



Education Report: Proposed changes to NCEA in 2020 to respond to COVID-19: Further Advice on University Entrance and supporting equity

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	21 May 2020	Priority:	Urgent
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Purpose of Report

To provide you with further advice on recommended changes to the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) for the 2020 school year, following our Education Reports dated 8 May 2020 [METIS 1227996] and 12 May [METIS 1228260].

Summary

- 1 In our advice dated 8 May 2020 and 12 May 2020 we recommended changes to the NCEA qualification system to coincide with the announcement on 11 May 2020 of the Government's decision on the COVID-19 Alert Level.
- 2 You agreed to announce changes to the timing of external examinations and submissions for submitted subject assessments to provide for additional teaching and learning time in Term 4. You also announced, and agreed that we would:
 - a. Consult with Universities New Zealand and University Vice Chancellors on whether there should be changes to the requirements in 2020 for University Entrance.
 - b. Work with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to consider how to equitably provide for students as all NCEA learning and assessment programmes have been disrupted by COVID-19, to varying degrees.
- 3 The NZQA Board is considering reducing the current University Entrance requirements from 14 credits in three approved subjects, to 12 credits in three approved subjects. This approach has been endorsed by Universities New Zealand and the University Vice Chancellors. A decision is expected by the NZQA Board early next week.
- 4 We have also completed work with the Professional Advisory Group, developing high-level principles derived from the principles of the NCEA Review (Wellbeing, Inclusion and Equity, Credibility, Coherence, and Pathways) and constructing and assessing the following set of options for your consideration:

- a. **Option 1: reduce the size of the NCEA qualifications** – so that fewer credits are required for their award in 2020.
 - b. **Option 2: additional credits provided to every student working towards an NCEA as they achieve against assessment standards** – every student currently working towards an NCEA would receive additional credits, tied to the number of credits they attain through ordinary assessment, without a specific judgment by the school.
 - c. **Option 3: an award of credits to students through a school attestation model** – all students are eligible, and in October schools will identify where it is appropriate for their students to receive credits, based on a simple assessment about their learning progress through the year.
 - d. **Option 4: an award of credits through school attestation with more intensive validation processes** – schools would identify students to receive credits in October as per Option 3 and provide evidence to NZQA. NZQA would work with schools to validate the evidence provided, and use data held by the Authority to confirm that overall attainment rates were in-line with historic patterns.
- 5 Because of NCEA's operational complexity, the selected option will require more design work to be done with urgency, which we have briefly summarised. At this stage we are seeking confirmation of your preferred option, and will then work with the Professional Advisory Group to confirm the final model by the end of next week.
- 6 Both the Professional Advisory Group (PAG), and the Ministry of Education and NZQA have independently assessed the options, and our recommendations are:

Option	Professional Advisory Group recommendations	Ministry of Education and NZQA recommendations
Option 1: reduce the size of the NCEA qualifications	Possible	Do not recommend
Option 2: additional credits provided to every student working towards an NCEA as they achieve against assessment standards	Preferred	Preferred, depending on the degree to which you wish to include school-based decision-making in the process.
Option 3: an award of credits to students through a school attestation model	Do not recommend	
Option 4: an award of credits through school attestation with more intensive validation processes	Do not recommend with strong reservations	Possible

- 7 The Professional Advisory Group values the simple, clear and universal response which Options 1 and 2 represent, as they recognise that COVID-19 has disrupted learning for all students. They recommend Option 2 as it has the benefit of recognising a wider range of learning, provides more equitable support for all learners, maintains greater credibility for the qualifications, and can act as a motivating factor for a wider range of students. While Option 1 is the simplest option to communicate and implement, the Professional Advisory Group recognises the risks to the credibility of NCEA which it presents.
- 8 Options 3 and 4 rely on school attestation, which could result in inconsistent application nationally. The Professional Advisory Group also have concerns about placing the decision-making burden on schools due to equity, ability to assess the impact on individual students, and workload implications. The Professional Advisory Group has strong reservations about Option 4, and believe the workload implications would place

additional pressure on teachers, and the uncertainty could create additional anxiety for both students and teachers.

