

STRICTLY EMBARGOED FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL 5AM TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2026



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Report: Strengthening NCEA – approach to implementation and timelines

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for Vocational Education		
Date:	9/05/2025	Deadline:	14/05/2025
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Priority:	High
From:	Jennifer Fraser, General Manager, Schools Policy Rob Mill, General Manager, Te Poutāhū	Phone:	9(2)(a)
Drafter:	9(2)(a)	METIS No:	1346021

Why are we sending this to you?

- As discussed with you, we are providing you with advice on strengthened implementation options for the package of NCEA changes, given the significant scale of change.

What action do we need, by when?

- We are seeking your decision by 14 May on the timelines for the proposed changes to NCEA, so we can finalise the draft Cabinet paper and discussion document for you.

Key facts, issues and questions

- We know you want to set students, schools and kura up for success with changes to NCEA, while balancing this with the drive for improvement.
- The changes you are making to the national curricula can make sure all students get a high quality education, but we have discussed the risk for students who may not have accessed the full benefits of this before NCEA is transformed.
- To support this lead cohort of students, we recommend a new timeline for implementing changes to allow an additional year of lead-in time for NCEA, and to phase in Year 11-13 national curricula changes to align with this. This will enable VET subject packages to be fully ready before the new NCEA and national curricula changes are introduced for years 12 and 13.

You are strengthening NCEA so that it is more credible and supports coherent learning programmes

1. Officials provided you advice on the approach to NCEA changes, seeking your direction on the objectives, scope, and scale of this work (METIS 1341831 refers). You agreed to several key features that should guide the changes and the following two objectives:
 - 1.1. increase credibility and trust in NCEA by making it easier to understand, a more credible and reliable measure of skills and knowledge, and more internationally comparable; and
 - 1.2. support high-quality, coherent learning programmes so students have access to deep learning and develop a coherent set of skills, knowledge and competencies, including foundational skills in literacy and numeracy or te reo matatini and pāngarau.
2. This paper is the fifth in the series. It focuses on the approach to implementation and timelines for the proposed changes to NCEA outlined in earlier papers.

Table 1: Series of papers on strengthening NCEA

What	When
Paper 1: Qualification structure and related curriculum changes	Completed
Paper 2: Subject-based approach	Completed
Paper 3: Qualification structure and attainment	Completed
Paper 4: Setting attainment requirements	Completed
Paper 5: Approach to implementation and timelines	Now
<i>PAG meeting – discuss public consultation and overall package</i>	<i>14 May</i>
Paper 6: Draft Cabinet paper and discussion document, with overall package of potential changes to NCEA	Late May

3. Officials need your decisions on the options presented in this paper to finalise the draft Cabinet paper and discussion document for public consultation on your proposed changes.

The overall package is shaping up to be a fundamental change to NCEA

4. You have indicated in previous decisions (METIS 1342670, 1343288, 1344926 and 1346021 refers) that you would like to make some fundamental changes to NCEA (see Annex 3 for a summary of the changes so far¹):
 - 4.1. removing NCEA Level 1, while retaining some foundational assessment in Year 11;
 - 4.2. moving to a subject-based approach, where achieving full subjects and subject packages is the basis for achieving NCEA; and

¹ Note we are still seeking your decisions on some parts of the model.

- 4.3. new attainment requirements for each of the two NCEA levels (subject to your decisions on Paper 4). We understand that you are leaning towards requiring a minimum number of subjects alongside a minimum number of total points from across all subjects.
5. This is in the context of significant changes to the national curricula to raise achievement for all students. This will help set students up for future success, which the changes to NCEA could support.

The proposed changes would make NCEA more credible and coherent but also more challenging for students to attain

6. The 2024 ERO report found that there are concerns from employers and tertiary providers that NCEA Level 1 is not a reliable measure of skills and knowledge². This echoes the finding from the wider NCEA review in 2018 that there is perceived widespread inequality in credits attached to standards within and between subjects across all levels³.
7. These concerns mean that while attainment rates are currently quite high, achieving NCEA may not be supporting students' post-school outcomes as well as it could. This means there is some urgency to make changes to NCEA to make it more credible and coherent to better support students' post-school outcomes.
8. You have agreed that only subjects and subject packages would count towards NCEA, which is a significant shift from the status quo where any combination of standards can be used towards NCEA. In increasing its credibility and coherence, the proposed changes are likely to make NCEA more challenging to attain compared to this status quo. Removing NCEA Level 1 means that the lowest level of NCEA will now be levelled at Year 12 of the curriculum and be more challenging to attain.
9. NCEA assessments and supporting materials will be rewritten to align with the refreshed national curricula. The refreshed national curricula will be more content-rich, which may also make the assessments more rigorous.

Initial estimates show a significant drop in attainment rates

10. We have undertaken some initial estimations of the immediate impact of the proposed changes on attainment rates for the overall qualification. It is a rough estimate of how many participants⁴ we would expect to achieve the proposed attainment requirements⁵. It is focused on the first few cohorts who would undertake the new NCEA, as we expect that in the long-term the national curricula changes will help raise achievement.
11. Under the proposed changes, attainment rates would decrease significantly in both the optimistic scenarios (by 15 and 9 percentage points for Levels 2 and 3 respectively) and pessimistic scenarios (by 32 and 22 percentage points) (see Figures 1 and 2).

² ERO (2024). [Set up to succeed: How well is NCEA Level 1 working for our schools and students?](#)

³ NZCER (2018). NCEA Review: Findings from the public engagement on the future of NCEA.

⁴ Participants refers to students who participate in NCEA (entered in more than 60 credits).

⁵ Note that we would need to update these estimates following your final decisions on attainment requirements. They are currently based on requiring three subjects.

Figure 1: Estimated percentage of participants attaining NCEA at Year 12 (current Level 2)

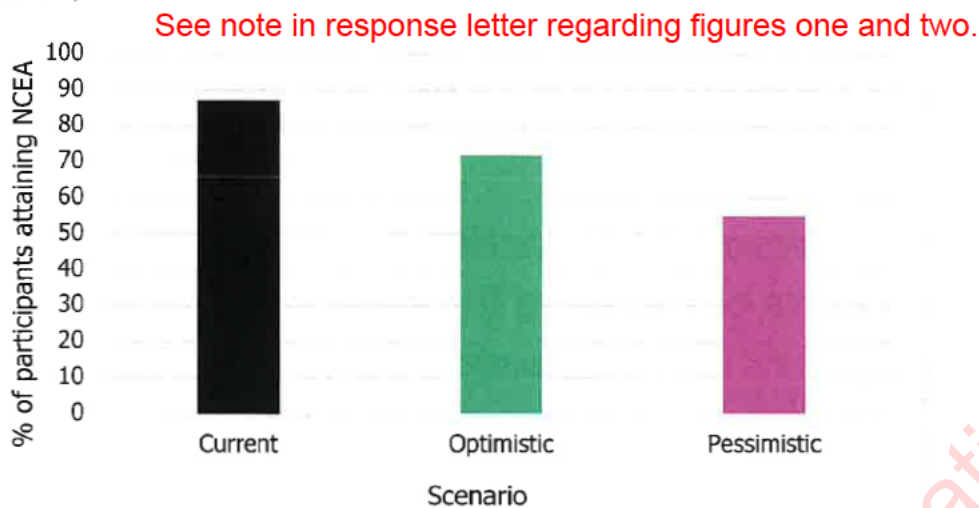
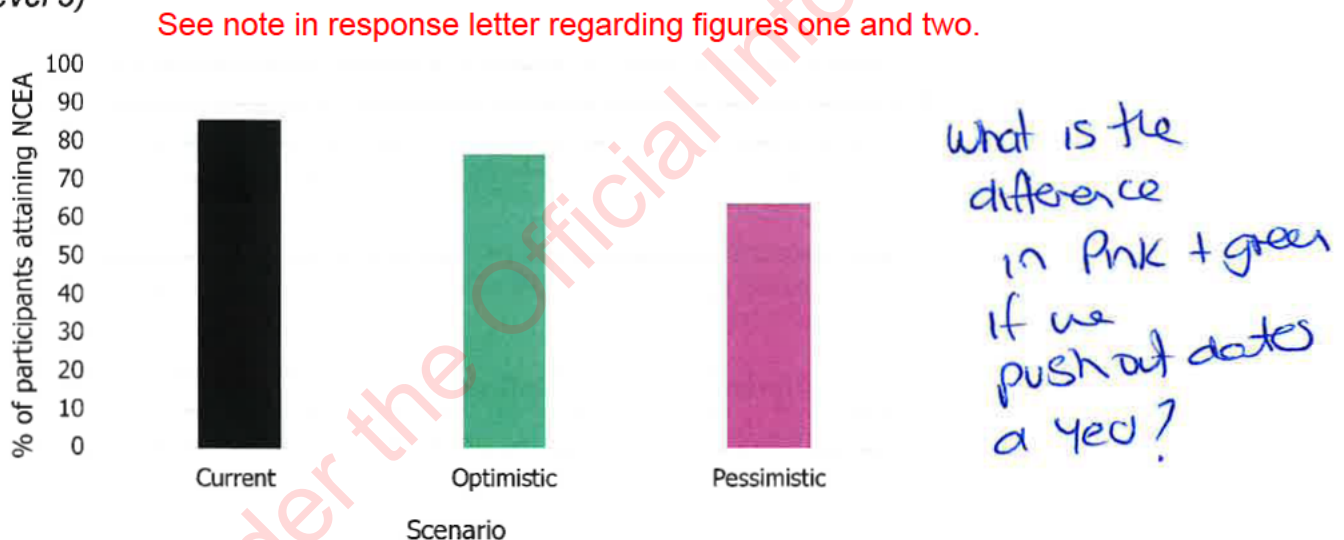


Figure 2: Estimated percentage of participants attaining NCEA at Year 13 (current Level 3)



12. In estimating the percentage of students that would achieve the proposed attainment requirements, we looked at how many subjects in which each student currently achieves 14 or more credits⁶. We:

12.1. assumed that every student that currently achieved 14 or more credits⁷ in three or more subjects would meet the proposed attainment requirements; and

⁶ We have used 14 or more credits as a proxy for attaining a subject under the new NCEA approach. A limitation in our data is that it only includes achievement standard subjects (as subject packages of skill and unit standards do not exist yet).

⁷ Note this is 14 or more of any type of credits (both internal and external). Currently, there are generally more than 14 credits worth of internal and external standards in each subject. Therefore, students could attain 14 or more credits through just internal or just external standards. Under the new Achievement Standards, there will generally only be 10 internal and 10 external credits worth of standards in each subject.

- 12.2. made optimistic and pessimistic predictions⁸ for what proportion of students that currently achieved 14 or more credits in two, one and no subjects would meet the proposed attainment requirements. We have considered the impact of including subject packages of skill and unit standards when making these predictions.
13. Further estimates show that the decrease in attainment rates is likely to be most significant for students facing more EQI barriers (see Annex 1), as the changes would require a more significant shift in practice. This means there is a risk that the proposed changes could widen the gap in attainment rates between students facing more and fewer EQI barriers.

We know you want to land the changes successfully and mitigate the risk of large drops in attainment

14. We know you want to balance the benefits of making changes to NCEA, so that it is more credible and coherent, with mitigating the risk of large drops in attainment as the qualification becomes more challenging to attain. You have asked us to look at how we can mitigate these risks.
15. The proposed changes can support better equity in post-school outcomes for students who leave school with NCEA, as they will have a more credible qualification and have accessed more coherent learning.
16. However, at least initially more students would leave school without any formal qualification. Students attaining any level of NCEA is associated with better post-school outcomes, and these students are less likely to become NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), compared to those leaving school without any qualification (METIS 1342670 refers)⁹. This means the proposed changes could also lead to worse post-school outcomes for some students.

These changes will follow previous changes to NCEA which led to large drops in attainment

17. In 2024, some changes to NCEA were introduced after several years of planning and implementation (commencing following the 2018 NCEA review). These changes included the introduction of the new (fewer and larger) standards in NCEA Level 1 and the co-requisite.
18. There were concerns around sector readiness that impacted the successful implementation of these changes. These concerns included:
- 18.1. **Student readiness-** many students' literacy and numeracy skills were not at the level required to achieve the co-requisite.
- 18.2. **Workforce readiness-** schools, kura and teachers did not have sufficient time or support to adjust and prepare for the changes before they were implemented.

⁸ We do not know for sure how much practice change would influence the number of students who achieve subjects – so these are based on assumptions rather than existing data.

⁹ Experiencing long-term limited employment affects youth wellbeing and can have long-term impacts including increased likelihood of homelessness and poverty (MBIE, 2023). [Preparing all young people for satisfying and rewarding working lives Long-Term Insights Briefing | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment](#)

19. The lack of student and workforce readiness contributed to low attainment rates of the co-requisite¹⁰. This resulted in the transitional period¹¹ being extended from the end of 2025 to the end of 2027.

We can learn from previous NCEA changes to guide successful implementation of these changes to reduce the risk to attainment rates

20. There are some valuable lessons learned from previous changes to NCEA that could help inform the implementation of these proposed changes to strengthen NCEA. These lessons include:
- 20.1. Having clear, realistic and agreed upon timeframes for implementation.
 - 20.2. Prioritising the early release of products and providing at least one full year for the sector to digest information prior to implementation.
 - 20.3. Timing and sequencing significant changes to maximise ease of transition while minimising change fatigue for the sector.
 - 20.4. Making sure that any transitional arrangements are simple, clear and consistent.
 - 20.5. Using testing of new standards and allowing time between this and full implementation.
 - 20.6. Making sure that NZQA and the sector are sufficiently resourced to carry out the changes.
 - 20.7. Supporting schools and kura to engage with parents and whānau so they understand the changes and can support students.

We can support the sector to make sure that the changes are implemented successfully

21. Based on previous experience, changes to the current timelines could help provide the conditions for making changes to NCEA a success.

More lead-in time would support the significant changes to how VET would work within NCEA

22. You have made clear that supporting effective VET within schools and kura is vital, as it can enable students to explore different subjects and pathways. Good quality VET does support better labour market outcomes for students. As previously advised, new VET subjects in Phase 5 will not be included in the curricula until 2028 at the earliest (METIS 1344565 refers and see Annex 4 for an updated timeline).
23. This is because changes in the tertiary Vocational Education and Training (VET) space mean the Industry Skill Boards (ISBs) will not be set up and ready to support VET for schools and kura soon enough under the current NCEA timelines. ISBs will play a key role in developing industry focused subject packages and new skill standards for use in NCEA.

¹⁰ In 2024, 69.6%, 66.1% and 55.0% of students achieved the reading, writing and maths standards respectively. The achievement rate was 85.7%, 70.8% and 44.4% for Te Reo Matatini Reo Torohū, Te Reo Matatini Reo Whakaputa and Pāngarau, respectively.

¹¹ During the transitional period, a short list of alternative standards can be used to fulfil the literacy and numeracy co-requisite requirements.

24. More lead in time would help ensure that VET can be more effectively integrated within NCEA, with a wider range of VET subject packages available to students.

The sector would also benefit from more time to prepare for successful implementation

25. As identified in the lessons learned from previous NCEA changes, making sure that the sector has sufficient time to prepare for changes before they are implemented is key to success.
26. It is expected that the introduction of the refreshed curricula will provide greater direction to teaching and learning and the improved learning that students receive will mitigate the risk in declining attainment of NCEA over time. Under the current timeline, the first few cohorts of students doing the new NCEA will not yet have benefitted fully from the refreshed national curricula and will be most vulnerable to significant drops in attainment rates. There is also the risk of change fatigue and confusion with making significant changes to NCEA at the same time as the refreshed national curricula.

PAG broadly supported some additional lead-in time

27. We discussed implementation considerations with the NCEA PAG at our recent hui on 8 April. The majority of PAG members favoured a timeline with some additional lead-in where there was time between the introduction of the refreshed national curricula and assessment materials, and the full implementation of the new NCEA. There were mixed views over the length of the lead-in time.
28. PAG members emphasised the importance of allowing a minimum of one full year between when assessment materials become available and when they are required to be used. They echoed concerns that there was insufficient lead-in time with the previous set of changes to NCEA.
29. Some PAG members did voice concerns around a potential further delay to the implementation of NCEA changes. They highlighted the need for careful and clear communication with the sector to explain the rationale for this delay, to maintain sector buy-in. A member raised the risk that any further delays would lead to more schools moving away from NCEA, and NCEA losing its value as a national qualification.

We propose an alternative timeline for introducing NCEA changes alongside the refreshed national curricula

The national curricula are being refreshed and are planned to be fully implemented by 2027

30. Under the current timeline, the refreshed national curricula for English, Mathematics & Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau will be introduced in 2026, replacing the existing national curricula in these learning areas across all Year levels (Years 0-13).
31. The refreshed national curricula for all other learning areas are planned to be introduced in 2027 across all Year levels (Years 0-13), and the existing national curricula would be withdrawn at this time.

Ideally changes to NCEA should be implemented alongside the refreshed curricula

32. Under the current timeline, the new NCEAs are planned to be introduced in 2028 for Year 12 and 2029 for Year 13 – after the refreshed curricula for these year groups. This may

create a mismatch between what is being taught (guided by the refreshed curricula) and what is being assessed (through NCEA)¹². It is important to make sure the curricula and qualification are aligned to mitigate the risk of confusion and frustration for schools and kura, and the impact on student learning and achievement.

We propose an additional year of lead-in time and aligning the new NCEA with Phase 5 of the refreshed curricula

33. We propose an updated timeline for introducing NCEA changes that builds in an additional year of lead-in time for the current plan. We recommend also adjusting the timeline for introducing Phase 5 of the refreshed curricula to align the curriculum and qualification changes. Table 1 outlines this proposed alternative timeline (Annex 2 provides a cohort view):

Table 1. Our proposed timeline for introducing the new NCEA and refreshed curricula

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Curriculum	Refreshed curricula for English, Mathematics & Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau is introduced for all Year levels. The existing curricula in these learning areas are revoked.	Refreshed curricula introduced for all learning areas for Phases 1-4 (Years 0-10). The existing curricula for Years 0-10 are revoked.	Refreshed curricula with new Year 11 subjects is introduced (including any mandatory and core subject requirements). The existing curricula for Year 11 is revoked.	Refreshed curricula with new Year 12 subjects is introduced (including any mandatory and core subject requirements, VET subjects and the new English, Mathematics & Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau subjects). The existing curricula for Year 12 is revoked.	Refreshed curricula with new Year 13 subjects is introduced (including any mandatory and core subject requirements, VET subjects and the new English, Mathematics & Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau subjects). The existing curricula for Year 13 is revoked.
NCEA	Existing standards for English, Mathematics & Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau are reviewed.		NCEA Level 1 is removed.	New NCEA at Year 12 is introduced and replaces the existing Level 2. The new standards are also introduced.	New NCEA at Year 13 is introduced and replaces the existing Level 3. The new standards are also introduced.

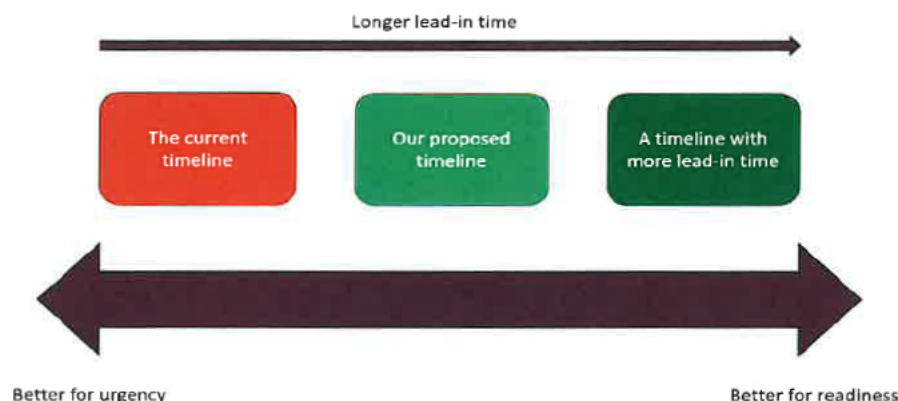
34. While the new NCEA would not be introduced until 2029 under this timeline, there would be important milestones much earlier to support successful implementation. For example, all assessment materials and guidance would need to be available to schools and kura at least one year before the new NCEA is implemented. We will provide you with further advice on the detailed implementation timelines following your decisions in this paper.

This timeline balances the need for urgency with readiness

35. There is a trade-off between urgency and readiness when deciding on the timeline for implementing the NCEA changes (see Figure 3).

¹² We anticipate that this mismatch may be most significant for Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

Figure 3: diagram for the trade-off between urgency and readiness



36. Building in more lead-in time would enable the new NCEA and national curricula to fully integrate VET, support readiness and mitigate the risk to attainment rates:
- 36.1. Student readiness: students will have benefited from more learning under your refreshed national curricula to prepare them for the new NCEA. The lead cohort of students doing the new NCEA will have had two full years of learning under full refreshed curricula from Year 10 prior to beginning NCEA (Year 9 for Te Reo Rangitira/English and Pāngarau/Mathematics) (Figure 4 outlines what this will look like for the first year group going through NCEA changes).
- 36.2. Workforce readiness: ISBs, the Ministry and NZQA will have more time to develop high-quality resources to support schools and kura and teachers in implementing the NCEA changes. It will also allow more time between when the resources are available and when schools and kura are expected to offer the refreshed curricula and new NCEA.

Figure 4: year-by-year timeline for the lead cohort going through NCEA changes

2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
 Refreshed curricula for Maths, English, Te Reo Rangitira and Pāngarau	 Refreshed curricula	 Refreshed curricula	 Refreshed curricula  New NCEA at Year 12	 Refreshed curricula  New NCEA at Year 13

We do not expect all stakeholders to support a longer lead-in time

37. We expect there will be some in the sector who may be frustrated by further changes in the NCEA and curriculum timelines – so more time may be more stressful for these groups. There may also be some pushback that students have to wait until 2029 for NCEA improvements to begin. However, we anticipate there will also be significant pushback to the fundamental changes to NCEA that make it less flexible, regardless of the implementation timelines.

38. We would develop clear communications explaining the change and timeframes, including that it has been designed to avoid further changes to timelines.

Next Steps

39. We will discuss this report with you at the next available Curriculum/NCEA meeting. We ask you to return the signed paper as soon as possible indicating your decisions, as these will inform our draft Cabinet paper and discussion document.
40. Officials have also discussed the work to strengthen NCEA with your Māori Education Ministerial Advisory Group. They raised some concerns about the potential impact on ākonga Māori, and the need to consider the changes in relation to Ka Hikitia. Based on ongoing conversations with Te Rūnanga nui o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa we also expect that the NCEA proposals may not align with how they organise their kura teaching and learning programmes. This is because the programmes often weave learning from multiple domains together, which may not align with a subject-based approach. 9(2)(f)(iv)
- 9(2)(f)(iv)

We are meeting with your PAG to discuss this paper alongside the overall package

41. We will share this paper with your PAG and discuss it with them at our next hui on Wednesday 14 May. At this hui, we will also discuss the other unresolved issues in the overall package of changes, including:
- 41.1. the role of VET subjects in NCEA and their alignment with other subjects;
 - 41.2. the points approach for grading subjects and determining overall attainment which you shared with us at our last Curriculum/NCEA meeting; and
 - 41.3. the names for each of the levels of the new NCEA.
42. You are speaking with the PAG at this hui.

Annexes

The following are annexed to this paper:

- Annex 1: Estimated percentage of students attaining NCEA under the proposed changes by EQI band
- Annex 2: New proposed timeline for changes to NCEA and curricula by student cohort
- Annex 3: Summary A3 of the package of NCEA changes
- Annex 4: Timeline for VET changes

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** we understand you want to balance the benefits of making improvements to NCEA with mitigating the risk of a significant drop in attainment

Noted

- b. **note** that phasing the implementation of the national curricula in for senior secondary students in years 11 - 13, and aligning it to NCEA changes, will help set students up for success

Noted

- c. **note** a longer lead-in time for the NCEA changes would support the significant changes to how VET would work within NCEA, given ISBs are unlikely to be in a position to lead their part of this work until later in 2026

Noted

- d. **agree** to our proposed timeline to introduce the new NCEA alongside Phase 5 of the refreshed national curricula, as set out in Table 1 – which means changes would start for Year 11 in 2028, Year 12 in 2029 and Year 13 in 2030.

discuss

Agree / Disagree

- e. **note** we will share this paper and discuss it with your PAG at our upcoming hui on Wednesday 14 May

Noted

Proactive Release:

- f. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this paper once changes have been considered by Cabinet, with any information needing to be withheld done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree



Jennifer Fraser

General Manager, Schools Policy

Te Pou Kaupapahere

09/05/2025



Rob Mill

General Manager, Qualification and Pathways

Te Poutāhū

9/05/2025



Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Education

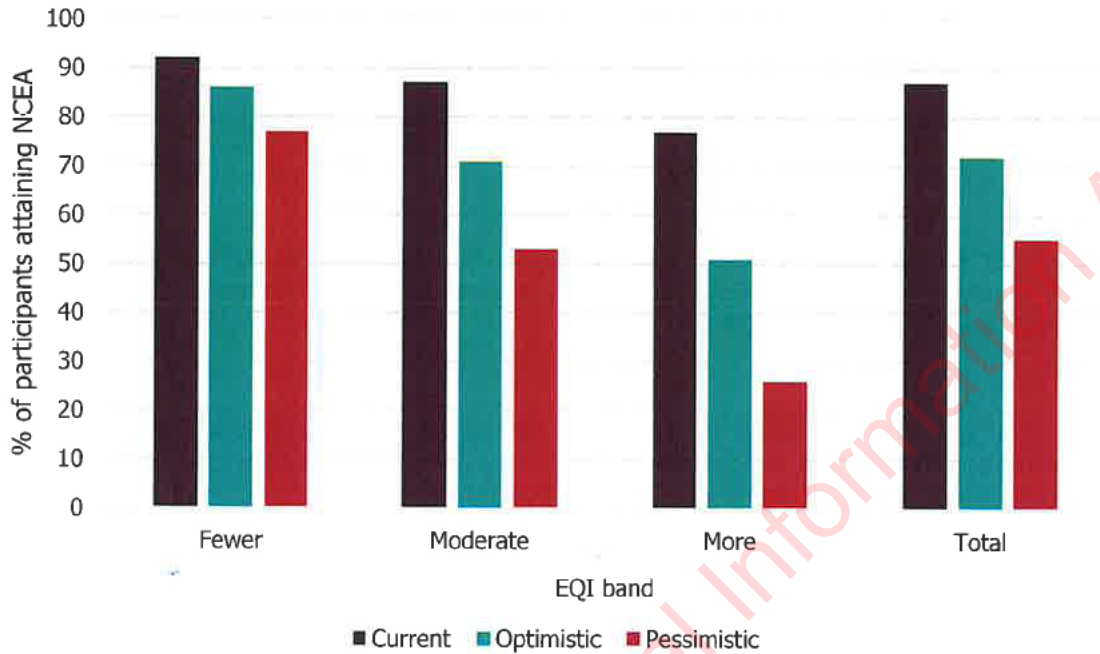
12/5/25

* Need advice on what happens to level one?

