



## Briefing Note: Release of results for the Literacy and Numeracy, Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau 2022 pilot first assessment event

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2022	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:


- **Note** that results of the 2022 Literacy and Numeracy, Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau pilot first assessment are scheduled to be released on 21 October.
- **Note** that the results release will include some early actions that the Ministry and NZQA will take in response to what we have heard from pilot participants and wider stakeholders this year. We will also be releasing:
  - a. an evaluation report following the first assessment event (we have attached a draft version to this briefing note).
  - b. the Common Assessment Activities from the first assessment event this year.
  - c. assessment reports from assessment event one that talk through the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot cohort.
  - d. further information for schools and kura on transition arrangements and administering the standards next year.
- **Agree** that this Briefing will not be proactively released at this time, until the results are released publicly.

**Agree / Disagree**

## Summary

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- As part of changes to strengthen NCEA, new standards to credential literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini me te pāngarau will become a mandatory component of the qualification from 2024.
- Over 200 schools, kura, and tertiary providers have participated in a pilot this year involving two assessment events, one in June and one in September. Students have received their results for the first assessment event but not yet for the second. Due to the high public interest in the pilot, we plan on releasing the cohort results of the first assessment event on 21 October.
- We have commissioned Evaluation Associates to carry out an evaluation of the 2022 pilot. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation will help the Ministry and NZQA to improve the assessment experience and implementation support. This will be uploaded alongside the results release. We have attached a draft version of this report to this Briefing Note.
- We will use the results release to also provide an update to the sector on transitional arrangements for the new standards as well as information about using the standards next year. In addition, we will be releasing the Common Assessment Activities from the first assessment event, as well as the associated Assessment Reports. These go through the strengths and weaknesses of student cohort who sat the assessment.
- We will also communicate what actions NZQA and the Ministry are taking in response to the findings and recommendations. This includes: strengthening the inclusive design of the assessment, exploring ways to provide individualised feedback to students, publishing the assessment paper from the first 2022 assessment event, reviewing the construction of assessment items, examining the levelling of the assessment items, and strengthening guidance for Special Assessment Conditions.
- We will provide your office with a copy of the communications plan in the interest of no surprises. We have also attached the draft version of the evaluation report.

  
Ellen MacGregor-Reid  
Deputy Secretary  
**Te Poutāhū (Curriculum Centre)**

14/10/2022

Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Associate Minister of Education**

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## Background

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2. On 7 September [METIS 1294694 refers] we provided you with an update on the release of the first assessment event results for the 2022 NCEA literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini me te pāngarau pilot. You agreed to the public release of those results on 26 September.
3. On 23 September [METIS 1296829 refers] we provided you a further update to advise that the date of release would be changed to the week of 17 October in order to incorporate further learnings from the pilot and analysis of results. This release will take place on 21 October.
4. The results release on 21 October will include:
  - a. the results that were included in our briefing to you on 7 September
  - b. additional information on next steps for the Ministry and NZQA
  - c. an evaluation report following the first assessment event (we have attached a draft version to this briefing note)
  - d. the release of the assessment reports from assessment event one that talk through the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot cohort
  - e. the release of the Common Assessment Activities from the first assessment event this year.
5. We have not reproduced the results in this briefing as they have not changed from the 7 September briefing, but we have outlined the additional information and next steps that we will incorporate into the release. The results will be released on [NCEA.Education.govt.nz](https://NCEA.Education.govt.nz), the website for new NCEA materials and information regarding the new NCEA qualification.

## Pilot overview

6. As part of the changes to strengthen NCEA we are piloting new literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau standards. These are assessed through a Common Assessment Activity, with the option of portfolio assessment for te reo matatini me te pāngarau.
7. The standards are levelled at 4/5 of the National Curriculum whereby students have some control of Level 4 and are ready to work at Level 5. This is the level determined by our external Technical Advisory Groups to reflect the internationally recognised levels of literacy and numeracy required for learning, life, and work. Experts looked at the level defined by the international benchmark – the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) – and levelled this with National Curriculum measures.
8. The Common Assessment Activities involve an online assessment, that schools and kura deliver across a set week at a time of their choosing. The assessments include selected response items, and short form answers, with the writing and te reo matatini assessment also having a long-form writing/tuhituhi component. The assessments do not have a time limit but are developed to each take about an hour. In the numeracy and pāngarau assessment, students are able to use a calculator and ruler, and text to speech technology is available to all learners in the numeracy and writing assessments. The writing and tuhituhi assessments have a word count function and the numeracy assessment has a spellcheck.

