

# New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL)

## Supporting Document – Draft for consultation – August 2025

### Purpose

The NZCEL Supporting Document supports assessment against the current versions of the qualifications in tertiary settings with a focus on the needs of NZCEL providers, and current and future learners (migrants, former refugees, international students and the wider community).

It is expected that all providers delivering NZCEL 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 not only enriches the learning experience but also 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 tertiary providers.

[\*The English Language and English for Academic Purposes Unit Standards Supporting Document\*](#) is the companion to this document. Its purpose is to support assessment against the current standards, with a focus on the needs of both secondary and tertiary teachers.

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## Section 1: 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 NZCEL qualifications.

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



**Wendy**—NZCEL Level 3 Programme Lead at a Tertiary Institution



**Carl**—Experienced ESOL Tutor, new to NZCEL



**Meg**—Experienced Teacher Trainer & Assessor at a PTE



**Aroha**—Programme Leader/Developer at a PTE, new to NZCEL & ESOL



**Jane**—Commercial Evaluator / Moderator, no ESOL background



**Ariya**—Parent of a Prospective International Student, new to NZCEL & NZ

## Wendy — NZCEL Level 3 programme lead at a tertiary Institution

**Wendy has been tasked with developing a new Academic Level 4 programme. Despite her experience with Level 3, she is concerned about the high stakes nature of pathway programmes leading to tertiary degrees.**

### Context:

- Teaching Level 3 General and 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 English for Academic Purposes (EAP) unit standards and support **materials**

### Needs:

- Clear understanding of NZCEL qualifications she teaches/leads

- Familiarity with performance expectations across levels
- Clarity on learner achievement requirements and their pathways
- Insight into how EAP unit standards can be integrated into a programme
- Examples of EAP unit standard assessment design and delivery
- Ability to create assessments for the Level 4 Academic programme
- Easy access to resources for assessment development

## Carl — Experienced ESOL tutor, new to NZCEL & NZ

**Carl is teaching NZCEL Levels 1 and 2 for the first time with limited support in his PTE or in the wider region**

### **Context:**

- Recently returned from overseas; trained overseas (CELTA, DELTA qualified)
- 20+ years' experience in ESOL/EFL (General English, EAP, Exam Preparation)
- New to NZCEL, New Zealand education system, 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 IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL, and CEFR

### **Needs:**

- Clear overview of NZCEL qualifications and programme options
- Deep understanding of NZCEL programme requirements
- Guidance on unpacking Graduate Profile Outcomes (GPOs) and Learning Objectives (Los) for classroom practice

- Clarification on how NZCEL relates to 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

## Meg—Experienced teacher trainer & assessor at a 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:

- 30 years' ELT experience in NZ and abroad
- MA in TESOL; CELTA trainer, IELTS examiner, OET interlocutor
- Strong interest in assessment design
- Wants 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

## Aroha—Programme leader/developer at a PTE, new to NZCEL & ESOL

**Aroha has been tasked with developing NZCEL programmes at her PTE. She has experience in assessment and programme design for other qualifications, but is new to both ESOL and NZCEL**

### **Context:**

- Responsible for developing NZCEL programmes (new area)
- Prior experience with assessment development (non-ESOL programmes)
- No ESOL teaching background

### **Needs:**

- Confidence in her knowledge of NZCEL to support her team
- Clear overview of NZCEL qualifications and programme options
- Strong grasp of NZCEL programme requirements
- Access to resources for developing assessments
- Ability to create assessments for her programmes

## Jane—Commercial evaluator / moderator, no ESOL background

**Jane is looking for clarity in relation to the NZCEL suite of qualifications, especially performance expectations, to improve the accuracy of her work**

### **Context:**

- Evaluates across subjects; paid to moderate assessments
- No ESOL teaching background
- Her samples received critical feedback from NZQA

### **Needs:**

- Clear overview of NZCEL qualifications and programme options
- Familiarity with performance expectations across NZCEL levels
- Access to exemplars that illustrate required performance standards
- Understanding of key NZQA terminology (e.g. "independently demonstrate competence")



## **Ariya**—Parent of a prospective international student, new to NZCEL & NZ

**Ariya is seeking to understand her son's intended course of study and future pathway.**

### **Context:**

- Son (23) plans to study in New Zealand
- Familiar with IELTS (has taken the test herself)
- Unfamiliar with NZCEL

### **Needs:**

- Clear understanding of what NZCEL is and how it is different from other types of study, e.g. General English, IELTS
- Clarity on the study pathways NZCEL provides into mainstream education
- Realistic timeframe for her son to reach entry requirements for further study

## Which section of the NZCEL Supporting Document will most benefit each persona?

Persona	Most Relevant Section	Content	Rationale
<b>Wendy</b> Programme Lead, familiar with Level 3	<b>Section 6: Sufficiency &amp; Assessment Guidance</b>	Details on assessment requirements, text lengths, and expectations by level	<i>Supports her need to develop and validate assessments for NZCEL Level 4 Academic</i>
<b>Carl</b> Experienced ESOL tutor, new to NZCEL	<b>Section 2: Qualification Structure, Progression and Pathways</b>	Overview of NZCEL levels, CEFR/IELTS mappings, and progression	<i>Provides foundational understanding of NZCEL structure and links to familiar frameworks (IELTS, CEFR)</i>
<b>Meg</b> Teacher Trainer & Assessor	<b>Section 4: Guidance to Support Assessment</b>	Detailed assessment guidance, conditions, integrated approaches, and evidence types	<i>Supports her moderation and assessment writing responsibilities with practical examples</i>
<b>Aroha</b> Programme Developer, new to ESOL/NZCEL	<b>Section 3: Understanding the NZCEL Levels</b>	Framework mappings and GPO examples across CEFR, IELTS, CLB, etc.	<i>Helps her understand expectations and build appropriate programmes despite no ESOL background</i>
<b>Jane</b> Evaluator/Moderator, no ESOL background	<b>Section 3: Understanding the NZCEL Levels</b>	Performance descriptors and benchmark comparisons	<i>Clarifies what competence looks like across levels to moderate effectively</i>
<b>Ariya</b> Parent, new to NZ/NZCEL	<b>Section 2: Qualification Structure, Progression and Pathways</b>	Simple explanation of what NZCEL is, how it leads to further study	<i>Offers a clear, accessible overview for laypersons unfamiliar with educational pathways</i>

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION