

# STUDENT AND PARENT GUIDE TO NCEA - 2026

- ✓ **Read the contents of this booklet thoroughly**
- ✓ **Go over it with your parents/caregivers so they are also informed**
- ✓ **Ask any of your teachers, your Dean or the Principal's Nominee for advice or clarification if required**
- ✓ **Keep this booklet safe so that you can refer to it during the year**
- ✓ **A copy of this booklet is also available on the NCEA section of the Portal**

## NCEA

NCEA stands for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement and it is the main secondary school qualification in New Zealand. There are 3 levels of NCEA available. You gain credits towards these qualifications through assessments (internal - during the school year and external – at the end of the year). The number of credits varies for each task depending on time and difficulty.

## Requirements to achieve NCEA in 2026

- Level 1. You must gain 60 credits at any level **AND** achieve Level 1 Literacy (10 credits) and Level 1 Numeracy (10 credits) from specific approved standards.
- Level 2. You must gain 60 credits at Level 2 or above. You must also have Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy.
- Level 3. You must gain 60 credits at Level 3 or above. You must also have Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy.

**University Entrance** is the minimum requirement to go to an NZ University. To qualify you must have NCEA Level 3 plus 10 UE literacy credits (5 reading and 5 writing) from a specified list of standards at NCEA Level 2 or above. You must also have 14 credits at NCEA Level 3 in 3 approved subjects. For more information on University Entrance requirements see your Dean, the Principal's Nominee or [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

**Scholarship** is separate to NCEA. Scholarship is available in a number of NCEA Level 3 subjects and there are financial rewards for recipients of Scholarships. The same rules apply for Scholarship as for NCEA exams and NZQA manages these exams. For more information on Scholarship see your subject teacher.

## Endorsements

You can gain certificate or course endorsements at all levels of NCEA.

To get a **course** endorsed with Merit you need to achieve 14 or more credits with Merit or Excellence in that course. This must include at least 3 credits that are internally assessed and at least 3 credits that are externally assessed. The requirements are the same for an Excellence endorsement except all 14 credits must be at Excellence level.

To gain a **certificate** endorsed with Merit you must achieve at least 50 credits with Merit or Excellence at the level you are studying or above. For Excellence the requirement is at least 50 Excellence credits. You can check your status towards these targets by logging into the NZQA website.

## Course Statement and Assessment Plan

You will be given access to a course statement and an assessment plan for each subject at the beginning of the year telling you the achievement or unit standards in the course, details of resubmission procedures and further assessment opportunities, a calendar of internal assessments and assessments leading to external assessments (eg portfolios, practice exams and tests). Read this information carefully as not all standards will have a further assessment opportunity.

You will be given at least **TWO WEEKS notice** of the exact date of an assessment. This could be an assignment deadline or a checkpoint date for an extended project, or a test.

## Course completion

When you enter a course you are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in all activities. This includes completion of all tasks assigned by the teacher during the course. You will gain a grade for every internally assessed standard in a course you have entered (except where standards are optional as set out in a course guide).

## Moderation of internally assessed work

Subject departments have systems of internal moderation to ensure your assessment work is marked fairly and to the national standard. Samples of marked assessment are also sent away to National Moderators in each subject.

## Missed assessments and extensions of time

Make sure you understand the **conditions of the assessment** (for example, whether you can take assessment work home and/or work with other students) and the **deadlines** that apply to each assessment. **Late work for assessment will not be accepted except for the reasons outlined below.** All work must be handed in on the due date and all tests and in-class assessments must be completed on the given date.

If you cannot hand in an assessment on time or complete an in-class test or practical activity on the day, **fill in a 'Missed Assessment/Extension Application' form** (available from your teacher or Head of Faculty) as soon as you know you will be late with an assignment or will be absent; or as soon as you return to school, and give it to your subject teacher (not required for a school sponsored activity).

**Valid reasons** for requesting an extension of time, or a new assessment date include:

- **Sickness:** supply a medical certificate
- **Family or personal trauma:** supply a signed note from Guidance Counsellor or Dean
- **School sponsored activity:** a list of student names signed by coach/organiser will constitute approval for missing an assessment, unless it is an assessment not eligible for a further assessment opportunity, as detailed in the course statement.

In all cases, **it is your responsibility to fill in a 'Missed Assessment/Extension Application' form** and give it to the teacher whose assessment you will miss/ have missed.

The Head of Faculty (HOF) will either grant the extension and set a new assessment date or decline the extension.

Note that a request for an extension of time must be made BEFORE the due date for a planned absence, such as a sports trip. Furthermore 'Self-interest Leave' including personal time off and family holidays during term time are not acceptable reasons for an extension or reassessment.

If you have been given an adequate opportunity for assessment but you miss it or do not hand work in without a valid reason (as above) a Not Achieved grade will be reported to NZQA.

