

Education Report: NCEA Review: Provisional Subjects List for Level 1 and Cabinet Paper on the Change Package

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	30 January 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1218401
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No
Consulted	NZQA		

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- **Note** that before we convene further Subject Expert Groups in 2020 to develop new Level 1 Achievement Standards for trial in 2021, we recommend a process of setting a provisional subject list for NCEA Level 1 for public engagement before finalising a list before April 2020.
- **Agree** to lodge the updated Cabinet Paper on the NCEA Change Package for the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee meeting on 12 February, incorporating our advice from our previous Education Report on Literacy and Numeracy [METIS 1218133 refers] and this report.

Summary

- 1 The Ministry of Education has produced a Provisional Subject List for NCEA Level 1 which gives effect to Cabinet's vision of a broader, foundational NCEA Level 1 with fewer, larger standards within more coherent courses. This is intended to better prepare learners for increasing specialisation from Level 2.
- 2 We intend to initiate further public engagement to test the subjects we have identified for Level 1 development (the provisional NCEA Level 1 subject list), beginning with subject associations before including the sector and the public. Some key issues and risks have been identified that we intend to actively manage and mitigate as the review process proceeds. Note that this process is for *New Zealand Curriculum* subjects only, with a different process for Māori Medium derived from *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* subjects as per the recommendations.

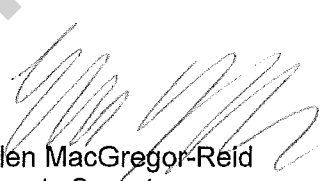
- 3 We are also currently seeking feedback from the sector on products developed through a Trial and Pilots process for Science, English, Visual Arts, and Religious Studies. Based on the Trial and Pilots process which produced these products, we have confidence that the development process is fit to be scaled up for the Review of Achievement Standards commencing once a list of subjects is finalised (before April 2020).
- 4 We have updated the Cabinet Paper on NCEA Change Package following your feedback at the Agency meeting on 27 January and incorporating our recommended changes, including those relating to literacy and numeracy. We have attached the updated paper (including the proposed provisional NCEA Level 1 subject list) for your review ahead of lodgement on 5 February for the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC) meeting on 12 February.

Recommended Actions


The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **Agree** to lodge an updated Cabinet paper (attached) on the NCEA Change Package by 5 February for Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (meeting on 12 February) (para 36)
- Agree / Disagree**
- b. **Note** that the Ministry intends to release the provisional subject list for NCEA Level 1 (*New Zealand Curriculum* subjects only) for public and sector engagement for a period of four weeks (e.g. 18 February to 18 March), and that we will work with your Office to confirm our communications approach (paras 19-20; 37-38)
- Make this 2 months.* **Noted**
- c. **Note** that once the Level 1 subject list is finalised, the Ministry can scale-up the process used for Trial and Pilots subjects and establish Subject Expert Groups (before April 2020) and lead the development of the required products for the new NCEA Level 1 subjects over 2020, for potential trial in pilot schools in 2021 (paras 10-11)
- Noted**
- d. **Note** that for subjects derived from *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, further sector engagement is recommended before a provisional list can be set, which aligns with the sector and Ministry's established model for Māori Medium Achievement Standard development, but this list may be subject to change following Cabinet decisions on the refresh of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, and that in the interim the subjects under development can be released (paras 32-34; 38)
- Noted**
- e. **Note** that subject list selections for NCEA Levels 2 and 3 are not to be set at this point, and will be done at a later point, ahead of development of Level 2 standards in 2021 (para 14)
- Noted**
- f. **Indicate** if you have feedback on the Ministry's provisional subject list
- Yes / No**
- g. **Agree** to proactively release this report at the appropriate time (subject to Cabinet approval). (para 42)

Agree / Disagree


Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

30/1/20


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

8/2/20

Background

1. As noted previously [METS 1217583 refers] the Ministry of Education is positioned to begin the next step in the Review of Achievement Standards (RAS). RAS is the most significant implementation step in the NCEA Review as the new Achievement Standards are the key means to implement the NCEA Change Package.
2. Before the Review of Achievement Standards can begin we need:
 - a. Cabinet to confirm decisions on NCEA.
 - b. To confirm the list of subjects which will be developed at NCEA Level 1 in 2020 as part of the Review.
3. This paper provides you with updates on the above areas. The below diagram shows how these decisions fit into the wider Review of Achievement Standards work stream over the next five years.