- 9 The Ministry and NZQA recommend Option 2 or Option 3 as they provide motivating support for a range of students, maintain a higher degree of credibility in the qualifications, and do not contribute significant workload for students and teachers.
- 10 After considering the broad response options (Options 1 and 2) the Ministry and NZQA recommend Option 2. We believe it can be designed and communicated in a clear and effective way whilst being more flexible to student needs and inequities.
- 11 Option 1 is not as flexible to respond to specific student needs, and poses the greatest risk to the credibility of the qualifications.
- 12 After considering the school-based decision options (Options 3 and 4), the Ministry and NZQA recommend Option 3. Attestation by schools would likely add validity to the award of credits. We also believe that schools will exercise judgement to ensure that it is applied to provide equitable support to their students, so would recommend this option if you value a specific school judgement underpinning the allocation of credits.
- 13 The increased validation associated with Option 4 would increase the credibility of the awarding of credits, and therefore the qualifications. We do not recommend it over Option 3 as the design challenges, potential burden on schools, and the operational risks likely outweigh the credibility benefits. However, if you want a degree of external assurance over the award of credits, this option would provide it.
- 14 Option 2 was the preferred option of the sector representatives we engaged with and the Professional Advisory Group, so would likely receive the greatest support at announcement and through implementation.
- 15 As the Professional Advisory Group recognise the need for a response and understand the complexities of the decision, they are committed to work constructively with the Ministry and NZQA on the design and implementation of any of the four options, noting their strong reservations about Option 4 or a choice not to implement a change at this time.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **Note** that in our advice dated 8 May 2020 and 12 May 2020 we recommended changes to the NCEA qualification system to coincide with the announcement on 11 May 2020 of the Government's decision on the COVID-19 Alert Level.
- b. **Note** that you announced, and agreed that we would:
 - i. Consult with Universities New Zealand and University Vice Chancellors on whether there should be changes to the requirements in 2020 for University Entrance.
 - ii. Work with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to consider how to equitably provide for students whose NCEA learning and assessment programmes have been disrupted by COVID-19.

- c. **Note** that the NZQA Board is considering a change to University Entrance to reduce the requirements from 14 credits in three approved subjects, to 12 credits in three approved subjects, along with the current literacy and numeracy requirements, and attainment of NCEA Level 3. A decision is expected early next week.
- d. **Note** that we have worked with the Professional Advisory Group to prepare further advice, including four options for how recommendation (c)(ii) could be achieved, without undermining the credibility of the qualification.
- e. **Note** that the Professional Advisory Group, the Ministry of Education and the NZQA, have each independently assessed five options, with our recommendations summarised in paragraphs 6-15 and in the body of the paper.
- f. **Note** that the five underpinning principles of the NCEA Review Wellbeing, Inclusion and Equity, Credibility, Coherence, and Pathways were used to develop and assess the options.
- g. **Agree** to your preferred option for implementation of recommendation (c)(ii):
- i. **Option 1: reduce the size of the NCEA qualifications (not recommended by the Ministry and NZQA)** – reduce the size of the NCEA qualifications so that fewer credits are required for their award in 2020.
 - ii. **Option 2: additional credits provided to every student working towards an NCEA as they achieve against assessment standards (recommended by the PAG, the Ministry and NZQA)** – every student currently working towards an NCEA would receive additional credits, tied to the number of credits they attain through ordinary assessment, without a specific judgment by the school.
 - iii. **Option 3: an award of credits to students through a school attestation model (recommended by the Ministry and NZQA, but not recommended by the PAG)** – all students are eligible, and in October schools will identify where it is appropriate for their students to receive credits, based on a simple assessment about their learning progress through the year.
 - iv. **Option 4: an award of credits through school attestation with more intensive validation processes (seen as possible by the Ministry and NZQA and not recommended by the PAG, with strong reservations)** – schools would select students to receive credits in October as per Option 3 and provide evidence to NZQA. NZQA would work with schools to validate the evidence provided, and use data held by the Authority to confirm that overall attainment rates were in-line with historic patterns.
 - v. **Make no changes at this time (not recommended by the PAG, the Ministry and NZQA)** – instead of making a change to the qualification at this stage, wait for more information about the impact of COVID-19 on student progress to be available during Term 2.