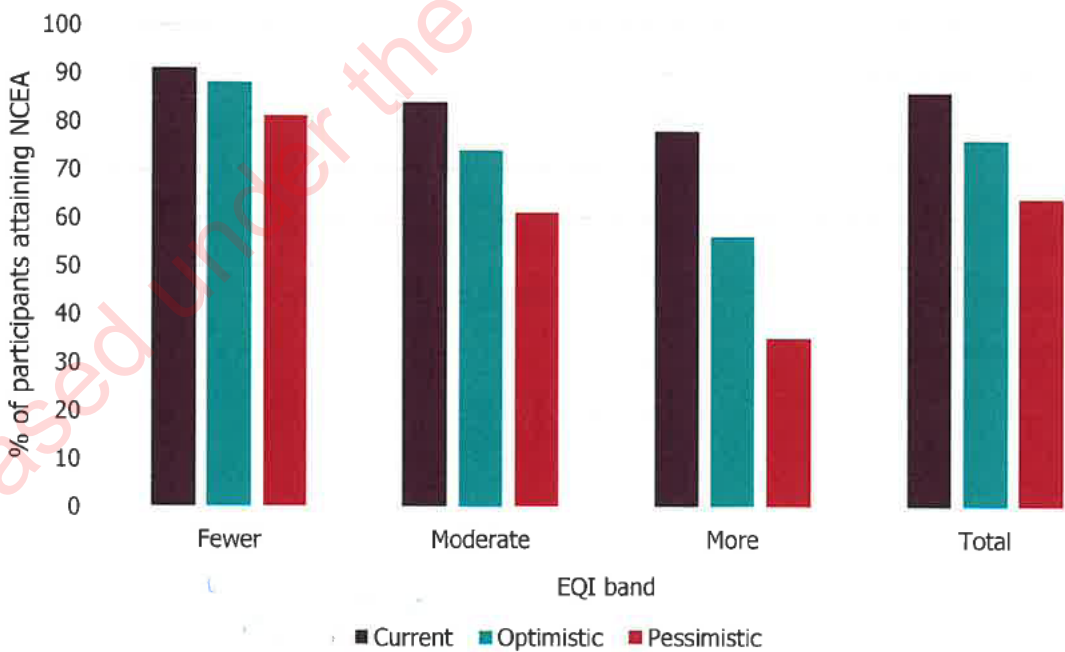
When? Replaced with?

Annex 1: Estimated percentage of participants attaining NCEA under the proposed changes by EQI band

Level 2



Level 3



NOTE ADDED FOR OIA RESPONSE: This scenario modelling in fig. 1 and fig. 2 is not a forecast of attainment rates for the new qualifications but was done to help understand the potential impact on students of different options. It uses existing NCEA data as a proxy, and makes assumptions about potential changes in student, school and teacher behaviour. Any figures should be interpreted with caution due to the significant limitations with the modelling approach.

Annex 2: New proposed timeline for changes to NCEA and the national curricula by student cohort

Key

Existing NCEA and existing national curricula remain in place

Refreshed national curricula and (where relevant) new NCEA in place

 **Lead cohort** →

2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	
Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13		
Year 11	Year 12	Year 13			
Year 12	Year 13				
Year 13					

Annex 3: Summary A3 of the package of NCEA changes

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

DRAFT ONLY - NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

Senior Secondary: Strengthened curriculum and NCEA qualification for all pathways**Increase credibility and trust in NCEA****Support high-quality and coherent learning programmes****Future State: Students at every school have consistent access to high quality learning and assessment, supporting better post-school outcomes.****A focus on learning key skills and knowledge****The curriculum drives NCEA**

Changes to the national curricula will **encourage deep-learning of core knowledge and skills** in all schools and kura. The national curricula will give more direction on what to teach during senior secondary (years 11-13). It will introduce mandatory teaching of subjects that support good post-school outcomes. This includes:

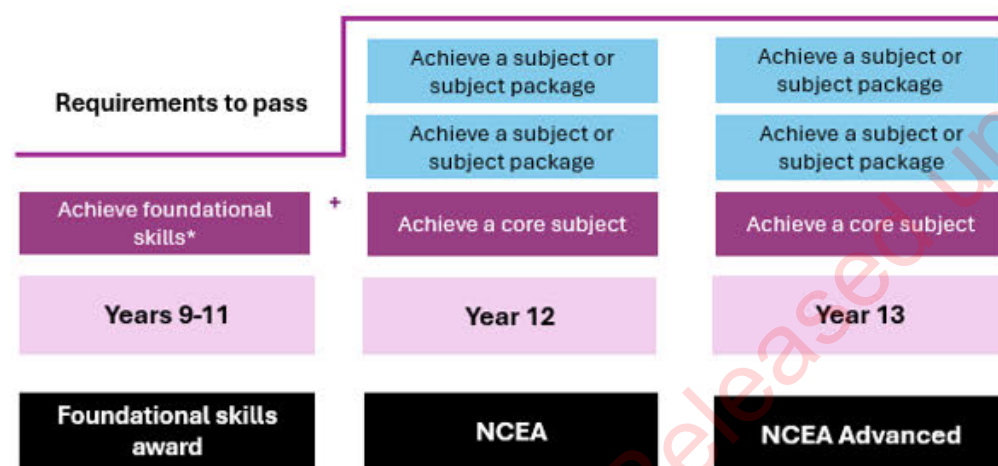
- At Year 11: English or Te Reo Rangatira and Maths or Pāngarau
- At Year 12: English or Te Reo Rangatira.

The approach to assessments under the NCEA changes will align with, and support, curricula changes and vice versa.

Requirements to pass each level of NCEA will be strengthened

We will progress changes to the passing requirements for each of the **two levels of NCEA** so that achieving NCEA is a better measure of transferrable skills and knowledge:

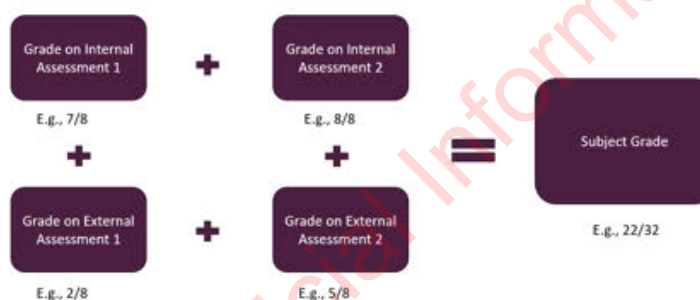
- E.g., A passing subject grade (or subject package) will be required in at least 3-4 subjects, and
- A total passing grade across all subjects.



*corequisite requirements for numeracy and literacy were implemented in 2023 (as optional) and 2024 (as a requirement)

Recognise deep learning across whole subjects

Quality learning across whole subjects provides access to a wide range of academic and vocationally-focused pathways.

**How do I achieve a subject package?**

Unit/skill standards: Learning that is designed by industry and approved under a new framework will be recognised within NCEA as approved **subject packages**.

How do I achieve a subject grade?

Achievement standards: Students' grades on individual assessments within a subject are aggregated to a **subject grade**. Achieving the overall subject will contribute towards NCEA.

NCEA integrates learning that is designed by industry**Alex****Sam****Increasing consistency**

There is more consistency across the country in the availability of learning that is designed by industry.

The learning and achievements under subjects are of comparable value.

Automotive 2	Geography	Statistics	Statistics
Automotive 1	Automotive 2	Chemistry	Chemistry
Physics	Automotive 1	Biology	Biology
English	Physics	Health & Nutrition	Health & Nutrition
Applied Maths	Applied Maths	English Literature	History
Year 12	Year 13	Year 12	Year 13

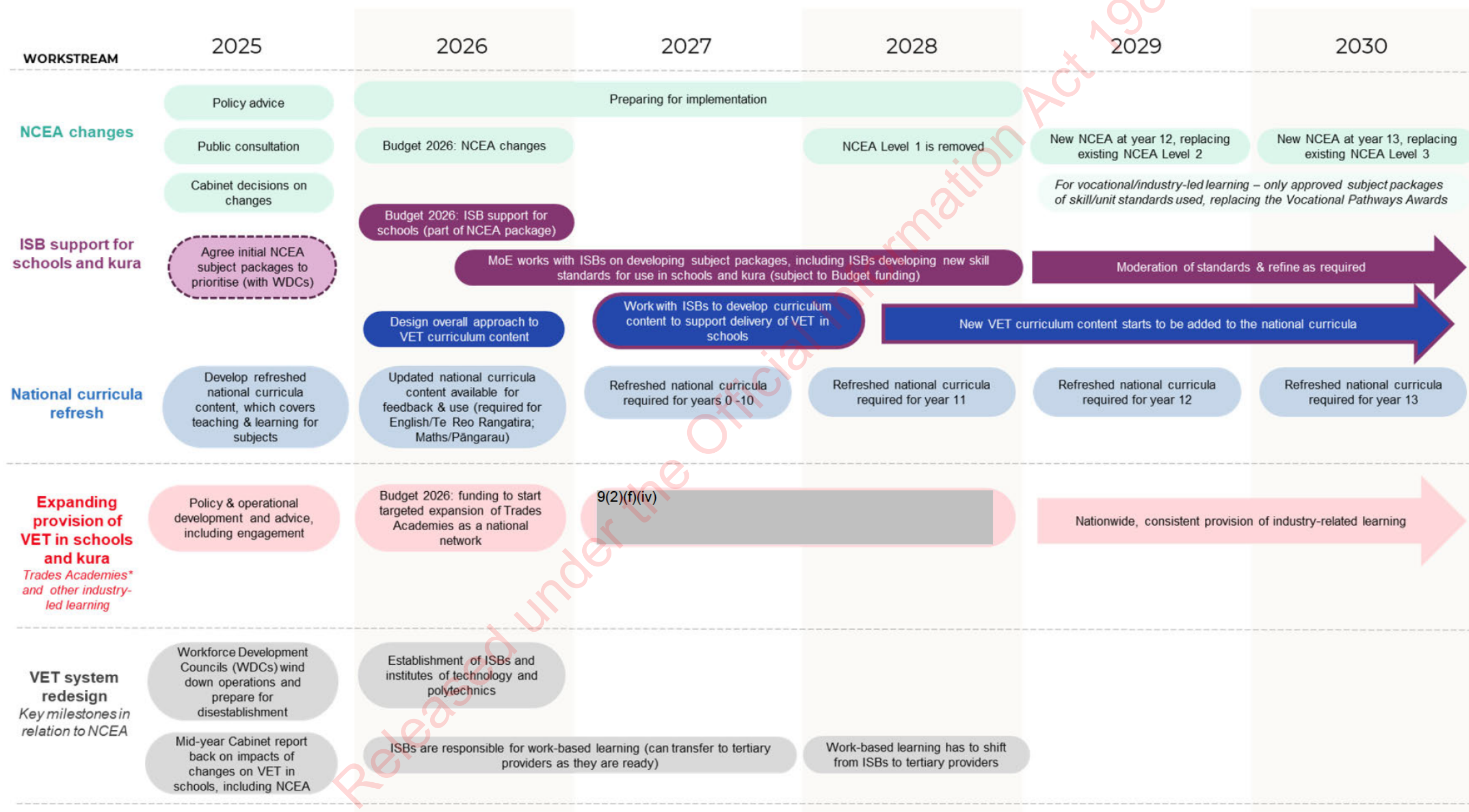
National curricula – Minister sets expectations for schools & kura

Subjects with learning designed by the Ministry
Assessed with achievement standards

Subjects with learning designed by industry
Assessed with skill standards could be cross-credited to industry qualifications

Annex 4: Timeline for VET changes

Plan on a page: Potential future of NCEA & VET in schools and kura



9(2)(a) 3/11/2025 1:50 pm

kia ora 9(2) i hope you had a lovely weekend 😊
Spoke with my manager and placement would either go in a news article or as a new Consultation specific page - either way we would not have a link to the page available until the page was created with the information to go live, so would be best placed just sending them to the [NCEA.education homepage](#).
However, i think we should establish first if this is the site it is intended for or if it would be the [MoE site](#) (education.govt.nz) and alongside the [official consultation pages](#) instead.

If the latter, then this would not be our team as we only look after NCEA.ed and not education.govt.nz



3/11/2025 2:00 pm

Kia ora 9(2), thanks for that information! I will pass it on to my Manager, and let you know when we get around to actually releasing the document - which I think will be a wee way down the track. Just wanted to get an idea for advising the Minister. Thanks again!! 😊



9(2)(a) 12/12/2025 11:59 am

Hi team, thinking back to the summary of findings from public consultation, were there discussions about that being made publicly available once the Minister/Cabinet has made decisions?

9(2)(a) 12/12/2025 12:01 pm

yes- the Minister also agreed to this in this paper [\[MIN SIGNED\] R 1354351 Summary of submissions from public consultation on proposal to replace NCEA.pdf](#)



9(2)(a) 12/12/2025 12:02 pm

9(2)(a) Excellent! Ta

9(2)(a) 12/12/2025 12:46 pm

9(2)(a) Hello. Sorry have been tied up most of the day so far! 9(2)(a) has raised this with 9(2)(a) and we will talk through what it all means at agency on Monday. In the meantime, we've held off sending the proposed new timelines across.



