English Language and English for Academic Purposes Unit Standards

Supporting Document – Draft for consultation – August 2025

Purpose

The English Language (EL) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Supporting Document supports assessment against the current versions of unit standards and qualifications in both secondary and tertiary settings, with a focus on the needs of secondary and tertiary teachers, and current and future learners (migrants, former refugees, international students and the wider community).

It is expected that all secondary schools and tertiary providers delivering English language programmes will contribute to an education system that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and respectfully considers New Zealand's diverse cultural heritage and the unique identities and histories of its people. This commitment promotes a deeper understanding of the English language in New Zealand's cultural landscape.

This document is not intended as a teaching and learning guide. Programme and assessment task design remain the responsibility of schools and tertiary providers.

The New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) Supporting Document is the companion to this document. Its purpose is to support assessment against the current qualifications, with more of a focus on the needs of tertiary teachers.

Overview

Connecting learning and assessment using EL and EAP unit standards
This Supporting Document shows how unit standards can be used to assess EL Foundation, EL Level 1 & 2, EL Level 2 & 3, EAP Level 3, and EAP Level 4, and is presenting different approaches that address an area of need.

Each approach:
- describes the teaching and learning context for either secondary or tertiary, or both, with a specific focus on who the learners are.
- shows how the standards can be used
- explicitly unpacks selected standards
- presents an example assessment schedule.

In the secondary context, the English language needs of each English Language Learner (ELL) must be well understood and records kept, not just for the English as an additional language (EAL) specialist, but for all teachers of their other subjects.

For a teacher to know which EL or EAP unit standard to use with ELLs, all four language skills must be assessed. Teachers need to know which English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) Stage each student is at for each skill. ELLs may be at different stages for different skills. For example, they may be at Stage 3 for speaking and listening but at Stage 2 for reading and writing.

In the tertiary context, equally, accurate assessments must be made to determine the language proficiency of the learner; usually at a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level for each skill. The relationship between the CEFR and ELLP is shown in Section Two.

Multicultural Learner Success and ESOL Support

Information and resources for teachers to respond to the needs of multicultural learners including those from migrant backgrounds, former refugees, and English language learners

newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/teaching-support/multicultural-learner-success-and-esol-support/5637164826.c

Valuing the languages and cultures of English language learners

We need to know our learners – their stories, their strengths, and their needs – before thinking about what we might teach them, or how we might plan assessment activities. Whether you have a large class or a group of three or four English Language Learners (ELLs), their stories will be unique, and their needs will be diverse.

Using L1 / home languages in the ELL classroom

English language learners (ELLs) in New Zealand come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Recognising this diversity lays a foundation for meaningful and respectful cross-cultural interactions.

ELLs may include:

- learners from homes where a language other than English is spoken
- ESOL-funded learners from migrant, former refugee, or New Zealand backgrounds
- previously ESOL-funded learners who have exceeded their funding period
- learners transitioning from Kaupapa Māori and Māori Medium Education settings to English-medium learning environments
- learners from bilingual education settings
- international fee-paying learners.

And using the home languages (L1) of learners to explain complex concepts or clarify doubts, through translation or by native speakers, can help build confidence, affirm identity, and ensure the continued bilingual or multilingual growth of the learners' languages. Translanguaging in the learner's linguistic repertoire supports the growth of English at any level of their English language acquisition. The key is finding a balance that aids learning without creating over-reliance on the home language (L1).

Assessing learning in the ELL classroom

When it comes to assessment, the following applies:

- For informal / low stakes / formative assessment - use L1 for clarification or translation purposes.

- For formal / higher stakes / summative assessment -precisely follow the Guidance Information in the English Language and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) unit standards. All assessment activities must be conducted in English, which must not be the learner's first language

Key resources supporting assessment

Key Secondary resources:

Tāhūrangi is the digital home for curriculum content, teaching resources, and news. It has content that supports effective teaching and learning across:

- Te Whāriki: He Whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum

- Te Marautanga o Aotearoa

- The New Zealand Curriculum, and,

- Te Whāriki a Te Kōhanga Reo.

The New Zealand Curriculum space offers information, resources, news, school stories and practical ideas, and includes teaching support for multicultural learner success and ESOL support.

This is where you will find The English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP). These resources are aimed at teachers of all levels working with students learning English as an additional language. Guidance can be adapted to all curriculum areas and will support teachers to choose content, vocabulary, and tasks that are appropriate to each learner's age, stage, and language-learning needs.

