sustainability
- Level 1, 2 and 3 Technology
- Level 3 Visual Arts

The evidence produced throughout the year must be submitted, as required in the subject's submission instructions on the Subject Resources pages on the NZQA website. **Note:** Some aspect of the portfolio must provide evidence of the candidate's actual level of performance, prior to the impairment.

Applications for a derived grade for must be completed in NZQA's high security area by the November closing date.

For Level 3 Visual Arts - a label found on the visual arts subject page is to be attached to the portfolio.

National Representation

Applications for national representation require NZQA pre-approval and will confirm for the candidate:

- that the activity meets the national selection eligibility criteria
- the dates that the candidate is eligible for a derived grade.

The following evidence is required with the pre-approval application form:

- the letter from the national body verifying national selection for the event or team
- the dates of the competition/event
- a copy of the planned travel arrangements.

Note: Invitational teams and teams chosen by an application process or competition do not meet the criteria for national selection.

NZQA will allow for reasonable travelling time to and from the event. However, if a candidate chooses to go early or stay on for additional touring or a holiday, the examinations missed in this time do not meet the criteria for a derived grade.

The school needs to hold evidence of actual participation (e.g. photo, result notice). The Principal's Nominee should collect this evidence as soon as possible after the activity.

Applications cannot be approved after the event has taken place – pre-approval is required.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

NZQA's Derived Grade Team evaluates all applications based on the information provided by the school against the derived grade eligibility criteria.

The school makes the application on behalf of the candidate through the online facility. Schools are to:

- scrutinise the information provided within the candidate's application against the derived grade criteria to determine if it meets the criteria, to support or not support the application as appropriate
- extract from the candidate's application form the information to enter online
- ensure sufficient detail is provided to enable NZQA's Derived Grade Team to evaluate the application against the eligibility criteria
- ensure only the dates identified by the medical practitioner/professional are applied for.

Essential information to include in the online application is:

- date of the onset of the illness/injury or trauma/event
- date of visit to medical/independent professional
- description of diagnosis OR description of trauma/event
- impact of impairment as indicated by medical/independent professional
- dates candidate is impacted as detailed by medical/independent professional, evidence or as pre-approved.

Example 1 of sufficient evidence

'Candidate' left exam on 18 November with severe stomach cramps. On 19 November 'candidate' saw doctor. Dr Brown diagnosed severe gastroenteritis. He said impairment was significant and 'candidate' would not be able to attend exams from 18 November to 20 November.

Example 2 of sufficient evidence

'Candidate's' grandmother died on 24 November. The funeral is on 27 November in 'another city'. 'Candidate' unable to sit exams from 26 – 28 November in order to travel with family to funeral on 26 November and return on 28 November.

REPORTING NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates can choose **not to apply** for a derived grade for a standard where a Not Achieved grade will be reported. Schools should advise candidates of this choice when they submit the application and, if there is a valid grade available and what that grade is.

What do I do if there is a highly sensitive situation?

Highly sensitive situations can be kept confidential, where appropriate. Contact your School Relationship Manager in the first instance to discuss.

What if an event causes a large number of candidates to want to apply for a derived grade?

Where an event happens that affects a large number of candidates e.g. death of a candidate, bus accident, or localized flooding, contact your School Relationship Manager for assistance and advice on how to apply in this situation.

WHAT EVIDENCE NEEDS TO BE PROVIDED

In general, credible evidence has to be provided to support any derived grade application. The author of any supporting document needs to be **independent** and suitably qualified to justify the application. They must stipulate that the student has been significantly impaired and clearly state the period of time to be covered (from when to when).

For example, for a derived grade application made as a result of temporary illness, the usual evidence provided is from a registered medical professional.

Supporting evidence for applications needs to confirm a medical diagnosis, an event happening and its impact on the candidate.

Some possible examples of evidence that can be used to support an application include:

- Hospital discharge/medical certificate
- Police or traffic report
- Order of service or death notice
- Report or certificate from a registered independent medical professional – Doctor, school nurse, counsellor
- Attestation from a Doctors practice nurse (eg for emergency nebulizer treatment)
- Attestation from Principal's Nominee or Exam Centre Manager (eg that student vomited/fainted in an examination).

If in doubt, Principal's Nominees should contact NZQA for advice.

INFORMATION ON DECLINED APPLICATIONS, APPEALS AND LATE APPLICATION

Can a derived grade application be declined?

NZQA reserves the right to decline derived grade applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria. The candidate and Principal's Nominee will be informed in writing of a declined decision.

All declined applications are peer reviewed, and so reflect the decision of two members of the NZQA Derived Grade Team.

Can a declined decision be appealed?