Subject: Proactive release
Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Start: Thu 26/03/2026 1:00 pm
End: Thu 26/03/2026 1:30 pm
Show Time As: Tentative

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Not yet responded

Organizer: 9(2)(a)
Required Attendees: 9(2)(a)

Hello

We will need to get all our papers ready for proactive release – I know we’ve made a start on the pre-consultation papers, listed in the ‘Papers Catalogue’ of the Gantt Chart but setting up some time to:

- Agree what content we are still withholding under active consideration and what can now be released
- Determine what status the pre-consultation paper are at in terms of mark-ups (mark ups finalised or still underway)
- Determine if we need to review any of the pre-consultation papers that have been marked up and assign who will do this
- Assign post-consultation papers for review and mark up

9(2)(a) are identifying what pre-2025 advice will be in scope and will run a similar exercise.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join:

Outside of scope

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**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Report: Replacing NCEA – options for the achievement requirements

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	9/04/2026	Deadline:	13/04/2026
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Priority:	High
From:	9(2)(a) [redacted], Senior Policy Manager	Phone:	9(2)(a) [redacted]
Drafter:	9(2)(a) [redacted]	METIS No:	1353774

Why are we sending this to you?

- This paper provides further advice on the achievement requirements for the new qualifications (also previously referred to as attainment thresholds) following public consultation on a proposal that students should have to achieve at least four subjects.

What action do we need, by when?

- We are seeking your decision on which option to progress for the achievement requirements, as well as agreement to explore different options for endorsements without scores.
- Please return the signed paper by 13 April 2026.

Key facts, issues and questions

- The achievement requirements of the new qualifications will have a significant impact on students' motivation and outcomes with the new senior secondary qualifications.
- There were mixed views in engagement about the achievement requirements. The NCEA PAG supported Option 4 (individual subjects), some of TAG supported Option 3 (three subjects) and other members of TAG supported Option 4.
- With the new subject-based approach, there is not as strong a rationale for requiring a specific number of subjects for achievement – as what students know and can do will vary depending on the exact combination of subjects.
- We recommend Option 3 (three subjects), as it will be a credible, reasonable minimum requirement, that is easy to understand and balances providing motivation with maintaining post-school pathways.

Alignment with Government priorities

1. This report aligns with your education priorities, including:
 - 1.1. Priority One: 'Clearer curriculum: Establishing a knowledge-rich curriculum grounded in the science of learning'; and
 - 1.1. Priority Three: 'Smarter assessment and reporting: Implementing consistent modes of monitoring student progress and achievement.'

You are reporting back to Cabinet in May with recommendations on the achievement requirements for Year 12 and Year 13

2. You are reporting back to Cabinet in May on the detailed qualification design for the new secondary qualifications system following engagement (CAB-26-MIN-0068). This will cover the potential achievement requirements (if any) for Year 12 and Year 13. Previously, the Government consulted on there being two overarching qualifications, the New Zealand Certificate of Education (NZCE) and the New Zealand Advanced Certificate of Education (NZACE), with students having to achieve four subjects, along with the Foundational Award, to achieve each qualification.
3. You have also agreed to a grading approach where students receive a grade (on either a five or six-point grading scale), but not a total subject score or total qualification score (METIS 1355160 refers).
4. We have now completed targeted engagement meetings, though we expect some feedback may be still to come through via email. This report provides you with advice on achievement requirements, informed by this engagement as well as input from the NCEA Professional Advisory Group (PAG) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Your decisions will be reflected in the draft Cabinet paper we provide you on 22 April 2026.

International practices vary, and many have more rules around what students study

5. Usually, senior secondary qualifications (also referred to as certificates) do not qualify individuals for specific roles but communicate broad achievement. OECD discuss secondary qualifications as having two main purposes for students¹:
 - 5.1. **Certifying knowledge, understanding and skills** – this means a recognition of what a student has achieved, and a focus on how this assessment aligns to the curriculum. This recognises that qualifications can also provide motivation to schools, teachers and students to cover the desired content from the curriculum.
 - 5.2. **Facilitating selection** – this is about using the information to facilitate access to higher education, or employment. This means the information needs to be seen as credible, consistent and relevant by multiple audiences.
6. International practice varies significantly – with **Annex 1** providing an overview. Countries with competitive entry to university may have more of a focus on ranking and/or streaming

¹ OECD (2026), *The Theory and Practice of Upper Secondary Certification*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b3fea5ba-en>.

students as part of their qualification system. This is less relevant generally in the New Zealand context, where individual tertiary programmes may have restrictions or requirements, but overall eligibility is not restricted to a certain number of students.

7. Often countries with an overall qualification credential a “whole programme” of study, across multiple years of secondary education. They typically have rules around what students must study. For example, the International Baccalaureate requires all students to study subjects from five different subject groups at a minimum, and the Dogwood Diploma (British Columbia) requires students to gain credit from at least eight different subject areas across Years 11 - 13.
8. The UK, Singapore, Ireland and Cambridge International Qualifications instead focus on subject qualifications, so there are not overall qualifications or any specific requirements.
9. Each jurisdiction’s unique context influences how it designs its qualifications – such as the role of its industry institutions, societal expectations, historical precedent, and how eligibility for tertiary study works.
10. For example, some countries have no exams as part of their secondary qualification systems but instead have separate exams for entrance to each university. Some Australian states have certificates based on completion of secondary education, rather than a certain level of achievement – however, subject results are then used to determine a national-level student rank for university entrance (ATAR).

Ultimately the purpose for New Zealand secondary qualifications is supporting a wide range of post-school pathways

11. In the New Zealand context, we consider that the core purpose of secondary qualifications should be to support students to access employment and higher education post-school, by credibly recognising what they know and can do (METIS 1341831 refers). This means it should support a wide range of pathways, including students moving directly into employment, apprenticeships or other types of higher education. Employers and tertiary providers should be able to rely on school qualifications to help make decisions on hiring or entry.
12. While the purpose of secondary qualifications is mostly to credential learning for post-school pathways, it also should align to and support the delivery of the curriculum (including a focus on the knowledge and practices set out as important). So, the qualification should both recognise curriculum-aligned achievement, while also being a strong signal to employers and tertiary providers about a student’s capabilities.
13. Other key parameters for options based on the New Zealand context have been:
 - 13.1. **Continuing a Year 12 level** – as NCEA Level 2 is often used for eligibility to vocational Level 4+ qualifications (including apprenticeships), and employment. Achievement is strongly associated with better employment outcomes.
 - 13.2. **University Entrance remains separate** – the qualification system should support students to get University Entrance, but less than a third of school leavers² begin studying degrees in the year after study. The design of achievement requirements

² Based on 2024 destinations of students who left school in 2023. [School leavers' attainment | Education Counts](#). This does not include school leavers who may enrol in a degree after a break in study.

should be inclusive of a range of post-school pathways and not be designed for University Entrance.

- 13.3. **Flexible subject choice** – you have previously agreed that there should be no required subjects at the Year 12 and Year 13 curriculum, including no “core” subjects (METIS 1346674 refers). We continue to recommend maintaining choice for students in terms of what they study at Years 12 and 13, so they can align their subjects to their interests and post-school aspirations. This includes both Ministry-led and industry-led subjects.

There was moderate support for four subjects during public consultation, but also concern

14. As previously advised, there was moderate support for the four-subject requirement for NZCE and NZACE (METIS 1354351):

Is the four subject requirement a reasonable requirement to gain a secondary qualification?		Will the four subject requirement provide employers with a clearer record of student knowledge, skills, and achievement?		Is the four subject requirement achievable for most students?	
Student		Whānau		Industry	
54% agree	27% disagree	58% agree	27% disagree	63% agree	28% disagree
				Educator	
				60% agree	24% disagree

15. Rates of support were significantly lower for educators from Māori medium settings and schools with more barriers to achievement (i.e. high EQI). 68% of educators from schools with fewer barriers to achievement agreed the four subject requirement would be achievable, compared to 48% of educators from schools with more barriers. Rates of support for it being a reasonable requirement were also lower among Māori whānau (47%) and Pacific whānau (49%).
16. Many submitters commented with concerns about how the “four subjects” rule could increase failure rates, including comments that:
- 16.1. ākonga Māori, Pacific students, disabled students, students with learning support needs and neurodiverse students could be disproportionately impacted by higher failure rates – with long-term consequences for their employment outcomes; and
- 16.2. a more challenging qualification to attain may result in more students disengaging from school.

There is not as clear a purpose for achievement requirements under the new approach, though there are benefits

17. Students’ NCEA qualifications are made up of many individual standards. Secondary students’ records of achievement can be multiple pages long with the list of all the standards they have achieved. This has meant having an achievement requirement (through the 60 credits plus the NCEA co-requisite) has been important for there to be clear, concise information about students’ achievement for students themselves, employers, parents and tertiary providers.
18. Under the new subject approach, there will be a more concise record of achievement. Most students could achieve a maximum of 10 subjects across both Year 12 and Year 13, and the subjects themselves provide clear, consistent information about what students know and can do.

19. Advice from the TAG has noted that unlike many tertiary qualifications, which generally focus on a specific area, an overall secondary qualification does not qualify students for any specific pathway. This means there is not as clear a purpose or rationale for setting a specific number of subjects that students need to achieve, because what a student knows and can do will depend on which subjects are achieved rather than an overall number. What subjects would be most relevant will also depend on a student's pathways post-school.
20. As noted earlier, internationally, qualifications with achievement requirements tend to have rules around what students study so there is more consistency. This means these qualifications are more likely to represent something meaningful about what students know and can do.
21. The TAG and NCEA PAG have noted however that there are benefits to achievement requirements for an overall qualification, in particular:
- 21.1. **Signalling** – NZCE and NZACE may provide a signal of general competency that is useful and easier to understand for some employers and tertiary providers.
- 21.2. **Motivation** – NZCE and NZACE can provide a level of achievement (including the Foundational Award) for students, schools and teachers to aim for. This is likely to provide an incentive for more students to achieve a minimum number of subjects and the Foundational Award, and for schools to support this
22. The benefits are nuanced (discussed further below and in the Annex). We discuss the impacts on motivation at paragraph 25.

There are four options, all would be more credible and coherent than the current state

23. We have short-listed four potential options for the achievement requirements, aiming to keep them as simple as possible. For Options 1 – 3, the achievement requirements would be the same for NZCE and NZACE, except that for NZACE only Year 13 subjects would count:

Option	Description	Notes on the design
Option 1 – 4 subjects	Students must achieve four or more subjects and the Foundational Award to achieve the qualification.	- Option with the most challenging achievement requirements. - Only option tested in public consultation. Submitters generally agreed it would be easy to understand – this is likely to also apply to Option 3. - Of submitters, 58% of whānau and 54% of students thought it would be a reasonable requirement.
Option 2 – 3 subjects & a minimum aggregate grade	Students must achieve three or more subjects, the Foundational Award, and a minimum aggregate grade across their five top subjects, to achieve the qualification.	- Unlike the other options, includes three types of requirements (aggregate grade, subjects, Foundational Award). - The aggregate grade would be based on all grades students achieved in their top five subjects – which would enable subjects that students have not achieved to contribute.

		- This is the only option where there must be an aggregate grade. Each letter grade would have a numerical value for calculating the aggregate grade (e.g. a C grade is worth 3, B is worth 4). - For example, students could have to achieve an aggregate grade of 12 or more.
Option 3 – 3 subjects	Students must achieve three or more subjects, as well as the Foundational Award, to achieve the qualification.	- Most similar to the current NCEA requirements (with one subject worth 20 credits for the refreshed NCEA Level 1, so 60 credits equivalent to 3 subjects). - Public consultation feedback suggests it would be easy to understand.
Option 4 – Individual subjects	Students can achieve individual subjects in Year 12 and Year 13, and the Foundational Award, which are recorded on a senior secondary certificate.	- Individual subjects, and the Foundational Award achievement, would be recorded on the certificate – there would be no overall qualifications or achievement requirements. - This means students would have to discuss their results in terms of subject grades (e.g. in Year 13 a student could say they achieved 3 As and 2 Bs, or 4 Merits and 1 Excellence). - Students cannot “pass” or “fail” an overall qualification, which would mean the Foundational Award is not a co-requisite. - Similar to how models like the UK A-Levels and Cambridge work with recognition of individual subjects rather than an overall qualification, though with more diversity of subjects and modes of assessment.

24. All options would be more credible and coherent than the current state. **Annex 2** includes more detail of our analysis against the criteria.