Option 1 / **Option 2** / Option 3 / Option 4 / No changes

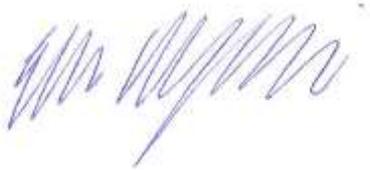
- h. **Authorise** the Ministry of Education and NZQA to continue to work with the Professional Advisory Group to develop the supporting detail for the agreed option.

Agree / Disagree

- i. **Note** that we will provide you with further advice on the detailed design for the agreed option, including draft communications material for a potential announcement.

- j. **Agree** to proactively release this report following public announcements of the changes to NCEA described within

Agree Disagree



Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

21/05/2020



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

24/5/2020



Grant Klinkum
Chief Executive
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

21/05/2020

Proactively Released

Background

- 16 In recognition of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation, the Ministry of Education and the NZQA have developed an escalating series of potential changes to the NCEA to respond to disruption to the 2020 school year.
- 17 The Ministry and NZQA have issued guidance on how each achievement standard can be tailored for remote delivery, provided digital devices and connectivity to NCEA students, made hard copy resources available free of charge, and worked via NZQA's School Relationship Managers to support schools and kura to manage national assessments during lockdown.
- 18 You have also announced the following changes to support NCEA:
- a. Confirming that examinations will proceed, but will be shifted back from 6 November to 16 November, to allow for another week of teaching, learning and assessment to be completed.
 - b. For submitted subjects, an extending the submission date to give students more time to prepare – to 12 November 2020.
 - c. Waiving the requirement for NCEA Level 1 and 2 Visual Arts verification to enable to schools to set their own submission dates.
- 19 You have also announced that the Ministry and NZQA will:
- a. Consult with Universities New Zealand and University Vice Chancellors on whether there should be changes to the requirements in 2020 for University Entrance.
 - b. Work with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to consider how to equitably provide for students whose NCEA learning and assessment programmes have been disrupted by COVID-19.
- 20 NZQA has worked with both Universities New Zealand and University Vice Chancellors to develop agreed options for University Entrance. The Ministry and NZQA have also worked closely with Your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to develop agreed options for NCEA, to discuss our views of the relative merits of each option, and provide advice on our recommendations (including where there are different views). This advice has informed the following sections of the Report.
- 21 We expect that some members of the Professional Advisory Group have also been testing ideas within their organisations (as they are appointed representatives of those groups). Wider engagement has also been undertaken to test potential approaches and establish the need for a change (further details at Annex 1).
- 22 Alongside qualification and award-level responses, we also recognise that many students have participated in valuable learning experiences through lockdown which may not be recognised through their current NCEA assessment programme. The Professional Advisory Group has advised that the shift to distance learning is likely to have particularly disrupted students in kura Māori settings, and students from priority population groups – including Pacific students and students with disabilities and additional learning support needs. There was also inequitable access to distance learning opportunities for students based on personal circumstances, with concentrated disadvantage in many communities and schools.
- 23 Alongside the options presented in this paper, the Ministry is working with NZQA to explore tools for schools to recognise the learning which occurred during the lockdown

period, including utilising Recognition of Prior Learning and Current Competency models. Advice from the Professional Advisory Group is that these tools, which can operate within existing policy settings, would be particularly valuable for recognising and credentialing the learning of priority groups, and those at risk of not achieving.

