



Education Report: Transition Options for Implementation of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Corequisite

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide you with information on the current implementation approach for the new NCEA Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau corequisite and to provide advice on alternative transition options to a full implementation of the corequisite.

Summary

- 1 We are preparing to implement the new Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau corequisite in 2024 and have confirmed our implementation approach. This involves bringing in the corequisite for all levels of NCEA simultaneously. The new Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau standards will be the only way to meet NCEA's requirements from 2024, although prior attainment of literacy and/or numeracy would continue to contribute towards NCEA.
- 2 The new standards are being piloted this year and can be used optionally next year, providing schools with an opportunity to test the standards and prepare ahead of them forming a corequisite to the qualification. To help with this transition, we have created a range of resources and support for schools and kura that are available online. Additional resource has also been provided to Ministry of Education regional offices to support literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau in schools and kura. alongside additional support through the Government's loss of learning package. While it is scheduled to form a corequisite in 2024, learners will have opportunities throughout their schooling journey to attain the corequisites.
- 3 There are risks with implementation of this corequisite, however. Pilots to date suggest that implementation in 2024 could decrease NCEA attainment, particularly for the early cohorts (i.e. learners currently in Years 8 and 9) who have not benefitted from a stronger focus on literacy and numeracy during their schooling. There is a careful

balance to be struck between strengthening the qualification and maintaining its credibility – placing positive pressure on the system to improve teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy, and not unfairly disadvantaging students, impeding their post-school options.

- 4 Instead of implementing in 2024, mandating the corequisite could be deferred. Instead of a delay, there are option to develop a specific transition arrangement for a period, targeting specific cohorts, maintaining momentum and a focus on improving literacy and numeracy for all, while reducing the short-term barrier to NCEA attainment.
- 5 One option involves credentialling literacy and numeracy through existing methods, but with a curated selection of assessment standards which more appropriately reflect the relevant competencies. We could also strengthen the marking or moderation of these contributing standards; however this may incur additional funding requirements for NZQA. It may add complexity to the system and workload, but if implemented effectively and consistent with the long-term vision for the corequisite, it should support positive shifts in pedagogical practice.
- 6 Another option we have considered is a certification/badging of the new standards to maintain a focus on the new standards and to signify the benefits of achieving them, but we do not recommend this. Options are explored further in the sections below. If you are interested in either deferring the corequisite or implementing a transition arrangement, we will provide you with further advice.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **Note** the confirmation of a simultaneous approach to implementing the corequisite at all levels of NCEA in 2024

Noted

- b. **Signal** if you would like further detailed advice on options to:

- i. Delay implementation of the corequisite past 2024

Yes **No**

- ii. Develop a transition plan to support learners by:

Temporarily amending the draft new Literacy and Numeracy Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau standards or developing new transition standards. (<i>Not Recommended</i>)	Yes No
Curating the list of assessment standards contributing to NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements to align more strongly with the new NCEA corequisite.	Yes No
Strengthening marking and moderation of standards contributing to NCEA literacy and numeracy by NZQA	Yes No
Create a system of badging or credentialling attainment of the new standards instead of introducing them as a corequisite. (<i>Not Recommended</i>)	Yes No

c. **Note** that strengthening marking and moderation of standards contributing to NCEA literacy and numeracy by NZQA may require additional funding

Noted

d. **Agree** not to proactively release this report at this time.

Agree / Disagree



Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre

04/11/2022



Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

06/11/2022

Background

1. Through the NCEA Review process, the Ministry of Education strongly heard concerns about the level of literacy and numeracy of NCEA graduates. The Ministry of Education, the Ministerial Advisory Group, and the Professional Advisory Group provided Minister Hipkins with consistent advice that the literacy and numeracy component of NCEA needed to be strengthened.
2. Through the NCEA Change Package, Cabinet agreed to implement a new 20 credit corequisite to NCEA, specifically assessed, which would come into effect in 2023 pending sector readiness [CAB-20-MIN-0023 refers].
3. Following development of the standards and assessments and a mini pilot in 2021, Cabinet agreed to change 2023 into a transition year, recognising the impacts of COVID-19 disruption and our advice on the state of sector readiness, with the corequisite becoming mandatory from 2024 [CAB-22-MIN-0241 refers].
4. The Ministry and NZQA are preparing for implementation in 2024 and are continuing work to build supports and ensure the standards and assessments are valid, appropriate, and accessible [METIS 1297298 refers].