There is uncertainty about how students, schools and teachers will respond to different incentives

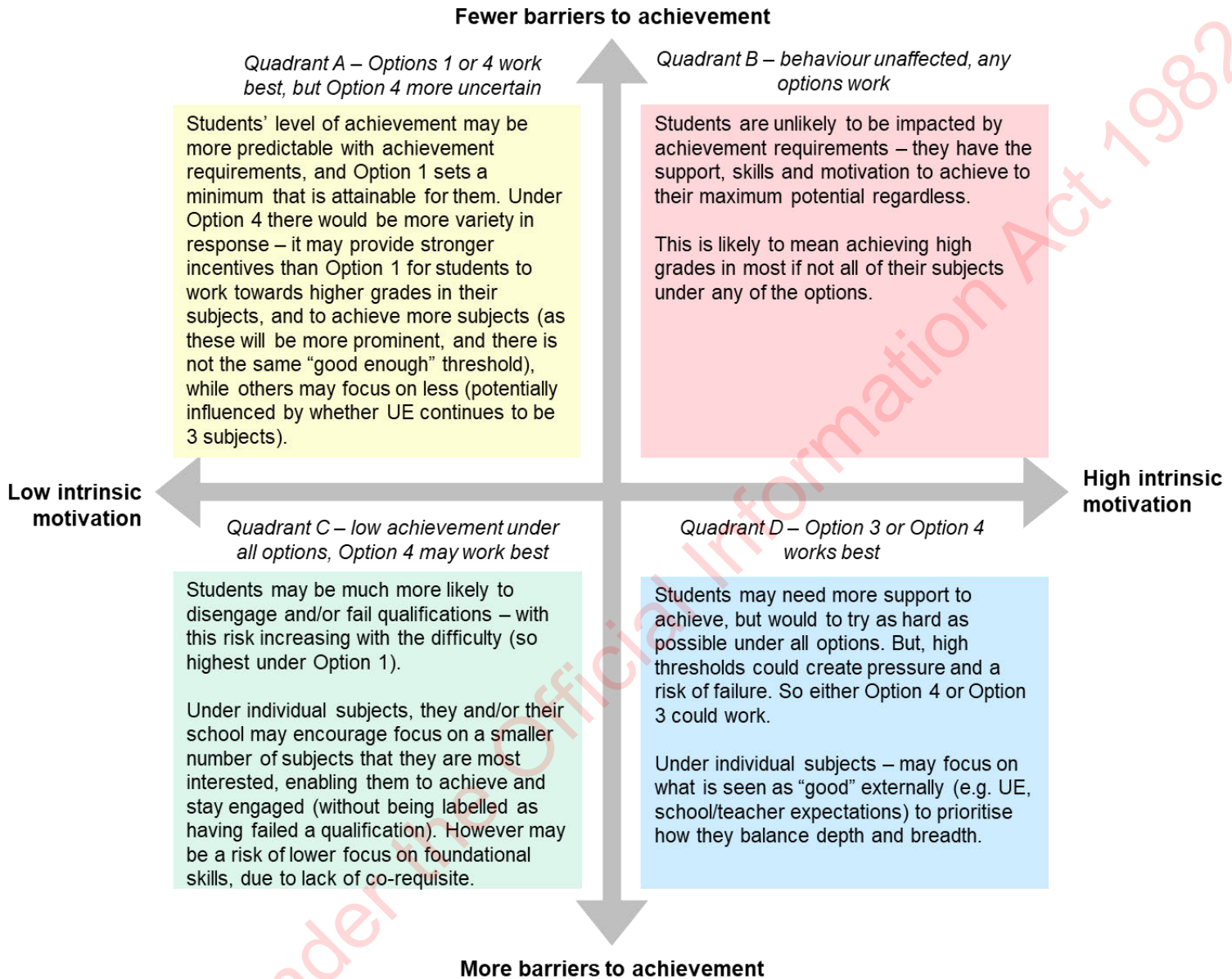
25. Achievement requirements will create different incentives for school, teacher and student behaviour around which subjects students choose, how engaged students stay in all the subjects they are taking, and whether students stay engaged at school more generally. All options will provide motivation for students, and it is likely that students will generally engage in more subjects than a minimum. For example, GCSEs and A-levels still see

consistent levels of achievement based on the number of subjects covered within the curriculum, despite there being no minimum threshold for an overall qualification.³

26. However, responses may vary, and in the diagram on the next page we outline some examples of different behavioural responses depending on the options. Note barriers to achievement in the diagram refers to lots of different factors – including socio-economic barriers to achievement such as housing instability, as well as individual students' situations (such as significant health needs).
27. The examples reflect both student behaviour, as well as what teachers and schools encourage students to focus on. In practice, students could sit at any place on the matrix, and there will be more diversity in responses than what we can represent here.
28. The diagram shows why there is uncertainty about behavioural impacts, because responses are likely to vary based on students' circumstances, and we cannot accurately quantify this. This uncertainty is higher under Option 4. Behaviour will also be influenced by other parts of the system – such as the strength of monitoring and performance measures (discussed later in this paper), University Entrance and other tertiary settings, and wider society perceptions. This means we cannot forecast exactly how students, schools and teachers will respond to different incentives created by the achievement requirements.

³ In 2024 in the UK, most students (71.5%) taking A levels took three or more subjects, which is the standard required for university and how their curriculum is designed for Year 12 and Year 13. 17.7% took two A-levels, and 10.9% took one A level. Most students also take 7 or more GCSEs in Year 11. [Qualification results in England: summer 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Figure 1: Examples of behavioural responses to different achievement requirements



Higher requirements could reduce qualifications attainment, which may limit students' pathways

29. We have previously provided you with indicative estimates of the potential significant drop in attainment of the qualifications (METIS 1346021 refers). This reflects that achieving subjects will likely be more challenging for students compared to achieving individual standards.
30. We have included this 2025 modelling in **Annex 3**. We have also included the estimates we did for students having to achieve four subjects (the previous overview only included students having to achieve three subjects), as you have emphasised your desire for high aspirations for all students. There are limitations to this modelling, due to the difficulties in predicting the level of behavioural change, the effect the new curriculum will have over time, and having a robust current state comparison for industry-led subjects.

31. There will be potential mitigations – such as the implementation of the new curriculum, investment in learning support and the enhanced focus on assessment before students get to Year 12. Over time, we expect that these will increasingly reduce the risk to attainment.
32. However, the modelling still indicates that the risk of decreased attainment for at least the first few cohorts could be high, as they will not have had the full benefits of the new curriculum and additional supports. Longer-term, there will still continue to be students who face barriers to attainment, some of which are outside of the education system (as there are under NCEA).
33. This risk to attainment is more significant for Option 1 (four subjects) compared to Option 3 (three subjects). Based on current data, this could disproportionately impact priority groups like ākonga Māori, Pacific students, Realm students, and students with more socio-economic barriers to achievement.
34. When considering equity, there needs to be a balance between having high aspirations for all students, while recognising the negative impacts that can occur when students do not achieve qualifications:
 - 34.1. It can be a negative signal to employers about students' capability – which could create barriers to students successfully transitioning into employment.
 - 34.2. It can prevent students being eligible for further study with tertiary providers, particularly if University Entrance (UE) requirements are increased compared to the current state. Early feedback from the Universities New Zealand Education Committee suggests they would expect UE to be set at least at the NZACE level, potentially with additional requirements.
 - 34.3. It may result in some students disengaging from school earlier, reducing learning opportunities. 9(2)(f)(iv)
35. A reduction in attainment could have long-term consequences for some students' post-school pathways. Evidence shows that students who do not pass school qualifications may be disadvantaged in the labour market. For example, one study found that leaving school with NCEA Level 2 was associated with earning twice the income nine years later, as someone who left school when at the same time but with no qualifications.⁴

There were different views on the options in targeted engagement, with support for Options 2 – 4

Most of the PAG recommended Option 4

36. The majority of PAG recommended Option 4, with reasons provided including:
 - 36.1. thresholds would not qualify students for specific post-school pathways;
 - 36.2. maintaining credibility and encourages focus by all stakeholders on individual subjects achieved; and
 - 36.3. balancing the equity impacts.
37. Of the options for achievement requirements, they unanimously preferred Option 2 on the basis that it incentivises achievement in all subjects, even subjects that students may not

⁴ Education and earnings: A New Zealand update (2020). [Education and earnings, a New Zealand update | Education Counts.](#)

have achieved. They were concerned that Option 1 may be too high a threshold, whereas Option 3 may be too low.

There was support for both Option 3 and Option 4 from the TAG

38. The TAG had mixed views. From a technical assessment perspective, some members recommended Option 4, including for the reasons outlined earlier around the purpose for achievement requirements being unclear, mitigating concerns about which subjects are seen as easier or harder, and the potential impact on attainment. Other members supported Option 3, as they valued having an overall qualification, and said it would be easier for employers to understand. Option 3 was preferred over Options 1 and 2 as it was similar in breadth to NCEA and University Entrance.

Other targeted engagement feedback

39. Feedback in other targeted engagement sessions has been mixed, with support for Options 2 – 4 mentioned. We may receive further feedback in coming weeks by email, including from the Realm.⁵ We have heard from the Tokelauan representatives, who supported Option 2. Some stakeholders did note that it was difficult to comment within the tight timeframes.
40. We had multiple hui with both Te Rūnanga Nui and Ngā Kura ā Iwi to discuss these options, most recently on 24 March 2026. As of 8 April, they have not yet indicated their preferred option, but we will advise you if this changes.

We recommend option 3, three subjects, as it is an appropriate minimum threshold

41. Based on our updated analysis, informed by the public consultation findings and targeted engagement (including with the PAG and TAG) we consider that there is a rationale for both Options 3 and 4, but at this time recommend Option 3 (three subjects).
42. Achievement requirements can define the minimum we want students to leave school with. Based on the current curriculum design for Year 12 and Year 13 (where students will generally take five subjects), we consider that having to achieve three subjects and the Foundational Award represents a credible, reasonable minimum amount of learning for students to achieve. It is comparable in breadth to the current University Entrance and NCEA settings, as well as international examples (e.g. Queensland, A levels entry requirements)⁶. Having achievement requirements will mean that the Foundational Award will be a co-requisite, so there are strong incentives to engage in a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy.
43. We consider that Option 3 provides the right balance of motivation for students while helping to maintain post-school pathways. We note though that even under this option, there will continue to be a proportion of students who may not attain the qualification, and this is likely to be higher than under NCEA, at least in the short to medium-term.

⁵ Representatives from the Department of Education in Tokelau, Cook Islands Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Services in Niue.

⁶ At most schools or colleges students generally need to pass 5 GSCEs for entry to A-levels. As noted earlier, most students take more than 7 GCSEs. [A levels | Skills for Careers](#).

There are trade-offs with all options, Option 4 is our next preferred approach

44. The trade-off with three subjects is that this may not always be perceived as aspirational enough by some stakeholders. If you are concerned about this, our second preferred option is Option 4. Individual subjects may be seen as more aspirational because it encourages a focus on what has been achieved (which can more meaningfully reflect what students know and can do) and is more internationally comparable. This provides incentives for students to strive for high grades within their subjects – as these will be more prominent, and students cannot rely on an overall qualification (for example, a student in the UK may refer to having 3A*). It also does not have the same risks around decreased attainment as Option 1.
45. The trade-off with Option 4 is that it is a more significant change than NCEA, and it does not enable a literacy and numeracy co-requisite, which means that there is more uncertainty about how schools, teachers and students may respond. While our analysis supported this option in an ideal state, we are concerned that there is not yet the system maturity to implement an option that does not set a minimum level of achievement. This includes concerns about the potential for a weakened focus on literacy, numeracy, and a minimum number of subjects for all students. We discuss below some mitigations for this but note that there would still be less certainty than under the other options.

Options 1 and 2 are not recommended by the Ministry

46. The Ministry does not recommend either Option 1 or 2. Option 2 is more complicated than the others due to the minimum aggregate grade, and similar to NCEA in that it includes requirements that could create incentives for students to focus on individual assessments rather than just subjects.
47. Option 1 would likely be perceived as more credible by some stakeholders, but we consider that it is too high a threshold to represent a minimum level of achievement. While ideally all students would achieve four or more subjects, there will continue to be students who face more barriers to achievement – and setting too high a threshold could demotivate these students. Option 1 would be harder than the current University Entrance, and we have not identified a strong rationale for requiring a specific number of subjects that justifies the level of risk to students' post school outcomes (including access to employment and higher education).
48. NZQA recommends Option 1, on the basis that it reflects your intent for an aspirational qualification and that there was support for this approach in consultation. Alternatively, NZQA considers that Option 4 with the addition of a four-subject endorsement (and potentially a three-subject endorsement) would support your intent for an aspirational qualification while balancing equity concerns and ensuring that students are recognised for all Year 12 and Year 13 subjects achieved. Later in this paper we provide advice on endorsements.

There are ways to set expectations that the Foundational Award is the minimum level of competency under Option 4

49. Under Option 4, achievement of the Foundational Award may continue to be a requirement of employers and tertiary providers. However, a key trade-off is that the Foundational Award would no longer be a co-requisite for a school qualification, as there are not overall NZCE and NZACE qualifications for it to be tied to.
50. We did explore alternatives, such as requiring achievement of the Foundational Award for students to achieve individual subjects. However, we discounted this option, as it would:

- 50.1. undermine the principle of competency-based achievement (students will have met the competency for the subject but not have it awarded⁷)
 - 50.2. have significant equity implications, as students who do not attain the Foundational Award would leave school with no credentials, even if they have otherwise received high grades in some subjects; and
 - 50.3. are likely to be seen as unreasonable by students, schools, whānau and teachers.
51. It is possible that this could lead to less focus on literacy and numeracy by students and teachers, as there was before the introduction of the NCEA co-requisite in 2024. By 2028, there will be significant system changes since 2024 starting to be embedded in practice, including introducing:
- 51.1. mandatory Year 11 English/Te Reo Rangatira and Mathematics/Pāngarau, each with a clear, detailed national curriculum
 - 51.2. mandatory twice-yearly assessment for reading, writing, maths, pānui, tuhituhi and pāngarau, including through the new SMART, for Years 3 to 8, as well as phonics checks and Hihira Weteoro
 - 51.3. the Foundational Award as a standalone credential, with an explicit purpose of enabling early school leavers to have core skills recognised in the absence of a Year 11 qualification
 - 51.4. a more rigorous, subject-based qualification.
52. We would communicate the expectation to schools that all students must achieve the Foundational Award as the minimum level of literacy and numeracy for secondary students. Below we provide more information about how we can monitor this. We recommend that a Senior Secondary Certificate (discussed below) states whether or not a student has achieved the minimum levels of literacy, and numeracy as part of the Foundational Award (and the level achieved), to strengthen this incentive.⁸
53. Given these significant system changes, generally schools would be likely to continue to support students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and have this recognised through the Foundational Award. However, there may still be more uncertainty than under Options 1 - 3.