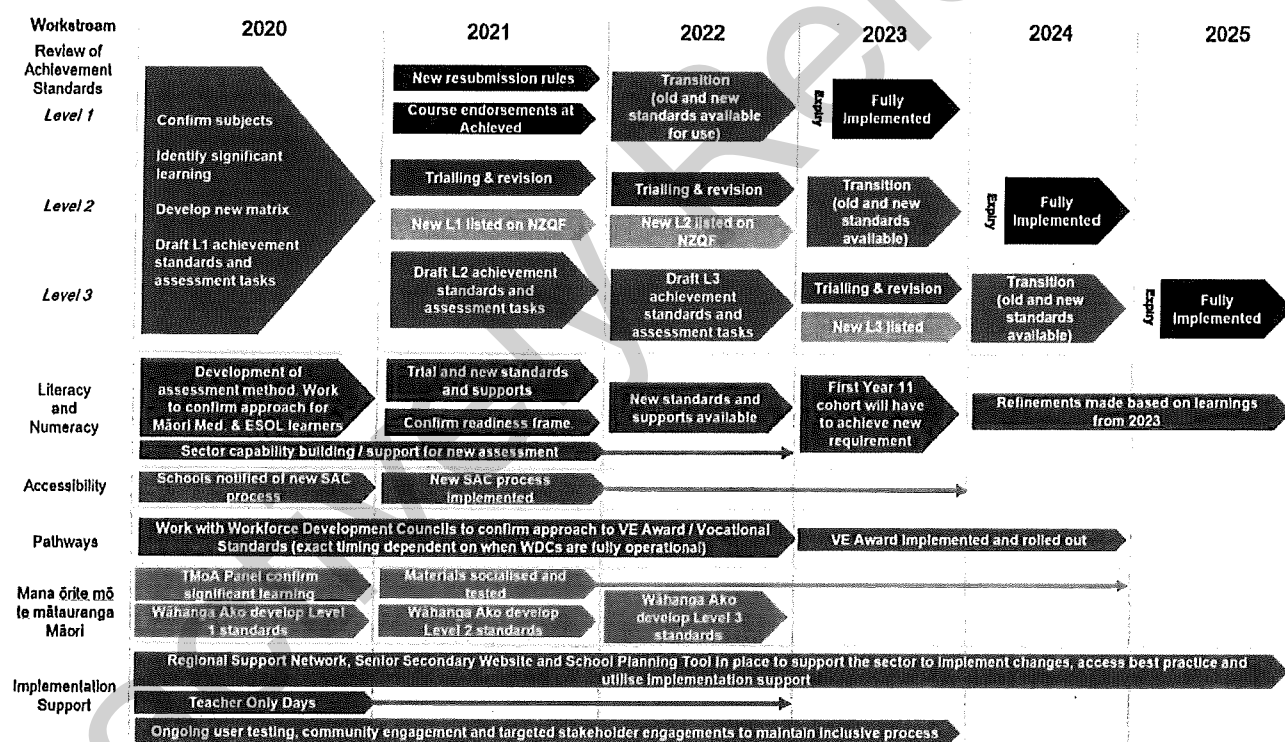


Diagram: overview of the NCEA Change Package showing the Review of Achievement Standards alongside related work streams

4. This Education Report unpacks the process to identify and develop subjects derived from the *New Zealand Curriculum*, and also provides an update on the development of subjects and standards which align to the wāhanga ako of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. The subject list and development of standards for these subjects are being developed through a parallel process which aligns with the sector and Ministry's established model for Māori-medium Achievement Standard development. How this fits into the wider work stream can be seen at a high level in the above diagram.

