

Cabinet Paper material

Proactive release

Minister & portfolio	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education, and Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education
Name of package	Timing of Mandatory Implementation of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy
Date considered	27 June 2022
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These documents have been proactively released:

Cabinet Minute: CAB-22-MIN-0241

Date considered: 27 June 2022

Author: Cabinet Office

Cabinet Office: SWC-22-MIN-0114

Date considered: 22 June 2022

Author: Cabinet Office

Cabinet Paper: Timing of Mandatory Implementation of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy and Annex

Date considered: 27 June 2022

Author: Hon Chris Hipkins and Hon Jan Tinetti

Some deletions have been made from the documents as the information withheld does not fall within scope of the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and is not relevant to the proactive release of this material.

You can read the Official Information Act 1982 here:

<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1982/0156/latest/DLM64785.html>



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee: Period Ended 24 June 2022

On 27 June 2022, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee for the period ended 24 June 2022:

Out of scope

SWC-22-MIN-0114

**Timing of Mandatory Implementation of the
NCEA Literacy and Numeracy**
Portfolios: Education / Associate Education
(School Operations)

CONFIRMED

Out of scope

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

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Timing of Mandatory Implementation of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy

Portfolios **Education / Associate Education (School Operations)**

On 22 June 2022, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1 **noted** that in February 2020, SWC agreed to implement the new mandatory literacy and numeracy co-requisite no earlier than 2023, as part of the NCEA Change Programme [SWC-20-MIN-0001];
- 2 **noted** that, at that time, SWC also noted that the shifts required to implement the co-requisite would be large, and that the Minister of Education would regularly review the sector's readiness and seek Cabinet's approval to amend implementation timelines as required;
- 3 **noted** that the Minister of Education and Associate Minister of Education (School Operations) have received advice from the Ministry of Education, and feedback from key sector leaders, which indicates that the quality of implementation would benefit greatly from a 2024 commencement;
- 4 **noted** the additional benefits of a 2024 commencement outlined in the paper under SWC-22-SUB-0114 in terms of alignment with implementation of the new NCEA Level 1 and the refresh of the New Zealand Curriculum and redesign of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, as well as providing schools and kura more time to digest the new *Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy* and *Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna*;
- 5 **agreed** that the mandatory implementation of the new NCEA literacy and numeracy co-requisite commence from 2024.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Hon Chris Hipkins
Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Peeni Henare
Hon Kiri Allan
Hon Aupito Williams Sio
Hon Meka Whaitiri
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Office of the Chair
Officials Committee for SWC

In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Education

Social Wellbeing Committee

Timing of mandatory implementation of the NCEA literacy and numeracy | te reo matatini me te pāngarau co-requisite

Proposal

- 1 We are seeking Cabinet's agreement that the mandatory implementation of the NCEA literacy and numeracy | te reo matatini me te pāngarau co-requisite commence from 2024.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 Introducing the co-requisite was one of the seven changes to NCEA agreed to by Cabinet in 2020 to strengthen NCEA for all New Zealanders and is being implemented through the NCEA Change Programme.

Executive Summary

- 3 In 2020 Cabinet agreed that changes to NCEA were needed to ensure all learners awarded an NCEA had achieved the level of literacy and numeracy required to engage with the world, particularly when it comes to employment and further education [SWC-20-MIN-0001 refers].
- 4 Accordingly, to strengthen the literacy and numeracy requirements, a 20-credit co-requisite has been developed, which students will be able to complete in English (literacy and numeracy) or te reo Māori (te reo matatini me te pāngarau). This co-requisite will sit outside the NCEA qualification, but successful completion of it will be required to receive an NCEA. The new unit standards for the co-requisite are external, explicitly assess literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau, and are set against a clear benchmark derived from our National Curriculum.
- 5 Advice provided by two Technical Advisory Groups in late 2019 emphasised that a system shift will be required to ensure learners are successful in meeting the co-requisite. For this reason, Cabinet:
 - 5.1 Agreed to implement the co-requisite no earlier than 2023.
 - 5.2 Noted that we would regularly review the sector's readiness for change and that we might seek its approval to amend implementation timelines [SWC-20-MIN-0001 refers].
- 6 The new standards and assessments are being piloted this year in over 200 schools, kura, rumaki, and tertiary providers following a smaller pilot last year. We had planned on making the readiness decision in September this year, following the outcomes of this year's first pilot assessment events.