9. As covered in the briefing to you on 23 September [METIS 1296829 refers], the 2022 pilot for new NCEA standards for literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini me te pāngarau involves two assessment events. The first was 27 June – 1 July and the second was 19 – 23 September. Schools who participated in the first assessment event have received their results. Schools who participated in the second assessment event will receive their results on 21 November.
10. A key feature of a pilot year is to test the standards and assessments with schools and students with a view to strengthening them. This is so that by the time the new standards become mandatory in 2024, we can have confidence that the standards and assessments are valid, robust, and inclusive. The 2022 pilot builds off learnings from the 2021 pilot. In 2021, a handful of schools and kura took part. In the first assessment event this year, 138 schools and kura and 4 tertiary providers participated, with 16,038 students completing one or more assessments in total. 81.9% of the participants were in Year 10.
11. As part of ensuring that we are learning from the pilot and adopting necessary refinements to the standards and assessment, we have organised for Evaluation Associates to carry out an evaluation of the pilot. The evaluation report will include insights and recommendations following quantitative and qualitative analysis from the pilot. At this stage, the Ministry and NZQA are working through the draft recommendations of that report.
12. In summary, the findings are telling us:
  - a. The assessments are generally performing well against the content of the standards. Psychometric analysis was not able to be carried out for te reo matatini me te pāngarau due to the small cohort, although this will occur for the November assessments.
  - b. Breakdown of achievement by ethnicity and decile shows significant differences in achievement. This is the same for students in tertiary settings, realm country schools, and English Language Learners. This likely speaks to wider system issues that need addressing to support literacy and numeracy skills across the whole pathway, but we will also investigate whether the assessments are contributing to this.
  - c. A number of teachers perceive the numeracy assessment to have an unjustified focus on literacy. In addition, a small number of teachers saw opportunities to improve the assessments' contexts and questions to be more inclusive and relevant, and for questions to be more clear. These matters will be reviewed in the design of future assessments.
  - d. Generally, teachers felt the process for administering the CAA was straightforward. However, there are a number of opportunities to improve the technical and logistical components of the assessment to support equity of access.
  - e. e-asTTle can be used as a readiness tool to support assessment of student readiness by teachers. Over half of pilot students had recently entered an e-asTTle score. Students with a score of 4A or above have a more than 50% achievement rate. Students who had scored 5A in e-asTTle had a 98% achievement rate in Literacy (reading), 96% achievement rate in Numeracy, and a 77% achievement rate in Literacy (writing), noting that there is a partial match with what e-asTTle sets out to measure.

- f. Schools and kura are at different stages of preparation/readiness for the changes. Schools and kura require further support to understand the standards, Curriculum levels, and what readiness looks like for a learner. The report recommends webinars and in-school PLD to support teachers' understanding and practice in this area.
- g. Schools and kura would also like more assessment specific materials that help Common Assessment Activity preparation. Some have said they would like the return of student papers. A range of other resources and tools are also recommended such as case studies for managing the CAAs, collaborative spaces for schools, incorporating activities into units of work, resources to support levelling, and guidance for te reo matatini me te pāngarau in the context of marau-ā-kura.
- h. The report reinforces the vital role that teachers have in this change and the need to highlight positive experiences going forward.

The Ministry and NZQA will continue to work through the findings of the report in preparation for the assessment events in 2023.

- 13. We have also already agreed to the following next steps based on what we are hearing.