Developing a new Senior Secondary Certificate

54. Previously, we have used the terms certificate and qualification interchangeably. But for this decision we start to distinguish between them. Certificates/certification is more common language used in senior secondary qualification systems internationally (including by the OECD). Many of these certificates are not listed on their countries' equivalent of the NZQCF, so it may not technically be recognised as qualifications.
55. Under all options, we recommend developing this dedicated Senior Secondary Certificate to outline students' achievement⁹. This provides a simple, easy to understand record of

⁷ For example, a student who has not achieved the numeracy requirement, but achieved a high grade in History, would not have their History achievement recognised in this scenario.

⁸ This does mean that a student who may have only achieved numeracy or literacy still has this recognised.

⁹ Including all individual subjects achieved, whether the Foundational Award is achieved, (if applicable) NZCE and NZACE achievement, any endorsements, Scholarship Awards and University Entrance.

achievement for students to use to access post-school pathways. This certificate would focus on students' highest levels of achievement.

56. While under Options 1 – 3 this would be a record of NZCE and NZACE results, under Option 4 the Senior Secondary Certificate would likely become the overarching framework for the senior secondary qualification system. This is because under Option 4 there will not be an overall qualification listed on the NZQCF, but there can still be a Senior Secondary Certificate that recognises achievement as part of the senior secondary qualification system. There are similar overseas comparisons, for example Ireland's Leaving Certificate. This would mean a shift in language for our qualification system – to referring to subjects within an overall Certificate, rather than separate qualifications like with NCEA.

Monitoring of school and student behaviour can help identify if action is needed

57. Under all options, alongside clear communications and curriculum changes, we will also monitor achievement and assessment of the Foundational Award, as well as subjects. This will give us data on things like the average number of subjects attempted, combinations of subjects, and any differences among groups of students. ERO reviews and evaluation of the qualification changes can provide further qualitative information about school practices.
58. Additionally, NZQA can help us to actively monitor how many students are taking five subjects through enrolment and results trends.
59. This monitoring and evaluation can help us identify early if there is growth in practices that could negatively impact students' post-school outcomes. For example, if a school was not consistently assessing students in five subjects. This monitoring can also inform future changes to the qualification system.
60. Under the Act, the Ministry can intervene in schools if there are reasonable grounds for concerns about educational performance, though we would focus first on providing support and guidance to the school.

61. 9(2)(f)(iv)
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

You could consider further work on the role of endorsements, and there are multiple options we could explore

62. The advice below applies regardless of whether you agree to Options 1 – 4. Note for Options 1 – 3, the endorsements would be of NZCE and NZACE. For Option 4, they would be Year 12 and/or Year 13 endorsements.
63. You previously noted that students' scores from their best five subjects could be used for endorsements, which was reflected in the discussion document (METIS 1348944 refers). We did not hear much feedback on the proposal to continue endorsements, which may reflect that it is already an existing feature of NCEA, and there were no specific questions about it.
64. You have now agreed that students' total subject scores, and aggregated qualification scores, will not be included in their record of achievement (METIS 1355160 refers). With

the move to clearer, more consistent grading through subjects, endorsements are not a critical feature of the new qualifications system and may add complexity. Students could already easily discuss their Year 13 results in terms of grades (e.g. 3 As and 2 Bs, or 4 Merits and 1 Excellence).

65. However, there may be some benefits to explore in terms of endorsements, including the following two types:

65.1. **General endorsements** – these would be focused on recognising a high level of achievement across multiple subjects, and could provide an incentive for subject breadth and depth for high achievers (9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]); and

65.2. **Combination endorsements** – these would be focused on recognising achievement in specific combinations of subjects, for example endorsements that are science focused, or primary industries focused, to support specific post-school pathways.

66. It would be important for any endorsements to be easy to understand and avoid a complex system. There was some initial feedback from the TAG that supported combination endorsements.
67. We seek your direction on which (if any) of the options you want us to explore further (i.e. general endorsements, combination endorsements, or both). Further work would include engagement with the NCEA PAG and TAG, as we as exploring more specific options. Your report back to Cabinet in May could note this work underway, and your final recommendations could be included in a Cabinet paper later in 2026 with an update on progress towards the new qualifications.
68. Note, we will be providing you with further advice around the impact of qualification changes on Scholarship in the paper on 15 April 2026.

Risks

69. As noted earlier, many educators, whānau, Tiriti partners and industry representatives have raised concerns about the equity impact of the potential changes. This was more common among those representing high EQI schools, Māori and Pacific perspectives. Earlier in the paper we discuss the equity risks of the different options from a student perspective.
70. There is likely to be opposition from some stakeholders to any options that are perceived as raising the threshold for attainment when compared to the current state, particularly if the option remains at four subjects. This reflects that achieving subjects could already be more challenging than achieving individual standards.
71. This could undermine trust and buy in to the changes by some schools and kura. Between now and 2029 we will need to work on how we can target support where it is most needed. This includes both support for schools and teachers to make the changes (such as PLD), as well as support for students to help lift achievement. You have a significant package of potential Budget 2026 initiatives which could provide additional investment in support, 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

Financial Implications

72. There are no direct financial implications related to the achievement requirements for the qualifications.

Next Steps

73. We intend to discuss this report with you at the next available agency meeting. We ask you to return the signed paper by 13 April 2026 so we can provide you with the report on issues related to qualification rules by 15 April 2026, and a draft Cabinet paper by 22 April 2026 reflecting your decisions. This will include agreements to consequential legislative amendments based on your decision.
74. You will also be receiving initial advice on Youth Guarantee on 23 April 2026 (METIS 1355206 refers). Currently, the funds include a focus on achievement of NCEA (though students can also attempt other qualifications). The changes are likely to make it more challenging for Youth Guarantee providers to offer school qualifications under any of the achievement requirement options, and the purpose of the fund is being reviewed.

Annexes

The following are annexed to this paper:

- Annex 1: International examples of achievement requirements
- Annex 2: Analysis of options against the criteria
- Annex 3: Modelling of attainment rates under different options

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** that you are due to report back to Cabinet in May 2026 with a recommendation about achievement requirements for Year 12 and Year 13, following further engagement
Noted
- b. **note** that the purpose for achievement requirements is less clear under the subject-based approach, though there are motivational benefits for some students and it could be easier for some employers to understand
Noted
- c. **note** that it is important to balance motivation for students with maintaining students' post-school pathways
Noted
- d. **note** that most of the NCEA Professional Advisory Group supported Option 4 below, and the TAG were split between Option 3 and Option 4
Noted
- e. **agree** to one of the following options for the achievement requirements for Year 12 and Year 13:
EITHER
 - i. **Option 1:** students must achieve at least 4 subjects, and the Foundational Award, to achieve the NZCE and NZACE qualifications

Agree / Disagree

OR

- ii. **Option 2:** students must achieve at least 3 subjects, the Foundational Award, and a minimum aggregate grade, to achieve the NZCE and NZACE qualifications

Agree / Disagree

OR

- iii. **Option 3 (recommended):** students must achieve at least 3 subjects and the Foundational Award, to achieve the NZCE and NZACE qualifications

Agree / Disagree

OR

- iv. **Option 4 (second preferred option):** students achieve individual subjects and the Foundational Award, which are recognised on a senior secondary certificate, but there are no overall achievement requirements or qualifications

Agree / Disagree

- f. **agree** that NZQA develop a Senior Secondary Certificate with secondary achievement (including Year 12 and Year 13 subjects, Scholarship, University Entrance, NZCE and NZACE), which indicates whether or not students have attained a minimum level of literacy and numeracy through the Foundational Award

Agree / Disagree

- g. **note** if you agree to Option 4, there will not be NZCE and NZACE qualifications listed on the New Zealand Qualification and Certification Framework (NZQCF), but Ministry and NZQA officials consider that this will not have a noticeable impact on credibility or international compatibility

Noted

- h. **note** that if you agree to Option 2, we will provide you with further advice on the minimum aggregate grade

Noted

Endorsements

- i. **note** that under a subject-based approach, endorsements are not a critical feature of the new qualification system and could add complexity, though there may be some benefits around incentives for high achievers

Noted

- j. **note** that we can develop options for how endorsements would work without a total qualifications score, including general and/or combination endorsements

Noted

- k. **indicate** whether you want officials to develop further options for :

- i. **General endorsements** – these would be focused on recognising a high level of achievement across a set number of subjects

Agree / Disagree

AND/OR

- ii. **Combination endorsements** – these would be focused on recognising achievement in specific combinations of subjects

Agree / Disagree

Proactive Release:

- I. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this paper once final Cabinet decisions are made with any information needing to be withheld done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree

9(2)(a)



**Senior Policy Manager
Te Pou Kaupapahere**

9/4/2026

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

____/____/____

Annex 1: International examples of achievement requirements

75. The table below provides an overview of different ways qualifications can work, with a focus on achievement requirements:

Category	Description	Examples
Individual subjects	Achievement is primarily focused on individual subjects, which are represented on a record or certificate, but there is no overarching qualification or threshold that students need to reach.	England, Ireland, Scotland and Cambridge International <i>Option 4 in this paper</i>
Whole programme – school completion certificate	Eligibility is primarily based on having studied certain subjects across multiple years of upper secondary, and fulfilling specific criteria, by the end of Year 13 (or equivalent), with rules about which subjects and how many. This means eligibility may not be based on achieving over a set threshold, though sometimes students need to pass subjects to get credit. Students receive grades for subjects.	Ontario, British Columbia, Victoria and New South Wales
Whole programme - aggregate grade	Eligibility primarily based on achieving an average or total numerical grade across a set number of subjects in upper secondary, with rules about which subjects must be taken (and sometimes other requirements too). For example, in France students receive a combined, weighted grade on a 20-point scale based on all their subjects. Generally, students must also achieve a minimum grade in all subjects by the end of Year 13.	Netherlands, International Baccalaureate (IB), and France
Achievement threshold	Eligibility is primarily based on reaching a set threshold, based on achievement of assessments. Unlike the above whole programme approaches, there is more flexibility with how students obtain it – so it is not based on achievement across a whole programme of study and could be based on an individual year.	Queensland and NCEA <i>Options 1 – 3 in this paper</i>

Annex 2: Analysis of options against the criteria

Key						
+++ Much better than the counterfactual	++ Better than the counterfactual	+ Somewhat better than the counterfactual	0 Neutral/no change compared to the counterfactual (current state NCEA)	x Somewhat worse than the counterfactual	xx Worse than the counterfactual	xxx Much worse than the counterfactual

Criteria	Counterfactual	Option 1: 4 subjects	Option 2: 3 subjects + minimum aggregate grade	Option 3: 3 subjects	Option 4: Individual subjects
Increasing credibility	0	+++ Feedback supports this option being easy to understand, rigorous and reliable measure of student achievement. Likely to be internationally recognised. Stakeholders may not be able to tell what students know and can do just based on its achievement – as that will depend on the specific subjects they take.	++ This option is likely to be perceived as more rigorous and reliable measure of student achievement. May be harder to understand than the counterfactual, due to including both subjects and an aggregate grade in the requirements – particularly as this will mean grades for subjects are numeric. Likely to be internationally recognised. Stakeholders may not be able to tell what students know and can do just based on its achievement – as that will depend on the specific subjects they take.	++ This option is likely to be perceived as a more reliable, easy to understand measure of student achievement. Feedback from engagement suggests it may not be perceived as rigorous by all. Likely to be internationally recognised. Stakeholders may not be able to tell what students know and can do just based on its achievement – as that will depend on the specific subjects they take.	+++ This option is likely to be perceived as a more rigorous measure of student achievement. Individual subjects are a more reliable measure of what students know and can do compared to an overall qualification. Some stakeholders, particularly in the short-term may perceive it as less credible and easy to understand because there is no minimum level of competency (including around foundational skills) as exists with NCEA. Though, similar systems (including Cambridge, A-levels, and School Certificate) have been perceived as highly credible – which may mitigate this risk. We expect that over time, the risk of this will reduce – clear communications and expectation setting could help. The only option that is directly internationally comparable. It would not be listed on the NZQCF, but this is not expected to be a barrier to international recognition. ¹⁰
Supporting high-quality, coherent learning programmes	0	+++ Strong incentive for coherent, deep learning, and requires students to achieve foundational skills. Most students are likely to be motivated to achieve multiple subjects as well, due to high bar.	++ Generally, strong incentive for coherent, deep learning, and requires students to achieve foundational skills.	+++ Strong incentive for coherent, deep learning, and requires students to achieve foundational skills. Many students will continue to be motivated to achieve breadth as well (in the same way most students attempt	++ Strong incentive for coherent, deep learning – as only subject achievement is recognised. Achieving Foundational Award is not required, but whether it is achieved included in certificate, and it will also be communicated as a credential to help students with their post-school pathways. This means generally

¹⁰ Listing a qualification on the NZQCF makes international comparability quicker to do when negotiating its recognition with other jurisdictions. Without an overall qualification, NZQA would use other tools to support benchmarking (such as how the curriculum aligns to the levels). NZQA does not consider there is a risk to international recognition, and many other countries have secondary qualifications that are not listed on their qualification frameworks.