The ELLP Years 9-13 resource presents matrices of the stages of English Language learning from Foundation to Stage 4. It is used for assessment, and to guide planning, learning and teaching of ELLs, including vocabulary levels and language structures typically used at each stage.

Ministry of Education Secondary Assessment Guidelines (in progress)

This resource provides guidelines for initial placement testing and ongoing assessment. Additionally, it refers to the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) and NZCEL Supporting Document because both the EL and EAP unit standards are key assessments for these qualifications.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User, and can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context. The levels are defined through 'can-do' descriptors. These levels provide a basis for language teaching, learning, and assessment and are especially used in the tertiary sector.

NZQA resources supporting EL and EAP assessment

The NZQA website is where you find the most recent versions of the unit standards and the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) qualifications.

Assessment Support Materials provide models of assessment tasks and schedules. There are also exemplars of learner work, and clarifications for addressing issues arising from the moderation process.
(links to updated ASMs, Exemplars, and Clarifications to be added)

Generative AI Guidance

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to machines programmed to mimic human intelligence. AI is used to analyse data to recognise patterns and make predictions based on those patterns.

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is a subset of AI. In response to human instructions or 'prompts', GenAI can create new content, such as text, images, video, audio, and code. It does this through being trained on very large collections of existing content – scraped from the internet and other sources. GenAI technologies are now revolutionary in the high quality of their content: it can be difficult to distinguish from human-generated content.

GenAI technologies, such as chatbots, intelligent tutoring systems, and speech recognition software, are increasingly used to enhance language learning experiences, to provide tailored resources, promote autonomous learning and improve specific linguistic skills.

The Ministry of Education has developed policies and guidance to support teachers and school leaders to understand the potential opportunities, issues and risks associated with the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

https://www.education.govt.nz/school/digital-technology/generative-ai/

GenAI gives us opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, but when it comes to assessment, its use needs to be restricted to ensure a learner's work is their own.

NZQA has guidance on AI and when its use is acceptable in assessment.

Guidance on the acceptable use of Artificial Intelligence – New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Guidance for generative AI in education and research | UNESCO: https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/guidance-generative-ai-education-and-research

The consultation version of the Supporting Document is in seven sections. This is SECTION ONE.

Contents

Audience personas

Who is this Supporting Document for?

Given the diversity of the audiences for this *Supporting Document*, the writers have imagined multiple personas to identify who its readers may be.

An audience persona is a semi-fictional character that embodies the intended reader or viewer. It's a concise snapshot of relevant information related to their professional background and context - where they teach, the problems they have encountered and the solutions they need - all packaged together to form a "person" who will be seeking to know more about the unit standards and NZCEL qualifications.

The different personas below illustrate how different audiences might engage with this document and what they may be looking for.

Tertiary sector PERSONAS

PERSONA 1: CARL - Experienced ESOL tutor, new to NZCEL and NZ

Carl is teaching NZCEL levels 1 and 2 for the first time with limited support in his private tertiary provider (PTE) or in the wider region.

Context:
- Recently returned from overseas; trained overseas (CELTA and DELTA qualified).
- 20 plus years' experience ESOL/ EFL (General English, EAP, Exam preparation).
- New to NZCEL, New Zealand educational context and the Māori-Crown partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Unfamiliar with NZQA processes, EL & EAP unit standards, and qualification frameworks.
- Working in isolation - no immediate support in his institution or town.
- Experienced with international language tests such as IELTS, TOIEC, and TOEFL and CEFR.

CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) | Cambridge English
DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) | Cambridge English

 Needs:
- Clear overview of NZCEL qualifications and programme options.
- Deep understanding of NZCEL programme requirements
- Guidance on unpacking the Graduate Profile Outcomes (GPOs) and Learning Objectives (LOs) for classroom practice.
- Clarification on how NZCEL relates to the CEFR and other frameworks.
- Access to resources for creating assessments.
- Ability to create and use English Language and EAP unit standard-based assessments
- Connections with other providers for advice and support.

PERSONA 2: WENDY - NZCEL Level 3 Programme Lead at a tertiary Institution

Wendy is an experienced teacher implementing a new Academic Level 4 programme. She is concerned about the high stakes nature of pathway programmes leading to tertiary degrees.

Context:
- Teaching Level 3 General and Level 3 Academic NZCEL.
- Leading the English Language programme.
- Concerned about how NZCEL 4 leads into academic study (high stakes)
- Limited assessment writing experience; plans to use the English for Academic Purposes writing unit standards and support materials.