- 7 However, the sector is seeking certainty as soon as possible on the implementation of the co-requisite and has requested that the decision be brought forward.
- 8 An indicator of the sector's need for more preparation time ahead of implementation is provided by the results from the 2021 mini-pilot. While small and non-representative (2313 entries drawn from a small number of schools, kura, and providers), these results, particularly those from the writing assessment for literacy, suggest that some work remains to be done to ensure that all NCEA learners are given an equitable opportunity to meet the new benchmark. If the co-requisite were to become mandatory in 2023, a considerable number of learners may not meet the co-requisite, which would add to existing stressors on the education sector.
- 9 A benefit from the point of view of schools, kura, and providers, is that delayed implementation of the co-requisite will mean that it aligns with full implementation of the new NCEA Level 1 achievement standards. While these components of the NCEA Change Programme can be implemented separately, we have heard concerns from the sector that having to replan NCEA Level 1 programmes twice over consecutive years is a potential workload burden.
- 10 A 2024 commencement will also help to strengthen alignment with the ongoing refresh of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) and redesign of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (TMoA). This five-year programme aims to ensure all ākonga experience rich and responsive learning.
- 11 The scale of the NZC Refresh and TMoA redesign over the next four years will place additional pressure on the teaching workforce at a time when they are also managing their way through significant uncertainty caused by COVID-19. As such, it is hoped that the additional year will provide the sector with sufficient time to digest Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna and the Literacy & Communications and Mathematics Strategy, which were released to the public on 25 March 2022, and whose implementation will support the development of the foundational skills the co-requisite assesses. We have attached at **Annex A**, an overview of the timing of the NCEA co-requisites in relation to these overarching work programmes.
- 12 We therefore seek your agreement that mandatory implementation of the co-requisite in all schools and kura commence from 2024, noting that schools, kura, and providers will still be able to opt in to use the new standards voluntarily next year, and we expect a large number to do so.

Background

- 13 As part of the NCEA Change Programme, new standards to assess literacy and numeracy | te reo matatini me te pāngarau will become a mandatory co-requisite to the qualification.
- 14 The Ministry of Education has developed the new unit standards and supporting resources, and NZQA is building the infrastructure needed to deliver the assessments at scale – with two open pilots this year having more than 200 schools and kura agreeing to participate.

- 15 We informed Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee that we would regularly review the sector's readiness for the change to literacy and numeracy | te reo matatini me te pāngarau and that we may seek your approval to amend implementation timelines [SWC- 20-MIN-0001 refers].
- 16 As part of preparing for the changes, the Government is:
- 16.1 Supporting a pilot of over 200 schools, kura, rumaki, and tertiary providers who have the opportunity to use the new standards in Term 2 and Term 3 this year. Pilot participants are supported through an NZQA and Ministry-led webinar series, and opportunities to connect and discuss the changes.
 - 16.2 Providing funding to Ministry regional offices who are recruiting/contracting personnel to support schools and kura that require accelerated support with PLD.
 - 16.3 Providing funding to Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa (Ngā Kura ā Iwi) and Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori (Te Rūnanga Nui) to support PLD initiatives for te reo matatini me te pāngarau.
 - 16.4 Developing online resources for literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau. Many of these have already been released on [NCEA.Education.govt.nz](https://www.ncea.govt.nz) and more will be released throughout 2022.
 - 16.5 Providing resources and support throughout the Accord Teacher Only Days on the changes.

Timing of the requirements

- 17 We were planning on making a decision in September this year on the timing of the changes. This would have considered the results of the first of two 2022 pilot assessment events and canvass the steps that the sector is taking to prepare for the changes. Following the outcome of that decision, schools, kura, and providers would have had from September through to December to prepare fully for the changes.
- 18 Sector representatives, including the Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA), Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ), and the Auckland Secondary Schools Principals Association (ASSPA) remain supportive of the policy intent but have advised that the change requires a greater lead time and that making a decision before September would provide greater clarity to the sector. This is largely due to the disruption caused by COVID-19 this year and the increasing pressure on schools and kura to deliver on the NCEA changes while focusing on the challenges of staff and student absences, and blended learning delivery.
- 19 The results from last year's pilot (while small and non-representative) also provide initial indications that the sector may not be ready for the changes to become mandatory in 2023. We will have greater clarity as to the magnitude of this risk following analysis of this year's pilot assessments.
- 20 Sector representatives have told us that there:

- 20.1 is a large degree of sector anxiety in the context of COVID-19 disruptions and associated workload concerns.
- 20.2 is a need for more time to digest the Literacy & Communications and Maths Strategy, and Hei Raukura mō te Mokopuna.
- 20.3 there are change management challenges within the sector, which are linked to COVID-19 disruptions. For example, an insufficient understanding of how to implement the changes at the school or provider level, such as the total number of credits that learners will require to attain NCEA Level 1.
- 21 Both Ngā Kura ā Iwi and Te Rūnanga Nui (the two peak bodies for Māori-medium education) agree that commencement of mandatory implementation of the co-requisite from 2024 would provide more time for kura to prepare.
- 22 The Professional Advisory Group also unanimously agree with a 2024 commencement date, and making a decision on this now.
- 23 Finally, additional time will help ensure that school and kura activity to support readiness for the NCEA changes is aligned to the intended direction for the common practice frameworks envisaged by the Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna and the Literacy & Communications and Mathematics Strategy.

Agreement sought

- 24 We are seeking your agreement that 2024 be the year in which the co-requisite becomes mandatory. Based on advice we have received from the Ministry of Education, we believe that the sector will be better positioned to implement these new requirements in 2024.
- 25 By making a decision earlier than planned, we will be able to provide the sector with greater certainty as to the timing of the changes. This will reduce sector anxiety regarding how to plan for the change; maintain sector commitment; and help to strengthen the connection between the new co-requisite, the wider NCEA Change Programme, and the new Literacy & Communications and Maths Strategy and Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna.
- 26 The decision will also not inconvenience those schools and kura who are on track in their preparations for mandatory change in 2023. The new co-requisite standards will still be available for use in 2023, but will not be mandatory. This means that schools, kura, and providers who wish to do so will be able to use the new standards next year as planned.

Financial implications

- 27 A decision to commence in 2024 does not carry financial implications for the NCEA Change Programme. While the additional year will provide an opportunity for the

sector to prepare for the changes, it will not impact the scale and resourcing of the planned support for the sector, which is already being implemented.

- 28 There are some small operational implications arising from a 2024 commencement, which can be managed within Change Programme funding.

Legislative implications

- 29 There are no legislative implications to the decision outlined in this paper.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory impact

- 30 There are no regulatory implications to the decision outlined in this paper.

Population implications

- 31 The new mandatory co-requisite is likely to impact attainment of NCEA qualifications. In particular, there is a risk that reductions in attainment will be more pronounced for population groups whom the education system currently underserves. These groups include Māori, Pacific, disabled, neurodiverse, and English-language learners. This government is investing in the system now to support these groups in their literacy and numeracy progress. The Ministry of Education will also be monitoring the success of these cohorts in the 2022 pilots.
- 32 Commencing the mandatory implementation of the standards in 2024 means that the Ministry of Education has a greater lead time to ensure there is appropriate support for the groups described above, including through the embedding of the *Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy* and *Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna*. This is an important benefit to this timing, which will help to ensure that NCEA remains an equitable and accessible qualification.

Human Rights

- 33 The decision sought in this paper is consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Consultation

- 34 In coming to the recommendation set out in this paper, we have sought advice from a range of sector representatives. This includes my Professional Advisory Group and Māori-medium peak bodies: Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa (Ngā Kura ā Iwi) and Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori (Te Rūnanga Nui).
- 35 The Ministry for Education has also consulted with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the Ministry for Social Development, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, the Office for Disability Issues, and NZQA, all of whom are supportive of the decision to commence mandatory implementation in 2024.

Communications

- 36 Following your approval, the Ministry will prepare a written press release for distribution. In addition, once we have published the press release, the Ministry will use targeted communications to inform key stakeholders of the decision, and will also share the decision via the School Bulletin and other channels. All communications will articulate the rationale for the 2024 commencement and reinforce existing messaging to schools, kura, and providers that they need to continue to prepare for the changes ahead of mandatory implementation in 2024.