Update on Trial and Pilots (Science, English, Visual Arts, and Religious Studies)

5. The Trial and Pilots process has allowed us to test the way in which we will be redeveloping the new standards alongside the education sector through the Review of Achievement Standards (the RAS). We intend to apply the same methodology used for the Trial and Pilots process to the RAS.
6. Four subjects are being redeveloped through the Trial and Pilots: Science, English, Visual Arts, and Religious Studies (all are currently included in the proposed provisional list). The Trial and Pilots process has two phases:
 - a. Phase 1 (ends 1 March 2020) – includes the initial development of a Learning Matrix, Assessment Matrix (as well as draft Achievement Standards and learning and assessment activities for Science) and a Rationale document that explains them.
 - b. Phase 2 (February – 24 April 2020) – includes user testing, incorporation of feedback and further development of these products including additional materials to support teachers with implementation in their schools. These include a detailed Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Guide and exemplar teaching and assessment activities and programmes.
7. The products developed in phase 1 were released on 10 December 2019 for sector feedback (closing 1 March 2020). To date, we have received 107 responses across the four subjects, with the majority of responses regarding Science and English. We expect to receive increased responses over the next month as schools begin for the year.
8. The proposed changes to Level 1 Science have been greater than for the other three pilot subjects, leading to more potential concern from members in that part of the sector and teaching community. Our communications planning includes supporting the Science SEG which developed the content to explain it to colleagues in the teaching profession, and working with the sector via subject associations and other avenues improve understanding and support change.
9. So far, the Trial and Pilots process has been critical in preparing the education agencies and the sector for the wider review, and for testing the design parameters and policy changes.
10. In particular, the formation and work of the Subject Expert Groups (SEGs) has demonstrated the process's effectiveness, with all four SEGs constructively engaged and contributing to the product development process with the promise of further benefits as products are to be tested with the wider sector and SEG members can help to support our leadership of that process. We therefore have confidence the process can work and could be scaled up into the Review of Achievement Standards commencing shortly. (rec c refers)
11. Trial and Pilots has also provided an opportunity to test the development of Achievement Standard matrices of 20 credits with four standards in each, along with broader NCEA Level 1 subjects focused on the important learning at curriculum level 6. Based on the work to date, we assess that these changes are workable for broader implementation through the Achievement Standards Review, and that they would contribute towards the outcome of improved coherence and decreased student and teacher workload. (rec c refers)
12. If the Review of Achievement Standards progresses with development for all NCEA Level 1 subjects from a finalised list, then the Trial and Pilots process will effectively merge into the Review of Achievement Standards; with all ready subjects trialled in schools in 2021.

Provisional Subject List for NCEA Level 1

Subjects derived from the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC)