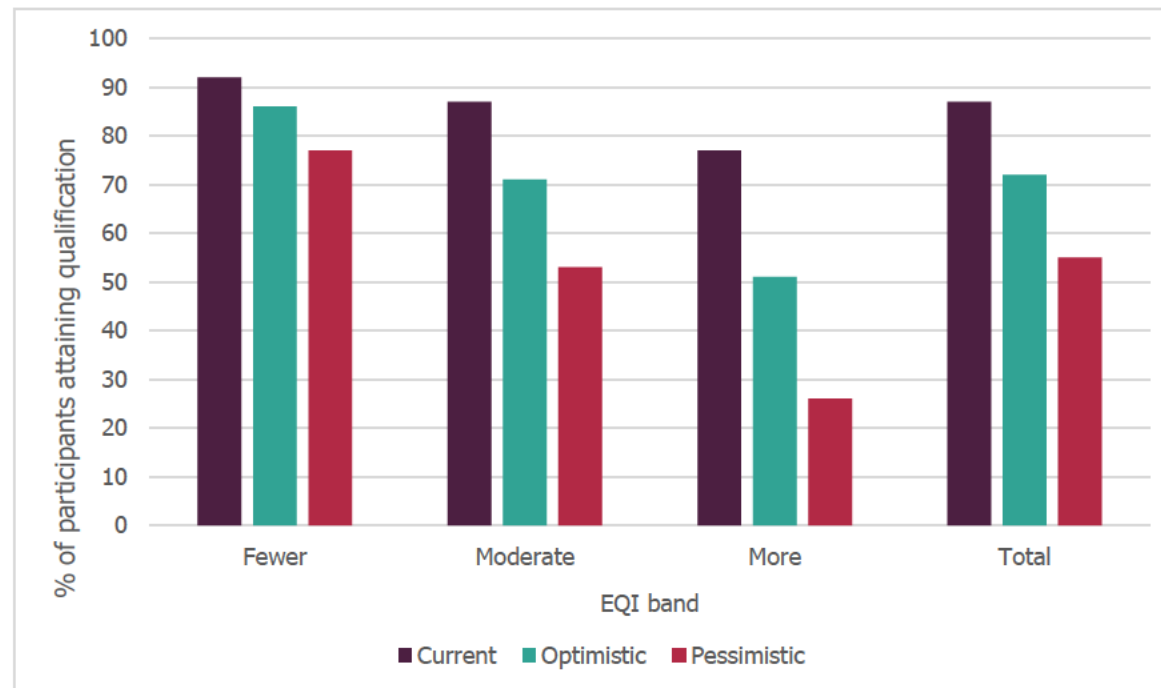
			Most students are likely to be motivated to achieve multiple subjects as well, due to higher bar. However, similar to with NCEA, enabling subjects that have not been achieved to contribute may undermine coherence. Some students may be less motivated to attempt all assessments in some of their subjects – for example, not taking exams.	more than 60 credits with NCEA), but some students may focus more strongly on three subjects, rather than all five subjects they are taking.	there are likely to be strong incentives for schools and students to achieve foundational skills, but there could be a risk of reduced focus for students who face more barriers to achievement. Monitoring behaviour would be required, and if focus weakens over time performance measures may need to be considered. The impacts on students' motivation to achieve multiple subjects could vary: - the lack of a minimum may encourage some students to attempt as many subjects as possible, to demonstrate a high level of achievement; - other students may choose to focus on maximising their grades in a smaller number of subjects, rather than achieving lower grades across a broader range. This may be influenced by university entrance. Because three subjects is the current requirement for this, this may become the “de facto” threshold for what is seen as an acceptable standard of achievement for some students.
Improving equity in post-school outcomes	0	x Overall – the risks are more certain given evidence about likely significant increased failure rates compared to the status quo, and known relationship between achievement and post-school impacts, which is why we have assumed the risks would outweigh the positive impacts. Positive impacts on equity because the option makes sure all students get access to coherent learning and a credible qualification – particularly priority groups that may have more incoherent learning programmes. This could support better longer-term employment outcomes. Previous modelling suggests this is likely to disproportionately impact ākonga Māori, Pacific students, disabled students and students at high EQI schools. For students who miss out, this is likely to have implications for their access to tertiary education and post-school employment incomes (e.g. reduced incomes, less time in employment). We understand from initial feedback from universities that their preference would be to lift the threshold for University Entrance to match NZACE. This option could encourage some students to leave school earlier	x Similar positive and negative impacts as option one. Equity risk may be slightly moderated by additional flexibility in how students achieve the qualifications – which may make it somewhat easier for some students who may specialise in a smaller number of subjects. But the difference is likely marginal.	0 Similar positive and negative impacts as option one but reduced negative impacts as threshold for attainment is lower. Because the requirements are effectively equivalent to the status quo, we have assumed that the positive and negative impacts (which are otherwise similar to options 1 and 2) may be more likely to balance each other out. Though, modelling still shows that there is still a risk of decreases to attainment.	+ Overall, the positive impacts are likely to outweigh the risks. The same positive impacts on equity as the other options – because the option makes sure all students get access to coherent learning and credible qualifications. Particularly priority groups that at the moment are more likely to have incoherent learning programmes. Plus avoids students having a negative signal of their capability because they did not achieve a qualification. May also be less risk (compared to the other options) of students disengaging due to concern about failure. But there may be more risk of schools offering significantly fewer subjects to some students, or having less focus on literacy and numeracy, because there is not a minimum threshold. Monitoring will be needed to identify and intervene in any streaming practices.

		than the counterfactual, which would add to the impact on attainment/post-school outcomes.			
Practical to implement	0	x May somewhat limit flexibility around how many subjects students take (most would need to take 5 full subjects). Students could require intensive support to ensure they are able to achieve (including outside of class time), and timetabling to respond to different student needs (including off site learning) may be complex. Alongside the curriculum changes, this may mean in the short to medium term it is harder to implement.	x May somewhat limit flexibility around how many subjects students take (most would need to take 5 full subjects). Students could require intensive support to ensure they are able to achieve (including outside of class time), and timetabling to respond to different student needs (including off site learning) may be complex. Alongside the curriculum changes, this may mean in the short to medium term it is harder to implement.	0 No significant change compared to current state. Would provide some flexibility for schools if a student needed to take fewer than five subjects (for example, due to health needs, off-site learning) without risking qualifications achievement.	0 No significant change compared to current state. Would provide the most flexibility for schools if a student needed to take fewer than five subjects (for example, due to health needs, off-site learning) without risking qualifications achievement.
Overall assessment	0	+ Delivers rigour and motivation for students, while being easy to understand - but risks harming post-school outcomes for some students, affecting equity.	0/+ Likely to be seen as rigorous but a complex option that may recreate the “top up” credit problem, and still could have risks for post-school outcomes.	+ Likely to be motivational, credible and easy to understand, and has lower risks to post-school outcomes, but some may see it as not aspirational enough	+ / ++ May help to maximise the benefits of a subject-based approach, while avoiding negative signalling by ensuring all students are recognised for what they have achieved. A more significant change in approach though, which creates more uncertainty about school and student responses, and will require careful communication to deliver the benefits to credibility

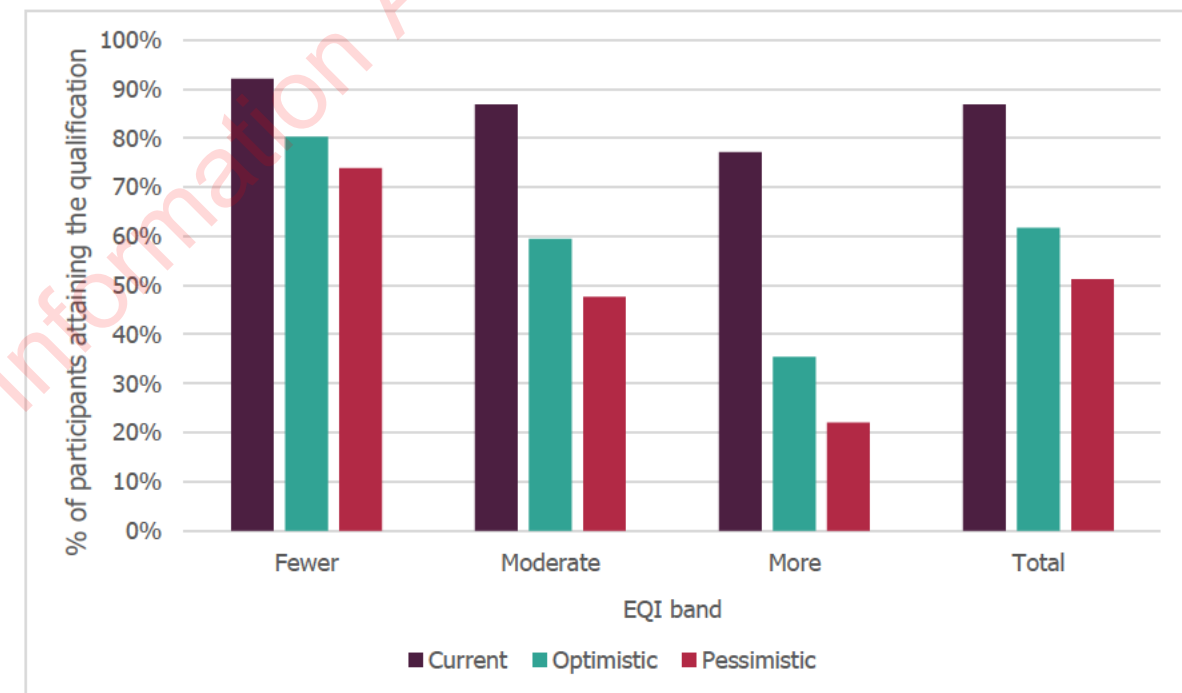
Annex 3: Modelling of attainment rates under different options

77. Current refers to NCEA Level 2 and Level 3 achievement. This is the same modelling we provided you 2025 (METIS 1346021 refers), but we have now included 4 subjects as well. We used 14 or more credits as a proxy for attaining a subject under the new qualification system (e.g. students who achieved 14 credits in History would be counted as achieving at least one subject). We made different assumptions about the potential increases to subject achievement for all groups under the changes. The optimistic scenario includes a higher increase in the number of subjects achieved, while pessimistic assumes less behaviour change. Under both scenarios, students who already achieved more than the threshold (e.g. 3 subjects for that option) are always treated as having achieved the qualification.
78. A big limitation is that this modelling only includes achievement standard subjects (as industry-led subjects do not exist yet, and there are generally not consistent packages of industry standards identifiable in the data). While the level of assumed increases to subject achievement may account for some of this, they are scenarios only, rather than exact forecasts. Note this is 14 or more of any type of credits (both internal and external) - students could attain 14 or more credits through just internal or just external standards.