Using New Achievement Standards to meet NCEA Literacy and Numeracy Requirements

5. New achievement standards are being developed across a full range of subjects to replace all the existing ones. These are due to be implemented in 2024 for NCEA Level 1, and 2025 for Level 2 and 2026 for Level 3. We have tested the new Level 1 standards through a mini pilot this year, ahead of a larger pilot next year.
6. One of the primary ways literacy and numeracy are currently credentialed towards NCEA is through the attainment of standards which provide scope for learners to demonstrate literacy and/or numeracy capabilities at the appropriate level. Over 800 assessment standards can currently be used to gain literacy credits, and over 100 for numeracy. Alongside credits towards an NCEA, achievement against these standards provide credits that count towards the relevant literacy and/or numeracy requirement.
7. As many learners are participating in the pilots across 2021-2023, we have provisionally 'tagged' the new draft standards as contributing to the current literacy and numeracy requirements as appropriate. This means learners who are piloting the new standards are not disadvantaged compared to their peers regarding opportunities to meet NCEA's requirements (e.g., a learner participating in the pilot Level 1 Mathematics and Statistics standards will have opportunities to achieve towards NCEA's numeracy requirements).
8. Under current planning, we only need to 'tag' draft Level 1 standards for the purposes of piloting (and Level 2 standards for the Kaupapa Ako Māori and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa standards being mini piloted in 2023). However, we can maintain the provisional 'tagging' of these standards, and tag new Level 2 and 3 achievement standards if required.

Planning the Implementation of the Corequisite at Each Level of NCEA

9. The provisional planning for the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau corequisite involved making it mandatory sequentially (NCEA Level 1 in 2024, Level 2 in 2025, and Level 3 in 2026). This approach would primarily impact the cohort currently in year 9 currently and follow them through NCEA. However, it would mean that in 2024 and 2025, schools would have to manage multiple methods of credentialing Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau requirements

simultaneously for different learners. The current public communications around this transition are high-level, and we had previously signalled that we would confirm and clarify the arrangements later this year.

10. Following testing with your Professional Advisory Group, we have confirmed our baseline approach for implementing the corequisite in 2024. This simplifies the transition for schools and teachers, supporting them to focus on effective pedagogy and clear expectations for NCEA without creating barriers for students.

Baseline approach for implementation of the new corequisite in 2024 for all levels of NCEA

11. Our confirmed approach means that the existing methods of attaining literacy and numeracy for NCEA would expire ahead of the 2024 school year. The new standards in Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau would therefore be the only way to credential literacy and numeracy towards NCEA at every level from 2024 onwards. This also means that the new achievement standards only need to be 'tagged' against literacy and numeracy for the purposes of piloting through to 2023 at this stage.
12. Any previous attainment of literacy and/or numeracy (under any of the existing methods, or through piloting the new standards) would still count towards all NCEA qualifications – meaning no learners would have to attain literacy and numeracy twice over the transition period (through to 2027). From the perspective of teachers and schools, any learner who has not yet met literacy and numeracy requirements will have to use the new standards so there will be a single method to support from that point forward.
13. Currently NCEA is an 80-credit qualification, although 20 credits used towards NCEA Level 2 and 3 can be at a single level lower than the qualification (e.g. 20 credits used for NCEA Level 2 can be at Level 1), known as the 'carry-over'. NCEA would become a 60-credit qualification at all levels in 2024, removing the 'carry-over' but with the 20-credit co-requisite required for qualification attainment (for the purposes of transitional cohorts, prior attainment of NCEA counts towards the corequisite component).
14. Students aiming for NCEA Level 1 in 2024 (generally the current Year 9s) would still have to attain the new standards. The majority of Year 12 and 13s in 2024 would have attained literacy and numeracy previously, so only have to meet the 60 credit requirements of the qualification.
15. Those impacted by our approach are primarily those without prior attainment of literacy and numeracy (e.g. new international students, or those who do not do NCEA Level 1). These learners would need to meet the new corequisite standards, but also only have to attain 60 credits towards their NCEA alongside the co-requisite, instead of the 80 credits required within the current NCEA.
16. A benefit of our revised approach to implementing the corequisite at all levels of NCEA simultaneously is that it simply involves changing which standards can contribute to meeting particular NCEA requirements across all qualifications if they haven't already been met. This means if you wish to pursue alternative qualification arrangements, (resulting in changes to the timing of the co-requisite implementation or to the standards which contribute during a transition period), it is more straightforward to enact and clearer to communicate to the sector.
17. The messaging material on this transition approach was contained in the draft communications plan, provided to your office to support the recent pilot results release [METIS 1297298 refers]. This has been published on the NCEA.Education webpage (where all the new NCEA materials are available).