University Entrance

- 24 NZQA has consulted with University New Zealand and University Vice Chancellors on options for amending the University Entrance Award criteria. We have also tested this advice with the Professional Advisory Group, who are supportive of the preferred option.
- 25 In creating the options, we considered the following principles, which include the expectations of universities:
- A student is considered ready for university if they are able to demonstrate depth and breadth of learning through attainment across three University Entrance approved subjects.
 - NZQA considers it is only fair that students who are close to attaining University Entrance, but whose learning and assessment was disrupted due to COVID-19 should attain University Entrance.
 - Schools can attest that the evidence of learning and assessment during the year shows that students can reasonably be considered to be ready for university in 2021 (or out years, for deferred entry).
 - Students who are likely to be disproportionately impacted by disruptions have fair access to University Entrance, such as those with health conditions, in rural areas, or without access to devices, from low decile schools, and particularly Māori and Pacific students.
 - The amended criteria for the University Entrance Award is one of a suite of responses to enable students to maintain plans to enter university in 2021.
- 26 The table below outlines the options to amend the University Entrance Award criteria considered:

Option	Requirements	Percentage (%) point increase on 2019 UE attainment rate (modelled)	Number of students
Option 1: Reduce credits across all 3 subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCEA Level 3 12 credits each in three (3) approved UE subjects And current UE Literacy and Numeracy requirement.	2.7	1267
Option 2: Reduce credit in two subjects Relaxed scope by deriving credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCEA Level 3 12 credits each in two (2) approved UE subjects 14 credits derived from across two (2) approved UE subjects 	6.3	2933

from 4 not 3 UE subjects	And current UE Literacy and Numeracy requirement.		
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- 27 Based on these numbers, on balance, NZQA considered the first option best balances the need to recognise COVID-19 impacts without leading to students obtaining the award who are not well prepared for university study. School principals consulted also strongly supported this option which additionally:
- a. provides recognition of loss of teaching, learning and assessment time;
 - b. is similar to the current requirement in structure;
 - c. retains depth and breadth requirements;
 - d. provides sufficient flexibility that students can meet the requirements in each of the approved subjects¹.
- 28 University Vice Chancellors and the UE sub-committee have formally communicated their comfort with option one. They have also noted that:
- a. The disadvantages created by the Covid-19 disruptions are almost certainly uneven across subjects and across socio-economic groups.
 - b. Universities will need additional resourcing to provide bridging and other kinds of student support to help mitigate (and avoid compounding) these disadvantages
 - c. For the same reasons, the Tertiary Education Commission should indicate a willingness to relax the Educational Performance Indicator targets for first year students in 2021 and for targeted groups within these cohorts
 - d. Universities can make increased use of discretionary entrance where appropriate, and the UE Subcommittee of CUAP has amended the regulations for the 2020 cohort to allow this
 - e. Schools should encourage students to undertake the normal range of assessments, including external assessments.
 - f. The ten day delay in the start to 2020 NCEA exams has potential to create a bottleneck around admissions into tertiary studies in 2021.
- 29 NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission will continue engage with Universities New Zealand over these points.
- 30 The proposed amendment will be considered by the NZQA Board for approval, with a decision expected early next week.

¹ A particular check was undertaken in relationship to the Te Mārautanga o Aotearoa subjects and the performance and portfolio based subjects on the list of approved subjects.

Options to provide equity for students impacted by COVID-19

Defining the problem

- 31 Overall, our joint objective with the Professional Advisory Group has been to recognise that COVID-19 is causing disruption across the education system and its impacts on learners studying towards an NCEA are not yet fully known. While many students, teachers and schools have successfully adapted to learning via distance, many young people have missed out on learning under Alert Levels 4 and 3.
- 32 Causes include: a lack of access to technology, a home environment unconducive to distance learning, less effective teaching and learning opportunities, learning which cannot be delivered via distance, a lack of access to pastoral care and support, and student disengagement.
- 33 This disruption has resulted in a significant risk that inequities will occur, either at the level of individual students, or across priority population groups of students where risk and resilience factors correlate with existing educational disadvantage. At the same time, we need to recognise that the qualification system is a complex one that operates as a delicate balance of moving parts, and that solutions that are operationally burdensome on schools could distract from the very teaching, learning and assessment work we are trying to support.
- 34 Bringing this together, we have developed the following high-level purpose statements derived from the underpinning principles of the NCEA Review, to help define the problem the options are intended to address, and to inform our analysis of them:
- a. Our priority is to support learners who have undertaken sufficient learning to attain a qualification or move on to the next step in their education journey, but need additional support to get credentialed (**Pathways and Coherence**).
 - b. There should be an acknowledgement that every young person has experienced some level of disruption due to COVID-19, and that as a whole our system response should provide support for every student, with tailoring of interventions where possible to minimise unintended consequences (**Wellbeing and Inclusion and Equity**).
 - c. We need to maintain the credibility of the qualification, and be cautious with interventions where sufficient learning has not taken place for a student, either generally across the year or in particular learning critical for their pathway. In these instances, it would be inappropriate to give these learners a qualification as this would risk undermining the credibility of the qualification, and would not set these students up for success in the next step of their learning journey (**Credibility**).
 - d. We should work to ensure that options impose minimal burden on the system, both administratively and in terms of the number and nature of the judgments required of decision-makers, to minimise the workload (and therefore the distractions from teaching and learning time) and complexity associated with the solution (**Wellbeing**).
- 35 NZQA has also carefully considered the operational feasibility of each of the proposed changes. NZQA plans to release the 2020 NCEA results in mid-January 2021. The need to implement changes in the award of the qualification as well as the University Entrance changes is likely to require NZQA to push out the release of results by 7 to 9 days to around 21 January.