#### **What we are hearing and how we are responding**

- 14. **Culturally inclusive design:** We have heard from a number of pilot participants and wider interested stakeholders that it is important for the assessment format and assessment items to be culturally inclusive, particularly for Māori and Pacific learners. This is also important in order to meet the objectives of the NCEA Change Programme. We have heard particular concerns on this relating to the literacy and numeracy assessments (as opposed to te reo matatini me te pāngarau assessments).
- 15. As part of the development process NZQA has endeavoured to make the assessments inclusive. However, they recognise that more could be done. New frameworks will be incorporated into the assessment design process to ensure that assessments are designed to be culturally inclusive. To support this process, NZQA have brought on additional personnel with specific expertise.
- 16. **Individualised student information:** Both the Ministry of Education and NZQA have heard from pilot participants that the release of individual scripts to learners would help students and teachers to understand where they went wrong and how to prepare for the next assessment.
- 17. Up to this point, NZQA has not released individual scripts to learners. A focus of changes to NCEA is to shift the current emphasis from assessment to teaching and learning. An emphasis on individual scripts may encourage 'teaching to the test' teachers focusing on particular assessment items at the expense of the broad range of skills that fall under foundational literacy and numeracy. Students may also be misled to expect similar questions from a previous year. Instead, schools have been encouraged to use existing Curriculum Progress and Assessment Tools to understand where learners are at and what their next learning steps might be, ie. tools that have been designed for this specific purpose such as e- Assessment Teaching and Learning Tool (e-asTTle), Progress and Achievement Tests (PATs) and the Learning Progression Frameworks (LPFs). In addition, NZQA has concerns releasing scripts as this can undermine the process of developing a robust and consistent question item bank that can be built up and used over time to ensure intra- and inter-assessment comparability.

18. Despite this, schools (and in particular school leaders) have voiced ongoing concerns around not having any kind of individualised information about learners that can assist in preparation for future assessment. This is particularly the case when the assessments are new and schools and kura are working their way through understanding effective ways of preparing learners. NZQA is therefore exploring ways in which individual student information can be made available to students and their teachers, without necessarily releasing the script itself. While still in the exploratory phase, NZQA intends to have this in place in time for the assessments in 2023.
19. For this year's assessment, we will publish assessment reports on [NCEA.Education.govt.nz](https://www.ncea.govt.nz) that provides cohort level information about strengths and weaknesses of student performance. These can be used to point teachers in the direction of where their students as a cohort might have done well and where they might have struggled. An interim report for each standard was provided to pilot schools following the first assessment event and we will be publishing these as part of the release.
20. **Past assessment activities:** For reasons similar to those for not returning individual scripts, past assessment activities are not available to students or teachers. However, we have heard through the pilot (in particular from teachers) that making past assessments available would support them in understanding how to prepare students for the assessment as teachers would have a greater understanding of how the outcomes of the standard can be represented across assessment items.
21. At present, teachers and students are able to access the 2021 Common Assessment Activities. A version is also publicly available, with some items redacted for copyright reasons, and some removed as they do not reflect what items will look like in the future (so could be misleading). In response to feedback from the sector, and in order to provide more updated examples, NZQA will be releasing the first Common Assessment Activities from the 2022 pilot for teachers and students to access. The publicly available version on [NCEA.Education](https://www.ncea.govt.nz) will have redactions, subject to copyright. A non-redacted version will be able to be accessed by teachers through their school's NZQA provider login. This will provide teachers and students with an additional useful assessment resource to prepare for the assessment going forward.
22. **Assessment construction:** The Common Assessment Activities mostly consist of short form responses and selected item responses, with writing requiring two longer pieces up to 250 words. NZQA will continue to use the latest evidence and analysis relating to robust and inclusive assessment design in order to ensure that questions are fair and provide construct validity ie. that the items target the outcomes of the standard and do not unintentionally assess skills that are outside the standard. Students' assessment experiences also help inform NZQA's assessment design.
23. **Levelling of assessment items:** The standards are explicit in their intention to cover Curriculum Level 4/5, whereby students have full control over Curriculum Level 4 and are ready to work at Curriculum Level 5. This reflects international norms for these foundational skills. Ensuring that each component of the assessment accurately captures this Curriculum level requires a very careful selection of texts, questions, and scenarios, as well as a careful consideration of marking schedules. NZQA uses highly qualified experts to support this process and seeks assurance through psychometric testing of items carried out by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER).
24. To further strengthen this process, NZQA and the Ministry of Education are conducting further analysis on the readability of assessment items in the Common Assessment Activities that builds on previous analysis. NZQA will consider this analysis in the next round of assessment development and will adapt the construction of assessment items for 2023 as appropriate.