A declined decision can be appealed. The process to appeal a declined decision is provided in the notification to the candidate that their application is declined.

A candidate can appeal a declined derived grade application within 10 days of being notified by:

- informing NZQA, in writing, that they wish to appeal the decision using the process outlined in the decline letter, and
- providing additional information to support original application.

Note: The candidate appeals the declined decision to NZQA, not the school, although the candidate may come to you for assistance with this.

If the appeal is declined and a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome they can write to the Chief Executive within 15 days of the date of the notification requesting a Review of the Appeal Decision. The Chief Executive decision will be final.

Will NZQA accept late applications?

Under exceptional circumstances NZQA may accept a late application but not after release of results in January.

- Contact your School Relationship Manager to discuss the reason for the late application and request a "Late Application Form".
- Late applications are a manual process.

ROLES WITHIN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

What are the roles of people involved?

WHO	WHAT THEY NEED TO DO
Candidate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the applicant. They or their parent are/is required to sign the application form. • Provide documentary evidence to support their application. • Ensure their application and supporting evidence is handed to Principal's Nominee by the due date.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accurate advice to candidates and caregivers on the derived grade process and eligibility criteria. • Use NZQA eligibility criteria to support or not support an application. • Make the application on behalf of the candidate using the NZQA online process. • Ensure the candidate or parent signs the application. • Collect application material and submit it by due date. • Submit grades based on authentic, standard-specific evidence that have been quality assured. • Collect and supply, in a timely manner, additional information to support applications if requested by NZQA. • Ensure only assessments falling within the dates identified by the medical practitioner or independent professional or as pre-approved are applied for. • Hold application material for 12 months for audit purposes or to provide to NZQA on request.
NZQA Derived Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider all applications including information supplied by the candidate and school against the derived grade eligibility criteria. • Report the better of the derived grade or the grade actually attained by the candidate in the external assessment. • Inform candidates and Principal's Nominee where an application is declined and their right of appeal.
NZQA Derived Grade Appeal Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the appeal process • Inform candidates and Principal's Nominee if appeal is upheld or declined and their right to seek a review of the decision by the Chief Executive.
Chief Executive Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the review process. • Inform candidates and Principal's Nominee if the review is upheld or declined. • Decision is final.

DERIVED GRADE USER SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

Because derived grade applications are of a sensitive nature, and may contain personal and confidential information including medical and police in-confidence, they require additional access controls and handling requirements.

Therefore, access to the derived grade application is restricted only to those people who have authorisation to handle these in NZQAs high security area.

Users are also reminded of the following security requirements:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the misuse of or unauthorised access to their computer system or derived grade application material
- ensure their computer system has appropriate anti-virus software installed
- do not use publicly shared computers such as those located in internet cafes
- do not reveal or share ESAA user name or passwords to any other person
- a legitimate ESAA or NZQA Administrator will never ask for a user's password
- ESAA passwords must not be written on sticky notes, desk pads, etc or stored in a file on their computer.

User access to derived grades is to be removed when no longer required/their role is finished.

User Violation

The ESL (Education Sector Login) and NZQA Administrators reserve the right to monitor IT resources, including individual login sessions particularly where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a user is abusing their ESL login and/or NZQA derived grade application resources.

GUIDELINES AND SCENARIOS TO ASSIST SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

The following guidelines are provided to assist schools with the derived grade process and their advice to candidates.

The candidate is the applicant - The school should guide students about the extent to which an application meets NZQA eligibility criteria and guidelines but should not prevent a candidate from making the application. If the school does not support the application the reasons for this are to be stated in the online application.

The candidate specifies the standards applied for - They do not have to apply for a standard where a Not Achieved grade is held. The school should inform the applicant if there is a valid grade available for each standard and what that grade is.

Can an application be made after results are issued – NZQA may accept late applications after applications close in extenuating circumstances that were beyond the control of the candidate, but no application can be accepted after results have been released in January. (Assessment Rule 7.1.5 (h)).

A Derived Grade is not available for New Zealand Scholarship subjects (Assessment Rule 7.1.5(c)).

NOTE

If a candidate attempts an examination and is also approved for a derived grade, the highest grade is awarded.

MEDICAL

Medical applications must be supported with evidence from a registered health professional confirming a significant observable detrimental effect.

Medical evidence must be timely and cover the examinations applied for The health professional's evidence from consultation(s) must match the examination sessions applied for. A visit to a medical practitioner needs to be timely and a clinical examination must have been made on each occasion or the medical report must cover all of the examination sessions applied for.

Anxiety and stress problems Examinations can cause stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety problems cannot be approved, even with medical evidence, unless there is a significant deterioration of a previously managed condition or it arises from a significant non-examination related traumatic event at the time of, or **immediately** (within a week) prior to the examination.