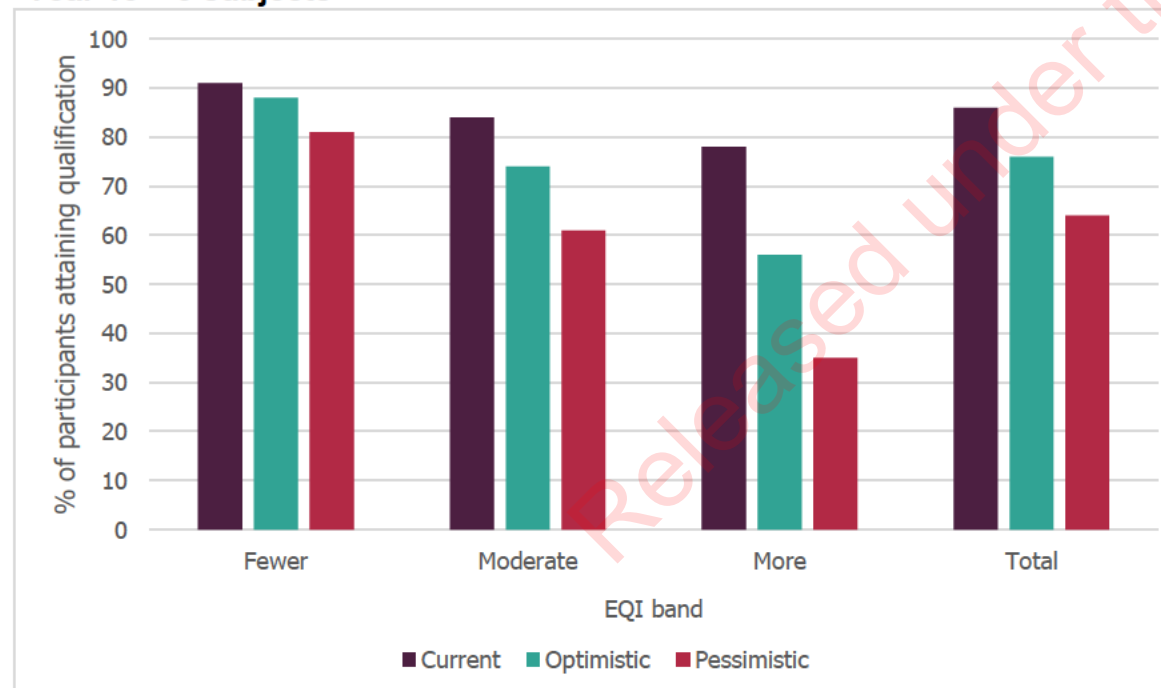
Year 12 – 3 subjects



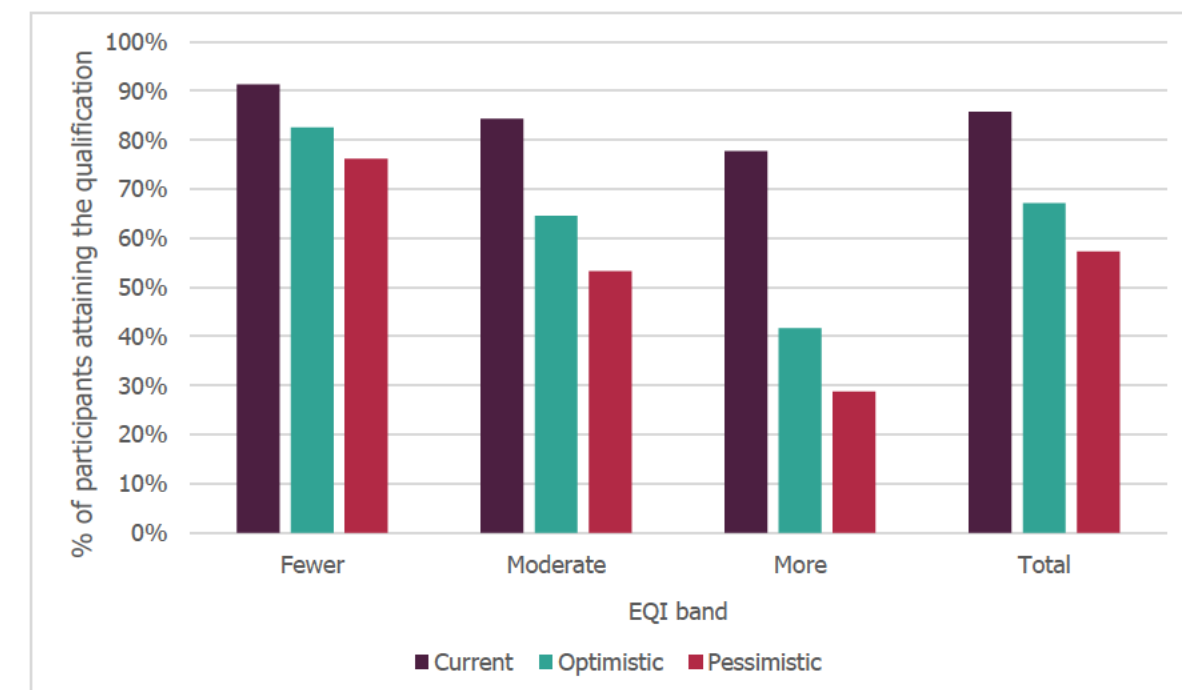
Year 12 – 4 subjects



Year 13 – 3 subjects



Year 13 – 4 subjects



From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 1:07 pm
To: 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Proactive release papers

Kia ora – happy to delay releasing the two papers I did the redactions for, as per your comments 😊

Ngā mihi,
Emma

9(2)(a) (she/her) | Graduate Policy Analyst | Curriculum and Digital Policy
Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy

9(2)(a)

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 11:55 am
To: 9(2)(a)
Cc: 9(2)(a)
Subject: Proactive release papers

[IN-CONFIDENCE - INTERNAL ONLY]

Kia ora

Thanks for all your work to get through proactive release – I’ve finished my review of the docs and just have a few minor comments for the papers in the table below. Could one of the reviewers for the paper take a look at my queries and let me know if you agree/disagree.

METIS	Title	Review	Comment
Outside of scope			

Outside of scope

1354351	Summary of submissions from public consultation on proposal to replace NCEA	9(2)(a)	Should we be releasing this now, given we're withholding the full report until after tranche 2?
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Outside of scope

I'll also confirm with GEMS that we don't release rapids or talking points proactively, as I think that's the assumption we've worked off (and I'm pretty sure is correct).

Thanks!

9(2)(a) [REDACTED] Pouwhakahaere Kaupapa | Te Pou Kaupapahere
Senior Policy Manager, Curriculum and Digital Policy

9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
National Office

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Released under the Official Information Act 1982

From: 9
Sent: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 12:30 pm
To: 9(2)(a)
Cc: 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Proactive release papers

[IN-CONFIDENCE - INTERNAL ONLY]

Thanks 9(2)(a) I have gone through your comments below and responded in red.

Happy to discuss (esp re the last point).

Kind regards,
9(2)(a)

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 11:55 am
To: 9(2)(a)
Cc: 9(2)(a)
Subject: Proactive release papers

[IN-CONFIDENCE - INTERNAL ONLY]

Kia ora

Thanks for all your work to get through proactive release – I’ve finished my review of the docs and just have a few minor comments for the papers in the table below. Could one of the reviewers for the paper take a look at my queries and let me know if you agree/disagree.

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Outside of scope			

Outside of scope

1354351

Summary of
submissions from
public consultation on

9(2)(a)

- Should we be releasing this now, given we're withholding the full report until after tranche 2?

Agreed- we should withhold

	proposal to replace NCEA		
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Outside of scope



I'll also confirm with GEMS that we don't release rapids or talking points proactively, as I think that's the assumption we've worked off (and I'm pretty sure is correct).

Thanks!

9(2)(a) Pouwhakahaere Kaupapa | Te Pou Kaupapahere
Senior Policy Manager, Curriculum and Digital Policy

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**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 4 June 2026 9:52 am
To: PARLIAMENT - 9(2)(a) >; PARLIAMENT - 9(2)(a)
Cc: 9(2)(a)
Subject: Proactive release - NCEA replacement docs

Kia ora kōrua

We're working on proactive release of all of the docs related to our policy work on NCEA – we have already had a few OIAs come in, one of which includes pretty much all of these papers. A list of all our advice is attached for your reference.

I wanted to test two questions with you.

Whether to proactively release papers that would fall within scope of most OIAs

We have a number of papers where the Minister has disagreed with the proactive release rec, but we have no grounds to withhold if they come under an OIA. As noted above, we already have an OIA that covers this paper.

In the attached table I have highlighted these pink. I wanted to test with you whether the MO thinks we should revisit the proactive release rec (which may have been circled as we were still working through the wider suite of design questions) or whether we continue to withhold and only release when requested under OIA.

Date for proactive release

Can we agree a date for when we get the proactive release finished and published on our website. We're marking all the documents up now and are keen to get this finished as soon as possible, as it gives us a better ability to manage the OIAs that come in and the narrative around them.

Does the MO have any preference for a proactive release date?

Thanks very much

9(2)(a) | Pouwhakahaere Kaupapa | Te Pou Kaupapahere
Senior Policy Manager, Curriculum and Digital Policy

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[IN-CONFIDENCE]

METIS	Name of paper	Date sent to MO	Minister approved proactive release?	Need to release under an OIA request?
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Outside of scope

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Outside of scope



[IN-CONFIDENCE]

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Outside of scope

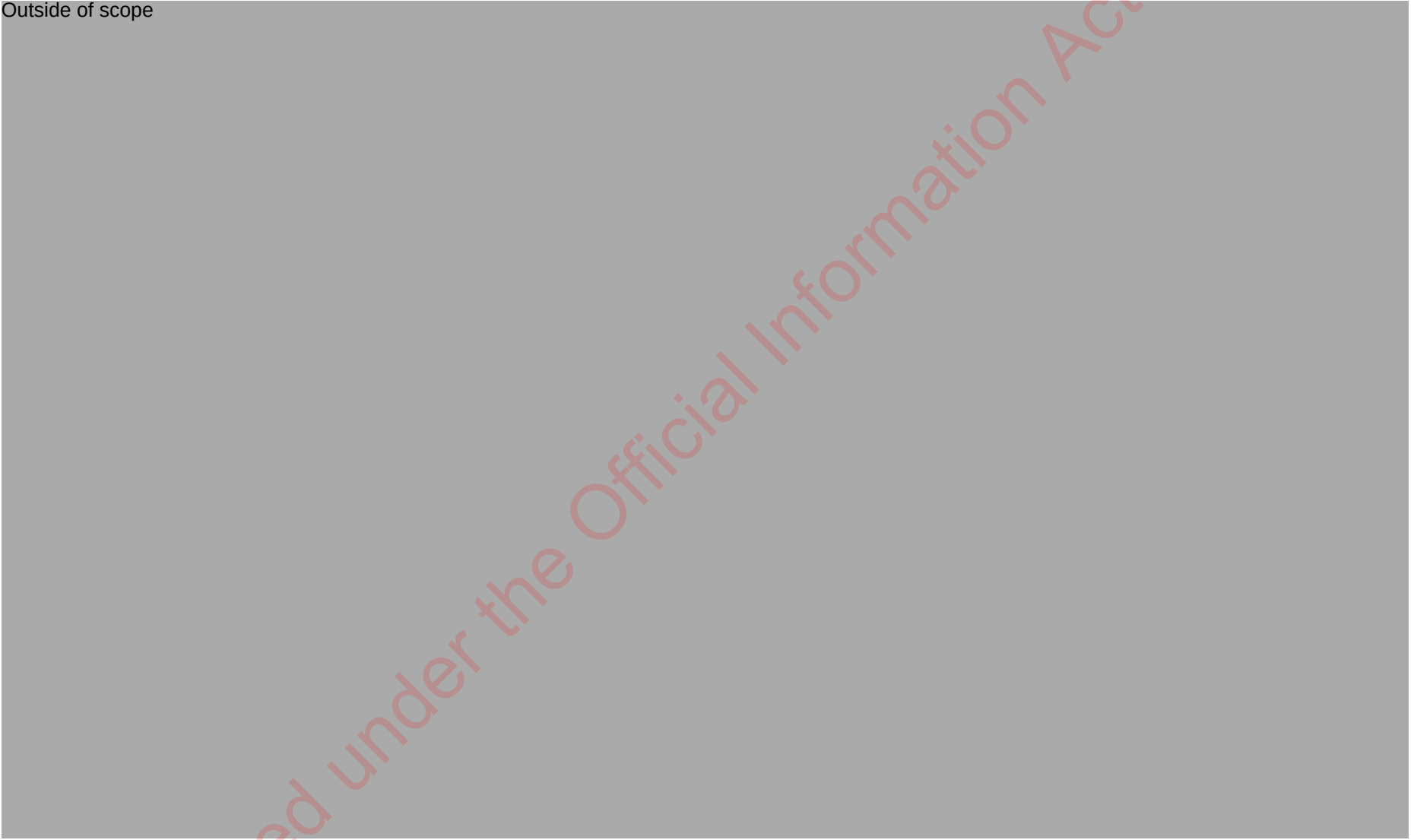
1354351	R – Summary of submissions from public consultation on proposal to replace NCEA	6 Nov 2025	Yes	Yes
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Outside of scope

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Outside of scope



[IN-CONFIDENCE]

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Outside of scope



[IN-CONFIDENCE]

From: [Andy Jackson](#)
To: 9(2)(a); [Jennifer Fraser](#); 9(2)(a)
Subject: Re: NCEA feedback from last year's consultation
Date: Wednesday, 5 August 2026 5:14:17 pm

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Perfect, I'm happy for you to go direct to Chris if you are OK with that.

Andy Jackson (he/him) Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy

Mobile +9(2)(a)
National Office

education.govt.nz

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From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 5 August 2026 09:01
To: Andy Jackson <Andy.Jackson@education.govt.nz>; Jennifer Fraser <Jennifer.Fraser@education.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) >
Subject: RE: NCEA feedback from last year's consultation

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Mōrena team

I think we could let Chris know that the report with analysis of submissions is going through the proactive release process right now, along with all of the other advice on the new qualifications, and we can send through an update once it has all been published?

As context - the qualifications proactive release material went to the Minister's office for review last week, which includes the summary of submissions report. Before this, there had been back and forth between MO/the proactive release team related to the release of TAG/PAG advice in the papers. Understand from the proactive release team that MO is aware of the need to publish, but they don't know for sure when we will get approval back.

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a) | Principal Policy Analyst
Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy

9(2)(a)

From: Andy Jackson <Andy.Jackson@education.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 5 August 2026 6:26 am

To: Jennifer Fraser <Jennifer.Fraser@education.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a)

9(2)(a)

Subject: NCEA feedback from last year's consultation

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Morena

Chris from PPTA asked me if/when they'd be able to see the feedback from the NCEA consultation.

I said I thought we would already have published the feedback analysis that went to the minister. If not when do you think we would be planning to?

Happy for you guys to send him an email or if I need to explain it to him then maybe I should?

Thanks

Andy Jackson (he/him) Hautū | Deputy Secretary

Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy

Mobile 9(2)(a)

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From: 9(2)(a)
To: cabercrombie@ppta.org.nz
Cc: 9(2)(a); [Jennifer Fraser](#); [Andy Jackson](#)
Subject: Proactive release - summary of submissions on replacing NCEA
Date: Thursday, 6 August 2026 8:52:40 am
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[UNCLASSIFIED]

Mōrena Chris

Andy has passed on your question about when the feedback from the NCEA consultation will be available, or if it is already.

There was a Summary of Submissions report, which has detailed analysis of the feedback received on the Discussion document. It is going through the proactive release process right now, along with all the other advice to the Minister on replacing NCEA. We will send you an update once it is all published.

Ngā mihi
9(2)(a) | Acting Senior Policy Manager
Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy

9(2)(a)
education.govt.nz

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