High level Options for Transitioning to the new NCEA Corequisite

18. Functional literacy and numeracy capabilities are important in enabling young people to have access to ongoing education, training, and work opportunities. As agreed by Cabinet [CAB-22-MIN-0241 refers], we are preparing to implement the corequisite as mandatory from 2024. Implementation does contain risks as these standards may be difficult for some learners, providing a barrier to their attainment of NCEA.
19. Learners will have multiple opportunities across a number of years to meet the standards and there are supports in place to help prepare teachers and learners for the corequisite. However, the results from pilots to date and feedback from schools suggest that implementation in 2024 could decrease NCEA attainment, particularly for the early cohorts (i.e., learners currently in Years 8 and 9) who have not benefitted from a stronger focus on literacy and numeracy during their schooling. There is a careful balance to be struck between strengthening the qualification and maintaining its credibility – placing positive pressure on the system to improve teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy, and not unfairly disadvantaging students, impeding their post-school options.
20. We have conducted analysis of a range of options for the transition to the new corequisite becoming mandatory. All of the options would likely result in mixed responses from the sector and if you wish to explore these further, we can provide you with detailed advice on specific options. Any changes would need to be agreed and announced by the middle of 2023 to provide schools and teachers time to prepare for impacts on teaching and learning programmes, and for the Ministry and NZQA to finalise any technical arrangements.

Delay implementation of the corequisite

21. Through to the middle of next year, it remains an option to defer the corequisite implementation. This would provide more opportunity for the associated pedagogical shifts across primary and secondary education, which would better set up all learners to achieve the new standards. Given how important these competencies are for all young people, we believe there are risks to delaying. There would likely be some loss of momentum towards the practice shifts we are trying to encourage through the corequisite, with risks that many future learners continue leaving school without being functionally literate or numerate. It may also impact the credibility of the qualification, as the challenges with the current credentialling approach for NCEA literacy and numeracy are widely known.

Other transitional arrangements

22. Instead of a delay, there are options to develop a specific transition arrangement for a period, targeting specific cohorts. This provides opportunities to maintain momentum and a focus on improving literacy and numeracy for all, while reducing the short-term barrier to NCEA attainment. It would likely add complexity to the system and may mean workload for the sector. However, if implemented effectively and consistent with the long-term vision for the corequisite, it should support positive shifts in pedagogical practice. Options are explored further in the sections below.

Specific Transition Arrangements

23. Rather than fully implementing the new corequisite in 2024, a temporary method of attaining literacy and numeracy could be available for a short period of time to support learners in the transitional cohorts. We have identified three broad options to accomplish this;

- Option One - Changing the draft new Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau standards
- Option Two - Developing separate temporary standards
- Option Three - Changing the selection of assessment standards which contribute to NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements under existing settings.

24. We do not recommend developing specific new standards for the purposes of a transition or temporarily changing the new draft standards (Options One and Two), as these would likely add significant complexity and planning for schools, teachers, and NZQA) while undermining the intent and nature of the new standards. The lack of familiarity with the standards and the assessment against them would likely cause additional teacher and student workload and anxiety. It would also undermine the level of functional literacy reflected by the upcoming corequisite if the sector became accustomed to the new levelling – making it difficult to change to the appropriate level in the future.

Option Three - Using a curated list of assessment standards as a transition measure

25. Instead, we would recommend that any transition approach uses the existing methods of credentialling literacy and numeracy, which the sector is familiar with, but limits the contributing standards in a way that partially realises the intent of the upcoming corequisite.

26. Currently, NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements can be met through a wide range of achievement and unit standards, including a specific package of literacy and numeracy unit standards. Across the different methods, over 800 assessment standards can currently be used to credential literacy and over 100 for numeracy. We anticipate this number reducing as the fewer, larger standards are implemented from 2024 through the Review of Achievement Standards, but provisional ‘tagging’ of draft achievement standards for piloting shows that it would still be broad and permissive with current settings. A transition arrangement could significantly change this, through further limiting the contributing standards. This could include:

- a. Focusing on a narrower list of ‘tagged’ assessment standards which more clearly require learners to assess the relevant competencies. Compared to the current assessment standards (and the draft new achievement standards provisionally ‘tagged’ for the purposes of piloting), this would significantly reduce the number of standards which can contribute, especially to the literacy component.
- b. Focusing on using existing unit standards, e.g. the specific 10 credit packages of unit standards for each of literacy and numeracy and relevant Reo Māori unit standards.