Existing post-traumatic stress. An application based on existing post-traumatic stress which is exacerbated by further events, (other than the stress of the examinations) **at the time of the examinations** can be approved where evidence from a registered health professional is available and sufficient.

Candidate suffers from a temporary illness, trauma or other serious event which impairs the candidate's ability to submit a completed portfolio.

The temporary illness must occur within 1 month of the portfolio submission day. The portfolio must be submitted. (Assessment Rule 7.1.5 (k)).

Candidate suffers from a temporary illness, trauma or other serious event that prevents them attending the examination or impairs their performance in the examination.

A temporary illness will occur on the day of or a few days before the examination and affect a candidate for a brief time/few days only. Supporting medical evidence from a registered health professional must be acquired within a day or two of each examination for which an application has been made. The temporary illness/injury must have a **significant observable detrimental** affect on the candidate. (eg pneumonia, vomiting and diarrhoea, not "I had a cold and could not study").

Candidate suffers from a chronic disorder or ongoing condition that impaired their performance or attending the examination. Any illness or chronic condition or trauma being present and/or managed that has been affecting the candidate for longer than the 4 weeks prior to the candidate's external examinations is regarded as ongoing and does not meet the eligibility criteria. A sudden change in a managed chronic condition/illness, just prior to the exams that is supported with medical evidence **obtained at the time of the examination** confirming the change in condition, may meet the eligibility criteria.

Candidate becomes ill during the examination. Where a candidate is **observed** to have fainted or vomited during an examination a report from the Examination Centre Manager (ECM) would normally be sufficient. Otherwise supporting medical documentation is required for the examination(s) involved in addition to the report the ECM.

Appointment with medical specialist or scheduled surgery. Evidence would be needed that the appointment is a priority and presents an essential opportunity for treatment/diagnosis and cannot be rescheduled.

NON MEDICAL

Death of a relative or close friend The nature of a candidate's relationship with the deceased and their ability and willingness to attend an examination(s) are variables to be considered in the extent of the application. **Applications covering more than one week of the examinations need to be supported by evidence of clinical care and/or monitoring from a registered health professional.** For the funeral and any associated travel, hold appropriate evidence about this (eg. pastoral, travel, order of service and funeral dates) . Where a funeral is out of the candidate's area they could be encouraged, where possible, to attend their examination sessions at another secondary school.

The following situations should be investigated and/or advice sought from NZQA Derived Grade Team or your School Relationship Manager

- The sudden death of a student at the school which affects a group of students.
- Transport delay, for example a bus breakdown, car accident or motorway blockage.
- Exam Centre Manager states that the translated examination paper did not arrive.
- There is a **prolonged** disturbance (e.g. fire evacuation) during the examination.
- A candidate is concerned about the quality of the technology used to record or play information during the examination session
- A reader or writer for special assessment conditions is suddenly unavailable.

Candidate attends court (jury service, witness or accused) and misses an examination.

Investigate. Courts understand the need for candidates to sit examinations. An application can be approved if the appointment is unable to be negotiated,

The following situations do not meet derived grade guidelines

- Candidate arrived at the wrong time for the examination session or arrived late (after 30 minutes) and cannot enter
- Candidate misses examination because the school made an error in the entry.
- Candidate loses equipment/admission slip etc and becomes stressed before the examination
- The candidate has transport problems (ran out of petrol) and is late for the examination.

These are avoidable circumstance that are within candidate's control/responsibility and schools should have procedures to check entries and provide replacement admission slips.

- Candidate is required to work or look after children so cannot study
- Candidate breaks up with girlfriend or boyfriend.
- Participation by choice, for example a family holiday or a personal commitment such as attending an interview, religious festival, visit overseas family or an examination for another organisation, coincides with examination preparation or NZQA examinations.

These are family related matters and personal commitments or pursuits and so do not meet derived grade guidelines

- Candidate states examination was too difficult
 - Candidate claims school did not teach them or tell them some vital information.
- These do not meet derived grade guidelines. Any candidate could suggest that a school or teacher had disadvantaged him or her in some way. These claims should be investigated within the school through the school's review processes.*

- Candidate loses some or all data or material related to an examination portfolio before the submission of the examination portfolio.
- This applies to Design and Visual Communication, Technology, Level 3 Visual Arts and Level 3 Education for Sustainability only. Candidates and schools need to take responsibility for safeguarding all material that may be submitted as a part of an examination report or portfolio, including backup of electronic material. See submission information.*

NOTE: Level 1 and 2 Visual Arts, Verified Languages and MCAT.

School procedures for missed and late assessments are applied. The absence or lateness must be valid and not from self-interest or convenience. See the administrative guidelines for each subject.