- 36 The later start to examinations also means that while other proposed changes to the NCEA for 2020 do require more processing time for results there is also less flexibility in the ability to absorb processing changes in the timetable. A timely results release is important to learners, particularly those transitioning to further study, so any changes to the rules for calculating qualification and award achievement will need to factor in implications for the timing of the release. NZQA will be working to minimise any delays.

Overview of each of the options considered

- 37 We have worked with the Professional Advisory Group and have identified four broad options. Because of NCEA's operational complexity, the selected option will require more design work to be completed prior to implementing, which we have briefly summarised in the body of this paper. At this stage we are seeking confirmation of the preferred option, and will then work with the Professional Advisory Group to confirm the next layer of detail. This will include detailed consideration of design settings which ensure that ākonga Māori across English and Māori-medium settings, Pacific young people, and young people with learning support needs receive equitable support and recognition for how COVID-19 has disrupted their learning.
- 38 Our view of the options, is that **If you want to provide for every student**, so that no one who needs support misses out, you could:
- a. Reduce the size of the NCEA qualifications; or
 - b. Implement a mechanism of awarding further credits to all students tied to the number of credits attained.
- 39 **However, if you want to target the intervention** to just those students who schools identify that their attainment does not adequately reflect the learning which has taken place, you could:
- a. Establish a mechanism for schools to award students additional credits through a simple and high trust 'credit recognition' process; or
 - b. Develop a more involved process that required schools to collate evidence, some of which could be sampled and verified by NZQA.

Detail of each of the options

Option 1: Reducing the size of the NCEA qualifications

Description of option

- 40 Some school leaders and students have been seeking a reduction to the credit requirements for each qualification on the basis that it would reduce pressure on students and teachers and make the qualification more attainable for those who have missed teaching, learning, and assessment opportunities.
- 41 The advantage of such an approach would be its simplicity – for 2020 the size of each NCEA qualification would be reduced by 10 credits at Level 1 (resulting in a 70 credit qualification), and by 8 credits at Levels 2 and 3 (resulting in 52 credit qualifications). These numbers would reflect our assessment that the disruption is equivalent to two averagely-sized assessment standards, with some additional recognition that NCEA Level 1 is an 80 credit qualification, while NCEA Level 2 and 3 are 60 credit qualifications if you factor in the carry-over credits.
- 42 The Ministry and NZQA do not recommend this approach because of the credibility risks for the qualifications. If you select this option, we recommend changes to the

certificate endorsement processes, having discussed this issue more fully with the Professional Advisory Group following our original 8 May 2020 advice. This would see the requirements for Merit and Excellence endorsements decrease from 50 credits to 46 credits at each level of NCEA. The requirements for course endorsements would also reduce the course endorsement requirements from 14 credits to 12 credits, to align with the proposed changes to University Entrance.

