

Understanding NCEA

Part 1:

How does NCEA work?

- Each year, students study a number of courses or subjects.
- In each subject, skills and knowledge are assessed against a number of standards. For example, a Mathematics standard could be: *Apply numeric reasoning in solving problems.*
- Schools use a range of internal and external assessments to measure how well students meet these standards.
- When a student achieves a standard, they gain a number of credits. Students must achieve a certain number of credits to gain an NCEA certificate.

Standards

- A standard describes what a student needs to know or what they must be able to achieve.
- Some standards are internally assessed by teachers during the year. Other standards are assessed externally by NZQA at the end of the year e.g. in an exam or by a portfolio of work.
- Each standard has a defined credit value, usually between 2 and 6.
- Students can achieve two types of standard: unit standards and achievement standards.
 - **Unit standards** are competency based
 - **Achievement standards** are New Zealand curriculum based

Assessment Grades

- The grades that a student can earn depend on the type of standard being assessed.
- For **unit standards** all grades may be available, but usually there are just two grades:
 - Achieved (A) for meeting the criteria of the standard
 - Not achieved (N) if a student does not meet the criteria of the standard
- For **achievement standards**, there are four grades:
 - Achieved (A) for a satisfactory performance
 - Merit (M) for very good performance
 - Excellence (E) for outstanding performance
 - Not achieved (N) if students do not meet the criteria of the standard

Internal Assessments

- Internal assessments are used to assess skills and knowledge that cannot be tested in an exam, e.g. speeches, research projects and performances.
- These are either completed in class or at home.
- If done at home, there will be progress checks and an authenticity statement will need to be signed.
- Students must be in class for internal assessments unless an application for extension has been approved.

Extensions for Internal Assessments

The following are examples of acceptable reasons for an extension:

- School trips
- National representation
- Medical
- Bereavement

The following are examples of reasons which may not be approved:

- Leave from school for personal reasons such as trips overseas
- Failure of the student to manage their workload and meet deadlines

Watch a video explaining how NCEA works



Ctrl + click on the picture to watch the video

Understanding NCEA

Part 2:

Further Information

NCEA Requirements for a Certificate

Level 1
80 credits
at Level 1 or above

Including:
10 literacy credits
10 numeracy credits

Level 2
80 credits
at Level 2

Or:
60 credits
at Level 2 or above,
plus 20 credits
at any level

Level 3
80 credits
at Level 3

Or:
60 credits
at Level 3 or above,
plus 20 credits
at Level 2 or above

Recognising High Achievement

- **Certificates** can be 'endorsed' to reflect high achievement in a significant number of standards.
- **Course endorsements** will show that students have performed well in an individual course.

NCEA Certificate Endorsement

- A student's overall NCEA qualification will have an endorsement if he or she achieves 50 credits at Merit or Excellence.
- For instance, if he or she gets 50 credits at Merit or higher at Level 1, the certificate received will be NCEA Level 1 with Merit.

Course Endorsement

- Course endorsement recognises high achievement in each individual subject.
- To be eligible for a **Merit endorsement** a student must have 14 credits at Merit or higher in his or her course.
- To be eligible for a **Excellence endorsement** the rules are the same but the credits must be at Excellence.
- At least three of these credits must be internally assessed and at least three must be externally assessed.
- In Physical Education and Level 3 Visual Arts all fourteen credits may be internally assessed.

University Entrance

To gain University Entrance students must have:

- NCEA Level 3
- Numeracy (10 credits at Level 1)
- Literacy (5 specified reading credits and 5 specified writing credits from Level 2)
- Three university approved subjects at Level 3 with at least 14 credits in each

Acceptance into University

- University Entrance allows students to apply for a university degree course
- In addition, many universities require “points” for entry into a specific course
- Points are accrued from approved subjects with:
 - 2 points for each Achieved credit
 - 3 points for each Merit credit
 - 4 points for each Excellence credit
- Only the best 80 credits are counted
- Points required vary from 140-270
- NCEA is accepted by overseas universities
 - For details, see the [specific country requirements for the recognition of NCEA](#)

Scholarship

Scholarship is a monetary award to recognise top secondary school students.

Scholarship exams are externally assessed and are an additional set of exams.

They do not attract credits, nor contribute towards a qualification, but the fact that a student has gained a Scholarship appears on their [Record of Achievement](#).

Links for Past NCEA Assessments

- **Digital exams** will take place this year in:
 - English – Levels 1, 2 and 3
 - History – Levels 1, 2 and 3
 - Chinese – Levels 1, 2 and 3
 - Media Studies – Levels 2 and 3
 - Business Studies – Level 3
 - Correspondence courses in German, French and Classical Studies
- The link for past Digital Exams is <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea/>
- Paper exams are for all other subjects
 - The link for past Paper Exams is <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/>

Understanding NCEA

Part 3:

Changes to NCEA in 2020

(due to influences on student learning from Covid 19)

- Students working towards NCEA can gain additional credits, based on the number of credits they achieve during the 2020 school year.
- These additional credits will be known as Learning Recognition credits.

- For every 5 credits achieved through internal or external assessment, students are entitled to one extra Learning Recognition credit.
- Students studying for NCEA Level 1 can get up to ten Learning Recognition credits.
- Students studying for Level 2 or Level 3 can get up to eight Learning Recognition credits
- Students who don't complete their NCEA this year, will have their Learning Recognition credits count again in 2021.

Certificate endorsements and course endorsements

- To get a certificate endorsement this year you need 46 credits at Merit or Excellence level, instead of the usual 50. Your Learning Recognition credits won't count towards an endorsement.
- To get a course endorsement this year you need 12 credits at Merit or Excellence level in a course rather than 14. You still need to achieve at least 3 credits in externals and 3 in internals.

Changes to exam dates and portfolio due dates

- External exams for NCEA and Scholarship have been moved later to give students more time to learn and prepare.
- Please check the [updated exam timetable](#).
- KingsWay School's "Derived Grade Exams" (formerly known as mock exams) have been moved back to Week 2 in Term 4.
- Portfolio submissions (such as Art and Technology) have been moved later as well.

Changes to University Entrance

- UE requirements have been reduced from 14 to 12 credits in three UE-approved subjects. Students will still need to attain NCEA Level 3 and meet literacy and numeracy requirements to be awarded University Entrance.
- It is still important that students complete the standards necessary for the course of study they want to undertake at university. Check any important prerequisites with the relevant University.