13. A robust process has been undertaken to develop the proposed provisional subjects list for NCEA Level 1. The NCEA Change Package has determined the policy settings – at a high level this is to move towards a “broader, more foundational NCEA Level 1” with fewer subjects to be offered for credentialing at Level 1, while ensuring *mana ōrite mō te Mātauranga Māori* and strengthening diverse pathways through NCEA. This change is consistent with the *New Zealand Curriculum* that applies to senior secondary schooling. With this in mind we have adopted one of four options for each subject currently offered at NCEA Level 1:
- Develop new standards and supporting content for the subject as-is.
 - Merge or reorganise the subject with another closely related subject or subjects to create a new broader subject, which either offers pathways to those subjects at Levels 2 or 3, or is part of a wider redevelopment of how that learning is offered in NCEA.
 - Do not support the subject at NCEA Level 1, but consider other ways support might be provided through supporting NZC-derived products or other reviews (for example unit standards, ROVE) to support pathways to the subject at Levels 2 or 3 should it be offered as part of increased specialisation e.g., assessment tasks with a media context for English or Social Studies standard to support ‘Media Studies’ courses.
 - Do not support the subject as part of NCEA including at Levels 2 and 3 at all.
14. For some subjects, a merger or reorganisation at NCEA Level 1 may be carried on to later levels if the new subject is found to improve teaching and learning outcomes. As we develop new Level 1 content, we will also work with the sector to test the approach to a more specialised subject offering from Level 2, ahead of providing you with a provision list for Level 2 at a later point. (see refers)
15. To assist the Ministry’s decision making on the Provisional Level 1 Subject List, the following criteria were developed and applied in a holistic way for each subject derived from the *New Zealand Curriculum*:
- How the subject fits with the policy vision articulated by the NCEA Cabinet Paper, including the shift to a broader, foundational NCEA Level 1 with increasing specialisation from Level 2; *mana ōrite mō te mātauranga Māori*; and strengthening pathways to further education and employment.
 - All foundational learning, disciplinary knowledge, big ideas and essence of each Learning Area derived from the *New Zealand Curriculum* are available through a subject at NCEA Level 1, without unnecessary repetition to ensure a broad foundational Level 1.
 - How best to structure that body of knowledge to support pathways to further specialist learning at NCEA Levels 2 and 3.
 - The extent to which subjects can interact with each other to form coherent courses in NCEA settings and support a breadth of learning for individual students.

- e. The extent to which there is demand for a subject from the sector and students, and the capability of the sector to support the subject.
 - f. Ensuring that the Crown's commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi are upheld and that the subject offering supports opportunities for Māori learners to succeed as Māori, in English- and Māori-medium settings.
 - g. Inclusion as a subject is likely to contribute positively to the ongoing and future credibility of NCEA as a series of internationally-recognised qualifications.
16. We note that due to the way that the Learning Areas in the *New Zealand Curriculum* are constructed, the way that criteria are assessed can and should vary from Learning Area to Learning Area. For example, in Mathematics and Statistics, deep learning can be covered easily within one subject at Curriculum Level 6 as a sequence of topics and still be credible, whereas in the Social Sciences the individual strands and disciplines cover a much broader range of content and knowledge so in order to be more credible, a wider variety of subjects is necessary in Social Sciences.
17. We also note that when considering how subjects at NCEA Level 1 are derived from the *New Zealand Curriculum*, we considered the work which has been done to clarify the big ideas and essential learning of each Learning Area at Curriculum Levels 6-8, to underpin the NCEA Achievement Standards [METIS 1193652 refers]. Furthermore, the sector-led development process we propose to follow will further identify the critical curriculum-based learning for NCEA and has potential to enhance teaching and learning, with further adaptation phased in as reviews like the Review of Achievement Standards becomes business as usual for the Ministry.
18. To support the assessment of criteria and the analysis behind the Provisional Subject List, we considered usage data on the current standards from NZQA and the self-reported subject enrolment data collected by the Ministry of Education during the July roll returns. This provided a sense of how subjects were used by students, whether there were local practices, and the overall health of each subject.
19. There are a total of 30 proposed provisional NCEA Level 1 subjects (NZC). These are set out in Table 1 below. (rec b refers)

LEARNING AREA (NZC)	NEW SUBJECT LIST
ENGLISH	English
TE REO MĀORI	Te Reo Māori
THE ARTS	Dance
	Drama
	Music
	Visual Arts
	Māori Performing Arts
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	Health and Physical Education
LEARNING LANGUAGES	Cook Island Māori
	New Zealand Sign Language
	French
	German
	Japanese
	Korean
	Tongan

**MATHEMATICS AND
STATISTICS
SCIENCE**

Mandarin
Samoan
Spanish
Mathematics and Statistics

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Science
Agricultural and Horticultural
Science
History
Geography
Commerce

TECHNOLOGY

Social Studies
Religious Studies
Materials Technology
Design and Visual Communication
Digital Technologies
Food Science