- 43 This would reflect the important motivational role that course endorsements play for high performing students, and sector feedback that the impact on student achievement relating to course endorsements is similar to that relating to qualification attainment.
- 44 We also recommend changes to the Vocational Pathways Award requirements. Currently 60 credits are required from recommended assessment standards, which would be reduced to 52 credits (in line with the other changes). We would not make changes to the 20 credit sector-related standards requirement as these are tied to specific pre-requisites for further vocational education and training.

Advice

- 45 The Professional Advisory Group advises that this option is **possible**. They believe it would act as a single, clear, and immediate response, with no burden or workload impacts on the sector or the system. They do have concerns about the credibility implications for the qualifications, which means it is not the preferred option.
- 46 The Ministry and NZQA **do not recommend** this option. A credit reduction is the simplest response and applies to all students, which avoids any discretion-related inequities in the system. There is, however a significant risk that a reduction in the number of credits makes attaining an NCEA seem 'easier' for all students, ignoring their particular circumstances or level of disruption, undermining the qualification's credibility and robustness.
- 47 There may also be hard to predict ramifications on the international recognition arrangements for the qualifications. Some students who meet the reduced qualification requirements may also limit their engagement in learning and assessment, including external assessment, to their detriment.

Option 2: additional credits provided to every student working towards an NCEA as they achieve against assessment standards

Description of option

- 48 Under this option, every eligible student currently working towards an NCEA in school or foundation tertiary would receive a number of additional credits tied to the number of credits they gain from assessment standards, without a judgment by the school.
- 49 As with option 1, this approach would ensure that all eligible students were treated equally, and reduce the role of school decision-making. It would also avoid placing a burden on the system, and could also address a possible source of inequity if schools are inconsistent in their judgments about whether to apply the credits to their students if they have discretion over the decision.
- 50 We recommend that a limit be applied to the number of credits which could be attained this way, to mitigate overassessment amongst high-achieving students. Linking the additional credits to actual learning which is taking place would also maintain a greater degree of credibility while providing support to students which reflects their specific education achievement. Students themselves would likely perceive this as fair and reasonable and the PAG believes it would be a motivator for students to re-engage in learning and assessment.

- 51 As a single mechanism is unable to effectively provide Merit and Excellence grades (i.e., credits gained this way would be unspecified without grades attached), an accompanying change will be needed to support students to gain certificate endorsement (such as a reduction in the requirements from 50 credits to 46).

Advice

- 52 The Ministry, NZQA and your NCEA Professional Advisory Group **recommend** this option. The Professional Advisory Group believe that option 2 is a clear and simple response, while maintaining greater credibility as the allocation of credits is tied to ongoing student achievement. They recognise that Option 2 will also appeal to stakeholders concerned by a potential blanket reduction in the size of the qualification, and see greater motivation potential for many of their students.
- 53 The Ministry and NZQA believe this option has all of the strengths of option 1, but also provides a strong motivating factor for a wide range of students, which will increase re-engagement and accelerated progress in education.
- 54 While this option still functionally reduces the size of the qualification for all students, and so may still create a challenge to its credibility, the additional credits are linked to the assessed learning for a student, so will likely be perceived as having greater validity.
- 55 The Professional Advisory Group supports an approach where graded credits could be allocated to students, reflecting the grades achieved by the student on their assessment standards. Such an approach would support students whose disruption put their wider education goals at risk (such as certificate endorsements).
- 56 NZQA have advised that the incorporation of graded credits through this approach results in significant added complexity, and do not believe this could be safely implemented within an acceptable timeframe for results release. As noted above, we would instead use an alternative mechanism to support students working towards Merit and Excellence endorsements.

Option 3: an award of credits to students through a school attestation model

Description of option

- 57 This was our recommended option in our 8 May 2020 advice. This option would involve a special, one-off credit recognition process for 2020. Schools would apply in October. Schools would have discretion about who would receive the credits, but we would take a high-trust approach, and encourage them to apply the credits to any student whose learning or assessment programmes were disrupted, and who they consider to have made learning progress which was not recognised through their assessment that year.
- 58 NZQA would not ask for evidence towards this, but would still monitor school returns using data held by the Authority. Schools with outlier responses would then be engaged via School Relationship Managers, but otherwise would ultimately be the trusted decision-maker.
- 59 As with Option 2, the number of credits available this way would need to be confirmed as part of the detailed design of the option.