27. We have not conducted full analysis on what would be the most appropriate combination, but at this stage recommend any potential response consider:

- How familiar teachers, schools, and students are with the form(s) of assessments, and their frequency of use.
- The extent to which the available standards would explicitly assess the relevant competencies, at what level, and how comprehensively.
- What impact it could have on programme design and learner course selection.

- Overall, how credible and reliable the selection of available standards is as a measure of literacy and numeracy.
28. The impact of such a transition would depend on the assessment standards which can contribute. If the contributing standards were broad and permissive, it could be seen as a simple deferral of the corequisite, carrying the same risks.
29. If the contributing standards during the transition are restrictive in ways that support assessment of functional literacy and numeracy, then more momentum towards widespread effective practice would be maintained. However, it could lead to the same attainment risks of implementing the corequisite in 2024, although to a lesser degree as it is not assessed through a standardised test.

NZQA marking or moderation

30. One of the complexities within the current system is that most of the contributing assessment standards contain literacy and/or numeracy components within specific subject contexts and the standards themselves do not include specific literacy or numeracy outcomes. While there are strong benefits in having these competencies contextualised in teaching and learning, it does mean they are not directly assessed, and learners are likely achieving standards without having specifically demonstrated and been assessed on their literacy and/or numeracy competency.
31. Alongside tightening up the contributing standards, we could explore options to make the assessment methods and oversight more like those of the co-requisite standards. This could involve only 'tagging' externally assessed achievement standards. While this would still not be direct assessment of literacy and numeracy, being externally assessed, the nature of the assessment and methods of assessment (eg examination, common assessment activity, portfolio) and nature of the evidence produced would more closely resemble the former. The assessment activities would also be set and marked by NZQA. However, as literacy and numeracy would not be the focus of the assessment and marking process, specific feedback to teachers (and learners) on those competencies would still not be available.
32. Another option could involve having a very limited number of contributing internally assessed standards specifically assessed by teachers and moderated by NZQA from a literacy and numeracy perspective. If you would like further advice on this, we will work through the extent this is feasible with NZQA. This option may incur additional costs which NZQA cannot absorb out of baseline, and we will include any funding requirements in future advice.

Badging the New Standards

33. One of the key risks of not implementing the new corequisite at all, rather than simply deferring making the standards compulsory, is a reduction on the focus on functional literacy and numeracy and learners continuing to leave school without the necessary competencies to succeed in life, work, and further education. A potential mitigation to this is to create specific recognition for learners who achieve the new standards, even if it isn't a mandated corequisite required to attain an NCEA. This was considered by the Ministry, the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) and the Professional Advisory Group (PAG) when providing advice on the original NCEA Change Package and has been publicly suggested more recently.
34. The Ministry, MAG, and PAG advised the Minister of Education that the new standards should form a corequisite to the qualification, rather than being credentialled distinctly [

METIS 1178879 refers]. Since its introduction in 2002, NCEA has always made claims that it credentials literacy and numeracy. Separating out functional literacy and numeracy from qualification requirements would likely reduce the credibility of NCEA overall and diminish the value of the qualification for learners who do not meet the new corequisite. This risks strongly reducing the benefits of qualification attainment for learners unable to meet the new corequisites, but also may result in a reduction of focus on supporting them to be able to attain it. This could undermine one of the key changes of the NCEA Change Package, which is to strengthen literacy and numeracy.

35. We have conducted early work on a potential badging of the new standards as an alternative to them forming an NCEA corequisite, however. While not recommended, at this stage our best advice would be that learners would receive recognition separate to NCEA, rather than badging or recognition within the qualification. Clearly differentiating learners within their qualification attainment (i.e. have an NCEA attained 'with Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau') would likely exacerbate the risks above. Instead, this could take the form of light-certification – automatically generated and available through a student's individual learner login. This would be accessible by learners alongside their Record of Achievement, showing that they have achieved the new standards and could be presented to potential employers or education providers as required.
36. Instead of replacing the corequisite with a badging system altogether, it could instead be used as a temporary measure to add further support to a transition option. If the standards were to be temporarily badged, it would maintain a focus on the new standards and the level they reflect for schools and teachers during the transition period. However, the risks to students identified above would still exist, albeit for a shorter period of time.

Next Steps

37. We released information on the simultaneous implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau corequisite at every NCEA level in 2024, as part of the communications aligned to the release of the 2022 pilot data.
38. Regarding transition options, we will conduct further work and provide you with detailed advice at your direction.

Proactive Release

39. We recommend that this Education Report is not released at this time to enable further advice on this topic from the Ministry without prejudicing any future decisions.