20. The key changes between current subject list and the proposed list are (rec b refers):

- a. Health and Physical Education are merged into a single subject at Level 1. Health and wellbeing content from Home Economics is likely to be included as part of this subject.
- b. Latin is no longer supported at Levels 1. In addition, a clear signal is proposed that Latin's potential to be included in Levels 2 and 3 is similarly unlikely.
- c. Science is condensed to one subject which can support the assessment of a range of content from Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Earth and Space Science at Level 1. Agricultural and Horticultural Science remains a separate subject as it supports agricultural pathways and is an important Achievement Standards-based subject in rural settings.
- d. Social Sciences is consolidated from ten subjects to five: History, Geography, Social Studies, Commerce and Religious Studies.
 - i. Commerce is a new subject that effectively merges current Economics, Business Studies and Accounting subjects.
 - ii. Classics, Psychology and Media Studies are no longer offered at Level 1.
- e. The Technology Learning Area is remodelled as four subjects: Materials Technology, Design and Visual Communications, Digital Technologies, and Food Science. Food Science is also a successor to Home Economics.
- f. Māori Performing Arts has been added as a subject under the Arts while Art History will not be supported.

21. Subjects which are removed from Level 1 may still be supported within the remaining subjects. The extent of support will be considered after the subject list is finalised, with

further engagement with SEGs to identify potential opportunities, without raising expectations that will exceed current commitments and budget constraints.¹

22. Providing support could include the creation of additional resources or sample assessment tasks. We will also be considering how the SEGs for subjects not available in the revised Level 1 can support their included counterparts at Level 1 to ensure clear pathways to more specialised subjects at Levels 2 and 3, and to incorporate any important contexts at the foundation level.

Potential issues arising with the Provisional Subject List

23. The process behind the Provisional Subject List has identified some further issues which we will need to continue to work through once the Review of Achievement Standards commences.

Managing Subject Expert Groups

24. The Ministry has put out Expressions of Interest for Subject Expert Groups for all subjects currently supported, with many members already appointed. SEGs are to be tasked with supporting the development of the subject matrices. However, some SEGs will be for subjects which have since been merged with other subjects, or will not continue to be supported at NCEA Level 1.
25. The Ministry is working to minimise and manage any risks arising from SEGs which are no longer required in 2020 to support Level 1 development or have to be reorganised for new subject configurations. This may include finding roles for SEG members on larger SEGs for new subjects or supporting them to understand what this may mean for NCEA Levels 2 and 3. At this point, only Latin is a contender to be removed at all levels of NCEA (subject to final decisions that SEG would not be required, and could therefore be stood down).

Engagement risks

26. As a number of subjects will be removed or merged at NCEA Level 1, it can be expected that there will be concern for those people in the sector who will be affected; in particular, teachers with specialisations in subjects which will no longer exist at NCEA Level 1, or that would be merged with a subject in which they have little experience. To a lesser extent, there may be concerns emerging later when schools rearrange middle management and senior leadership in light of the new subject list (i.e. this occurs after the trials in 2021 have concluded and schools look to determine staffing configurations to support the new subject in 2022).
27. In most cases, we expect that communications surrounding increased specialisation at Level 2 and 3 will help mitigate concern. For most teachers affected, their subject is likely to exist in some form at Level 2 or 3 at least, particularly in the Social Sciences where there is the largest reduction in subjects. For teachers within merged or reorganised subjects there will likely be some need for development opportunities for teachers to support them to better understand the new version of their subject.

¹ For example, Media Studies contexts may be able to be used in Social Studies or English. Given this, we anticipate that some schools may want to offer courses that emulate previously offered subjects using a mixture of achievement standards and unit standards.