Advice

- 60 The Professional Advisory Group **does not recommend** this option. They have concerns about placing the decision-making burden on schools due to equity, ability to assess the impact on individual students, and workload implications. If you do choose

to implement a school-based decision model, the Professional Advisory Group would advise Option 3 over Option 4.

- 61 The Ministry and NZQA **recommend** this option. This represents a balanced approach which could be implemented in an operationally straight-forward way with manageable system and workload burden.
- 62 As the credits available are attested to by the school, they will likely be seen as more valid than credits provided through a general mechanism. This would provide a credibility advantage over more universal mechanisms. It would also ensure that the credits were awarded under active teacher and school judgment, adding an additional check to ensure that students who received them were engaged and participating in learning.

Option 4: an award of credits through school attestation with more intensive validation processes

Description of option

- 63 This model is similar to Option 3, but with more assurance applied to validate the results, at the expense of increased burden and complexity for schools.
- 64 Schools would provide evidence in October towards the criteria identified above. Evidence might include teacher attestations, the results of school-administered assessments (e.g., mock examinations), and attendance and engagement information.
- 65 NZQA would then validate this process and evidence, either nationally or with each school through the School Relationship Managers, and review a sample of the evidence (for example, 1% nationally). NZQA would then continue to work with schools where there was not agreement between the school's decision and NZQA's verified result.

Advice

- 66 The Professional Advisory Group **does not recommend** this option. Their view is that this option would likely not be considered a reasonable imposition by the sector, as the evidence gathering and validation process would significantly increase teacher and school workload, and require a significantly more complex process than Option 3.
- 67 The Ministry and NZQA advise that this option is **possible**. It would create a higher system and workload burden, and we also consider that it would be received by the sector as a significant imposition at a time where schools are focusing on accelerating student progress.
- 68 It would, however, provide robust validation, and clearer criteria, but this would come at the expense of some shifts in decision-making from schools and tertiary providers to NZQA.
- 69 NZQA also notes that it has not operated the validation system at this scale before, and while confident that processes will be able to be established in the time required, the Authority notes that the system will be more complex and potentially carries a higher operational risk than the simpler system described above.

Next steps

- 70 This paper has been prepared in advance of your agency meeting on 25 May 2020.

- 71 Following this agency meeting, and confirmation of your preferred approach, we will work with the Professional Advisory Group on the operational detail of the preferred approach, and with your office on planning for the required communications. We expect this process to take approximately one week.

Annexes

Annex 1: Engagement with Sector Representatives

Proactively Released

Annex 1 – Engagement with Sector Representatives

- 1 The detailed co-design of the proposed options has been undertaken with the Professional Advisory Group and its members, and the final list of options reflects a joint view of which options should be on the table for the Minister to consider, and their relative strengths and weaknesses. Members of the Professional Advisory Group include Roger Moses (chair), Deidre Shea (SPANZ), James Morris (NZSPC), Helen Mora, Rangimarie Mahuta (TRN), Louise Anaru, Campbell Dewes (TKKM), Melanie Webber (PPTA), Natalie Faitala, and David Ferguson.
- 2 Wider engagement has been undertaken to test potential approaches and establish the need for a change. These have included conversations with PPTA leadership, the PPTA Secondary Principals Council, SPANZ Exec, and school leaders in Bay of Plenty, Waikato, and Wellington. We have not formally consulted with these groups on the specific final options generated with the Professional Advisory Group, but have incorporated their views as appropriate. This was to preserve the integrity of the co-design process, and ensure the Professional Advisory Group were able to work somewhat independently of their organisations.
- 3 The Ministry, NZQA, and members of the PAG (Roger Moses and David Ferguson) also met with a group of seven Auckland school leaders on 19 May including Heather McRae (Diocesan School for Girls), Glen Denham (Massey High School), Tim O'Connor (Auckland Grammar School), Steven Hargreaves (Macleans College), Patrick Gale (Rangitoto College), James Bentley (St. Peter's College), and Patrick Drumm (Mount Albert Grammar School).