25. **Universal design:** It is important that the standards, assessments, and supports are designed in a way that is inclusive to all learners. This will be a focus of design and development going forward, both in relation to the design of assessments/resources and in relation to the assessment and qualification settings.
26. **Special Assessment Conditions:** Schools and kura are able to administer Special Assessment Conditions as part of the pilot. The process is devolved to individual schools and kura, meaning they do not need to make a formal application to NZQA in order to provide Special Assessment Conditions for learners. The Ministry and NZQA will continue to make Special Assessment Conditions available in this way in 2023 as a means to providing barrier-free access for students to these conditions. In order to support this process for 2023, NZQA will provide further guidance for schools and kura to support them applying these conditions, as well as updated guidance for reader-writers.

### Teaching and learning

27. The above improvements primarily relate to the design and development of the Common Assessment Activities. However, we also know that improvement in student achievement will rely on the strength of teaching and learning environments and how well students and teachers are supported to enable literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini me te pāngarau in the classroom.
28. We will therefore continue to build on the resources and approaches that have been developed and set out in our briefing to you in September [METIS 1294694 refers]. In particular, we will:
- a. Continue the regional support provided to schools and kura, noting that this is a targeted intervention and will not reach all students preparing for the new standards. However, we will continue to use this initiative to target schools and kura with cohorts of learners that require accelerated support for students. In 2023, our focus will be to ensure that this initiative supports Māori and Pacific students in English-medium environments; and has a stronger focus on consistent practice for students in kura Māori settings.
  - b. Refine and upgrade our online resource offering, including providing:
    - i. specific advice on how teachers can use the June assessment tasks and assessment reports alongside other literacy and numeracy resources in time for the late November TODs.
    - ii. more specific information for portfolio assessment for te reo matatini me te pāngarau standards.
    - iii. co-constructed te reo matatini me te pāngarau resources online.
    - iv. an online curated resource bank for literacy and numeracy (ie. recognising that there are a range of resources currently available, but they can be difficult to find).
  - c. Review and strengthen materials that support assessment readiness, such as using resources to familiarise students with the Assessment Master platform and the nature of assessment items, as these differ from those they have experienced previously for example, how to engage with selected response items.

- d. Schools and kura can also access funding as part of the Government's COVID-19 loss of learning initiatives, including additional teaching and learning tutoring for students.
29. As noted in our previous advice to you, we would be happy to provide further options for strengthening short-term options to support students with literacy and numeracy, te reo matatini me te pāngarau foundational skills. These would primarily leverage off existing models (such as the regional support initiative) so that they could be implemented quickly and effectively in 2023.
30. We also note the ongoing work related to the implementation of the action plans for the Literacy, Communications and Maths Strategies and Hei Raukura Mō Te Mokopuna.

## Key Risks and Benefits

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31. There is a risk that the education system is perceived poorly due to the results. Literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau are important foundational skills that are expected to be a core component of our education system. However, the release of the results will continue a national conversation on how the education system and partners (community and whānau) can continue to support these skills so young people are set up for success in learning, life, and work.
32. The implementation of the standards and assessment may impact NCEA attainment, particularly in the short-term. We will continue to monitor the assessment results in the second assessment event and in 2023. Based on this, we will begin to build a picture of what the impact on NCEA attainment could be (noting that we will not know for certain until we are able to observe school leaver data). This will enable to you have a fuller picture of what NCEA attainment could look like at the school-leaver level in the short- to medium- term.

## Communications

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33. It is recommended the full set of results are published on 21 October.
34. We expect interest in the results to continue and are working with NZQA colleagues to be ready to respond to questions from media and others as they arise.
35. In particular, there may be more questions about the perceived difficulty of the assessments so it will be important to emphasise the work undertaken to ensure they are fair and levelled correctly.
36. Heightened interest has the benefit of increasing awareness about the necessary changes and the wider community's responsibility to support young people to gain critical foundational literacy and numeracy skills.
37. These assessments mark the beginning of what will be a long-term effort by the whole sector, supported by Te Poutāhū, to lift expectations and to increase capability in a key area of learning.

## Next Steps

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38. We are updating our communications materials to reflect the updated information set out in this briefing. This will be released publicly on 21 October. We will provide your office with a copy of the web material on the basis of no surprises.



## Proactive Release

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39. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released following the 21 October release. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Proactively Released