



Briefing Note: NCEA Response to COVID-19: Recognition of Learning from Lockdown

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	23/06/2020	Priority:	Medium
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

- Note** that we have worked with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to develop an operational response to support schools to recognise the learning, skills and competencies gained by young people during lockdown, and that we will communicate this new support to schools in early 2020.
- Agree** that this Briefing will be proactively released.

Agree **Disagree**

Summary

- This operational response draws on what schools are already able to do in terms of assessing learning against unit standards.
- Our response will involve providing templates and ways to support schools to use these unit standards in less familiar contexts e.g. where students have been in part-time employment, or volunteering.
- We plan on communicating about these new supports to schools once you've had a chance to engage with this Briefing Note, ideally from 1 July.


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Early Learning and Student Achievement


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

25/06/2020

30 / 6 / 2020

Background

1. In the Education Report *Changes to NCEA in 2020 to respond to COVID-19* (METIS 1227996), we told you that we are working on new ways to support schools to identify and collect evidence that could be used towards fulfilling the requirements of certain assessment standards, to recognise young people who have gained skills and competencies, including employability skills, as a result of learning experiences during lockdown (e.g., while working, volunteering) that were not tied necessarily to planned programmes of assessment.
2. Our advice was that this should be done via processes similar to existing ones for gathering evidence of achievement, and that we would work with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to confirm the exact nature of the support.

The operational response

3. There are a wide range of unit standards for which schools have consent to assess and which they can use to assess students for NCEA qualifications who may have been:
 - a. In paid employment e.g. in supermarkets, garage stations, or doing cleaning work
 - b. Engaged in unpaid work, caring for family members and managing the household e.g. cooking meals, childcare supervision, budgeting
 - c. Volunteering or working in/for the community e.g. delivering shopping to elderly
 - d. Transitioning to distance learning e.g. learning how to use online learning management systems and word processing programmes
4. For example, this could include unit standards such as 30906 *Plan and engage in an activity intended to benefit the community* (6 credits).
5. Schools are currently able to recognise skills and competencies via these standards, but it is uncommon for schools to recognise these from learning outside of school settings as this requires schools to work with unfamiliar learning contexts.
6. To support schools to recognise skills and competencies arising out of this learning, NZQA will provide support in the form of Assessment of Current Competency Tools.
7. This means that NZQA would provide schools with guidance and evidence gathering templates. The guidance would include examples of appropriate evidence and we would also look to ensure the relevant standards are translated into te reo Māori for use by Wharekura. This guidance would also link to the Employability Skills Framework.
8. Evidence collected using this process would be internally moderated as per usual school processes. NZQA will quality assure the process by identifying those schools and kura in need of support to credibly and validly assess and provide them with individualised support to build capacity and remediate any issues.
9. These resources could be available and we could begin to communicate with schools from 1 July.

Impact of this approach

10. As noted above, we have consulted with your Professional Advisory Group on this approach. Your Professional Advisory Group agree with the direction of this approach, and with them, and they have advised:
 - a. That the additional scaffolding provided by the evidence gathering tools will support schools to recognise this learning in a way that they normally do not
 - b. That this approach will give value and recognition to skills and competencies arising out of learning during lockdown where it has occurred, even though that learning wasn't tied to a student's normal learning programme
 - c. That this will have positive impact for the students who faced the greatest disadvantage during the remote learning period and who are still struggling to engage for a variety of reasons
 - d. That, while these tools will be used for a relatively small cohort of students, the benefit to these students will be significant.

Key Risks

11. There is a risk that it will be perceived that this makes it too easy to obtain an NCEA this year, and that this could undermine the credibility of the qualification. This risk is mitigated by ensuring communications material emphasises that this response recognises that some students were more affected by lockdown than others, and that this response draws on standards that schools already have consent to assess.
12. The Professional Advisory Group advised the need to ensure that communications make it clear that the assessment and evidence requirements for these standards are consistent with credible and valid assessment. The Professional Advisory Group have also advised that we do this by targeting communications at the Principal's Nominee for each school for NZQA purposes and at Principals themselves.

Next Steps

13. NZQA will continue to develop the templates, consider ways of supporting schools and to develop communications materials. We will begin to share these communications with Principals and Principal's Nominees once your Office signals you are comfortable for us to do so. We would like to begin communicating about this from 1 July.
14. We have agreed to share the key communications materials with the Professional Advisory Group to seek their feedback in advance of communicating this approach to the sector.
15. We are also exploring with NZQA the possibility of developing new Field Māori standards grounded in mātaḡono and tikanga which could be used to assess this learning. We are yet to have a full discussion with the Professional Advisory Group on this topic, and will brief you further if we decide to progress with this option.

Proactive Release

16. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.