Proactive Release

- 37 We intend to proactively release this Cabinet paper and other key documents relating to the development of the paper, subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

- 38 The Ministers of Education recommend that the Committee:
- 38.1 **note** that Cabinet has previously agreed to implement the new mandatory literacy and numeracy co-requisite no earlier than 2023, as part of the NCEA Change Programme
 - 38.2 **note** that we indicated at the time that the shifts required to implement the co-requisite would be large, and that we would be considering the sector's readiness before potentially seeking Cabinet approval to amend implementation timelines
 - 38.3 **note** that we have received advice from the Ministry of Education, and feedback from key sector leaders, which indicates that the quality of implementation would benefit greatly from a 2024 commencement
 - 38.4 **note** the additional benefits of a 2024 commencement in terms of alignment with implementation of the new NCEA Level 1 and the refresh of the NZC and redesign of TMOA, as well as providing schools and kura more time to digest the new *Literacy & Communication and Maths Strategy* and *Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna*.
 - 38.5 **agree** that the mandatory implementation of the new NCEA literacy and numeracy co-requisite commence from 2024
 - 38.6 **note** that we intend to announce this decision via a written press release.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

Hon Jan Tinetti

Associate Minister of Education

Annex 1 – High-level timeline showing alignment of mandatory implementation of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau co-requisite with the NZC Refresh, TMoA Redesign, and wider NCEA Change Programme (i.e., Review of Achievement Standards)

	The New Zealand Curriculum Refresh	Redesign of <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i>	NCEA Change Programme (i.e., Review of Achievement Standards)	NCEA Literacy and Numeracy Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau
2022	<p>Learning area design and feedback: Mathematics and Statistics, and English</p> <p>Literacy & Communications and Mathematics Strategy released</p> <p>Refreshed Social Sciences tested and made available by mid-year</p>	<p>Agree upon framework and structure for redesign.</p> <p>Wānanga to design supporting material.</p> <p>Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna released</p>	<p>Pilot Te Ao Haka (80+ schools and kura)</p> <p>Mini-pilot of NCEA Level 1 subjects and Wāhanga Ako (around 100 schools and kura)</p> <p>Development of NCEA Level 2 subjects and Wāhanga Ako</p>	<p>Pilot Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Literacy and Numeracy (200+ schools, kura and tertiary providers)</p>
2023	<p>Refreshed Mathematics and Statistics, and English Learning Areas available.</p> <p>Learning area design and feedback: Technology, The Arts, and Science</p>	<p>Te Takanga o Te Wā implementation</p> <p>Implementation design for <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i> redesign.</p>	<p>Implement Te Ao Haka (across NCEA Levels 1-3)</p> <p>Full pilot of all NCEA Level 1 subjects and Wāhanga Ako</p> <p>Pilot NCEA Level 2 Te Reo Māori (mini-pilot)</p> <p>Mini-pilot of all TMOA NCEA Level 2 Wāhanga Ako</p> <p>Development of NCEA Level 3 subjects and Wāhanga Ako</p>	<p>New NCEA Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Literacy and Numeracy standards available for use in all schools and kura but not mandatory until the beginning of 2024.</p>
2024	<p>Refreshed Technology, The Arts, and Science Learning Areas available</p> <p>Learning area design and feedback: Learning Languages, Health and Physical Education</p>	<p>Kura begin to implement redesigned <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i>.</p>	<p>New NCEA Level 1 fully implemented</p> <p>Full pilot of all NCEA Level 2 subjects and wāhanga ako</p> <p>Mini-pilot of NCEA Level 3 Te reo Māori</p> <p>Mini-pilot of all TMOA NCEA Level 3 Wāhanga Ako.</p>	<p>Mandatory implementation of NCEA Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Literacy and Numeracy</p>
2025	<p>All schools using the refreshed <i>New Zealand Curriculum</i> by the end of 2025</p>	<p>All kura begin to transition to redesigned <i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i></p> <p><i>Te Marautanga o Aotearoa</i> Gazetted</p>	<p>New NCEA Level 2 fully implemented</p> <p>Full pilot of NCEA Level 3 subjects and Wāhanga Ako.</p>	