Needs:
- Clear understanding of the NZCEL qualifications she leads/teaches.
- Familiarity with performance expectations across levels.
- Clarity on learner achievement requitements and their pathways.
- Examples of EAP unit standards assessment design and delivery.
- Examples of different ways in which EAP unit standards could be delivered,
- Ability to create assessments for the Level 4 Academic programme.
- Easy access to resources for assessment development.

PERSONA 3: MEG - Experienced teacher trainer and assessor at a private tertiary provider (PTE)

Meg has been seconded to assist the EAP team (NZCEL Levels 2–5) after a suboptimal round of external moderation. Her role includes writing and moderating assessments. To support her team, she needs a clear grasp of the programme structure, especially assessment and moderation requirements

Context:
- Thirty years' ELT experience overseas and in New Zealand.
- MA in TESOL; Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) trainer, IELTS examiner, OET interlocutor
- Strong interest in assessment design.
- Seeking to align assessment practice with NZQA moderation feedback.

Needs:
- Resources to assist with assessment creation (e.g. task types by LO, progression examples)
- Sample rubrics and exemplars showing how to meet moderation criteria
- Clear understanding of how NZCEL aligns with CEFR, IELTS, and other frameworks
- Familiarity with learner performance expectations at different NZCEL levels
- Examples of how EL and EAP unit standards are used in assessments
- Access to exemplars that clarify performance standards at each level

Secondary Sector PERSONAS

PERSONA 1: DEBBIE - HOD English starting ESOL classes to try to meet the needs of new English Language Learners in the community.

Debbie is working in a large secondary school that is starting ESOL classes for the first time.

Context:
- Leading a cross-curricular English, social sciences, science project.
- Preoccupied with NCEA requirements.
- Recent enrolments from new migrants and former refugees.
- Not TESOL trained.
- ESOL experience through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme.
- No previous experience using English Language or EAP unit standards.
- Not sure how to start or where to look.

Needs:
- Clear understanding of the English Language and EAP unit standards, and their delivery through an integrated assessment programme.
- Access to ESOL and the English Language Intensive Programme (ELIP) resources to support assessment planning.
- Clarity about the relationship between the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and how they relate to the English Language unit standards.
- Guidance on assessment procedures and learner performance at different levels.
- Examples of different ways in which unit EL and EAP standards might be used to assess learning.

- Overview of teaching and learning sequences and of where to find examples.
- Familiarity with specific definitions and terminology.
- Clarity about the expectations of learners who are needing language support for their other NCEA subjects.

PERSONA 2: SIONE - New Teacher in Charge (TIC) *English as an Additional Language* **(EAL)**

Sione is working with another English Language (EL) teacher. They are team-teaching the first multi-level senior EAL class in their school and are planning to assess their learners using English Language unit standards to gain NCEA credits.

Context:
- Multilingual.
- CELTA and Diploma of Second Language Teaching.
- Taught non-NCEA EAL classes in his last secondary school.
- Understands NCEA achievement standards but has not used unit standards.

Needs:

- Clear understanding of how unit standards work.
- Examples of how different level English language unit standards can be taught through one unit of work.
- Access to ESOL and the English Language Intensive Programme (ELIP) resources to build teaching and learning sequences.
- Access to assessment materials to support Foundation, Level 1, and Level 2 English Language Unit Standards.
- Access to secondary appropriate initial assessments to place students at the right level for unit standards and to understand what teaching and learning they will need.
- Clarity about the relationship between the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and how they relate to the English Language unit standards.

- Familiarity with the terminology used in the EL and EAP unit standards.

PERSONA 3: SARAH - HOD English Language at a large co-ed secondary school

Sarah needs to keep up to date with all the curriculum and assessment changes and is looking for fresh ideas.

Context:
- TESOL qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable.
- Contributed to the review of the EL standards in 2023.
- Classes at every year level for ELLs (Years 9-13) and classes to support learners who have basic English.
- Learners are on NCEA pathways.
- Supports English language learning across all the NCEA subjects that English Language Learners' study.

Needs:
- Clarity about the current EL and EAP standards - how they can be used for assessment as part of an integrated unit of work in conjunction with assessment against other English language unit standards at the same level.
- Fresh assessment approaches and examples of different ways unit standards might be used to assess learning.
- Resources to assist with creating assessments.
- Guidance about how to connect EL and EAP to the NCEA literacy co-requisites.
- Clarity about how the unit standards relate to the CEFR and other frameworks, including ELLP.
- Understand of the different pathways available to students who are needing language support for their other NCEA subjects.