## Breaches of rules/Authenticity

**All work submitted for assessment must be your own original and independent work** and you will be required to sign a statement to affirm that work handed in has been completed by you. You must not accept undue assistance from anyone else (eg. other students (past or present), caregivers, teachers or tutors) when completing assessments. Unless explicitly stated in the assessment conditions, you should not use AI to plan, write or edit any assignments or assessments.

You will be required to reference your work and acknowledge any sources consulted. Plagiarism or copying from people (eg. students) or sources (eg. books or websites) is not acceptable in NCEA.

You could have your grade withdrawn if there is evidence that any breach of assessment rules has occurred, including inappropriately helping or hindering other students.

The course teacher will consult with the HOF and Principal's Nominee and any suspected incident will be investigated.

Where cheating or other misconduct or dishonest practice is found to have occurred in an internally assessed standard, you will be awarded a Not Achieved grade for the standard. Other penalties may be imposed by the Principal's Nominee or the Senior Leadership Team.

### Resubmissions

Schools may offer a resubmission opportunity to students only when a minor error prevents them from reaching an 'Achieved' grade.

The **only** change in grade boundary available for resubmissions is from 'Not Achieved' to 'Achieved.'

The resubmission will only be offered when students have made mistakes **that they should be capable of discovering and correcting on their own**. A resubmission will be limited to specific aspects of the assessment and **no more than one resubmission** will be provided per assessment opportunity.

### Further Assessment Opportunity

Where manageable, and after further learning has taken place, students **may** be offered a maximum of one further opportunity for assessment of a standard within a year. This is outlined on the course statement for each subject (see the subject page on Ultranet). Students that choose to complete the reassessment will be awarded the highest grade of the two assessments completed.

### Appeals – internal assessments

The appeal process can be used if you disagree with any decision relating to assessment: a grade awarded, provision of an assessment opportunity or extension of time or an allegation of breach of rules.

**Appealing grades awarded:** your teacher will explain the criteria for each grade for an assessment when it is handed back to you. If you think the decision is wrong you should discuss the grade with your teacher before appealing any assessment decision.

An appeal **must be made within two weeks** of the assessment being returned, using the Appeal form available from the student office, and giving it to the Head of Faculty or Principal's Nominee. A Deputy Principal is the final adjudicator in internal appeal decisions.

### Appeals – external assessments

You can apply for a reconsideration or review of an external grade when you receive your external examination booklets. You can do this by logging onto the NZQA website.

### Privacy

In keeping with the Privacy Act 2020, student names and results will not be posted in any form for others to view. Student work may be used as an exemplar only with permission of the student.

### School Exams

These will be held in Term 3 under the same conditions as the end of year exams. Results will be reported to students and parents. Evidence from school exams may be used to determine a derived grade at the end of the year if a student misses their exam or has their performance affected.

### Derived Grades

If an external exam is missed for health or compassionate reasons you can apply for a derived grade. See the Student Office or Principal's Nominee for more information on this process.

## Special Assessment Conditions

These are provided for students with identified needs for internal and external assessments as appropriate. Please see the Learning Support Co-ordinator Rob McHardy [ry@nelsoncollege.school.nz](mailto:ry@nelsoncollege.school.nz) for further information.

## Fees

Fees apply to international fee-paying students only.

## Results and National Student Number (NSN)

You will be given a National Student Number (NSN) which can be used to log into NZQA to look up your personal details, exam entries, your results and your Record of Achievement. You can also access your school assessment results by clicking on 'View Assessments' when you log into Ultranet.

Each term you will be issued with an end of term credit summary and results will also accompany the two sets of progress reports issued throughout the school year.

You will be required to sign to confirm your internal assessment results with your teacher to ensure they are reported accurately. If you think a grade is reported incorrectly see your teacher or the Student Office.

## Further information

Search the NZQA website: [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

See the NCEA area on the Nelson College site <https://sms.nelsoncollege.school.nz/index.php>

Contact Ms White (Principal's Nominee) [lw@nelson.school.nz](mailto:lw@nelson.school.nz) or Mrs Cahill (Student Data Manager) in the Student Office.

## NCEA changed in 2024, and adjusted again in 2025!

New Level 1 standards were introduced in the majority of subjects from 2024 onwards. New Level 2 standards won't be introduced until 2029, with new Level 3 standards being introduced in 2030.

In 2024 NZQA changed so that some external assessments at Level 1 were completed during the academic year, for example submitting reports, assessments and portfolios. Common Assessment Activities (CAAs) for literacy/numeracy are also completed through the year.

More external assessments at Level 1, and an increasing number of assessments at Level 2 and 3, will be held on-line through the NZQA portal. It is important that all students have access to, and know how to use, their own device.