28. Overall, our assessment is that given small student numbers in specialised Level 1 subjects, and the practical reality that teachers already teach "out of subject" (e.g. in Year 9 and 10) we expect the risk to be manageable.
29. It is a critical element for success that the Ministry maintains the trust and cooperation of the sector, especially those persons serving on SEGs. Overall, we assess that the public will generally receive the (reduced) subject list positively similar to how the NCEA Change Package was received but there is a risk that the public do not like some of the individual decisions e.g., removing Latin. We will mitigate this through our engagement activities by developing proactive and reactive communications that emphasises the rationale for the change.

Further design work required

30. In some Learning Areas there is further design work to ensure that the provisional list is the best fit for each Learning Area, e.g. in the Technology Learning Area to ensure that the range of subjects available can support the wide range of courses and programmes of learning in a range of contexts. This will require further testing in the SEG. We will work with the sector and expect to refine our approach (as required).
31. There is also further analysis to be commissioned of subject usage data which will need to be done in parallel with the Review of Achievement Standards. This will include further analysis on what schools use particular subjects (trends), the potential impacts on Māori and Pacific students and the potential impacts for wharekura using *New Zealand Curriculum* subjects to supplement their programmes of learning and further cohorts of disadvantaged students.

Subjects derived from Te Marautanga o Aotearoa

32. The Ministry will also be developing subjects derived from *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* from 2020; however, the process for the development of these subjects will be distinct, to ensure we support Māori to shape Māori-medium pathways through NCEA. (rec d refers)
33. Alongside the development of subjects derived from *The New Zealand Curriculum*, we are working with experts in the Wāhanga Ako of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* to develop the following subjects at Level 1 in 2020 (rec d refers):

Te Reo Rangatira	Hangarau
Pāngarau	Ngā Mahi ā Te Rēhia
Tikanga ā-Iwi	Toi Ataata
Pūtaiao	Toi Puoro
Hauora	

34. For the purposes of the provisional subject list, we will outline that these are the subjects under development for Level 1 in 2020, but that a final subject list for *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* is unlikely to be confirmed until the end of 2020, following Cabinet decisions on the refresh of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. (rec d refers)

Cabinet Paper

35. We have attached an updated version of the *Cabinet Paper Implementation of the new, strengthened NCEA* to this paper.

s 9(2)(1)(iv)

Since the last version which your office received in November 2019 we have made the following key changes (along with minor edits):

- a. Increased clarity about the proposed implementation approach, reflecting developments since November
- b. A commitment that we will not implement the new literacy and numeracy standards until the sector is ready [METIS 1218133 notes].
- c. Inclusion of the proposed provisional subject list for NCEA Level 1 (NZC) and that further public and sector engagement will be undertaken before the list is finalised.

36. We recommend that you lodge this paper in time for the Social Wellbeing Committee meeting on 12 February to confirm Cabinet decisions before the beginning of the Review of Achievement Standards. (rec a refers)

Next Steps

- 37. With Cabinet confirmation, we intend to initiate public and sector engagement for a period of four weeks (e.g. 18 February to 18 March) on the proposed provisional subject list for *New Zealand Curriculum*-derived subjects at NCEA Level 1. (rec b refers)
- 38. We will work with your Office to confirm our communications approach. We will also confirm our communications approach to announcing the subjects aligned to the Wāhanga Ako of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* with your Office. (rec b and d refer)
- 39. Following engagement we will seek your approval to finalise the subject list for subjects derived from *The New Zealand Curriculum*. (rec c refers)
- 40. If there are significant changes to the subject list that is finalised, there could be delays in fully implementing changes to NCEA in some subjects (e.g. if additional subjects were to be added; METIS 1217583, para 19 refers).
- 41. Following Cabinet decisions on the refresh of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* we will provide further advice on the subject list for Māori-medium.

Proactive Release

- 42. We recommend that this Report is released after Cabinet decisions are confirmed along with public announcements (details of which are yet to be agreed). (rec g refers)

Annexes

Annex 1: NCEA Change Package Cabinet Paper (updated showing track changes)

Final Cabinet paper found on <http://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/advice-seen-by-our-ministers/> [February, CAB-20-MIN-0023]