

4 April 2023

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your request on 9 March 2023, under the Official Information Act 1982, for the following three sets of information about the Literacy and Numeracy co-requisite:

First set of questions:

Please provide answers to the following questions, that my schools has been unable to answer:

I think I will need to become involved in ensuring that [REDACTED] can pass this testing, but I need more information, please. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] so we will have to carefully manage any unexpected extra demands on this student and their parents. This means providing a great deal more information than what was currently provided, including some sort of timetable for this to happen. My first impression is that the launch of this new requirement has not been thought through, and I do not know why we are involved in something which is both a pilot, but essential "in order to be awarded any future NCEA qualification". Can I suggest that this is not a good way to launch a new requirement, especially as the level of detail in what is required appears to be absent.

I did not get a clear idea of what kind of questions might be involved in this testing.

Is it possible to get 5 or 6 mock exams of this type for me to get a handle on what's required and allow us to do comprehensive practice for this?

Ideally, the mock exams would be available in the same form that the exam requires, ie online. Otherwise the change of format will throw them on the day.

If there is a commercial solution that provides this that you know of, then please let me know. Eg. it might be a tutoring company that has researched this new requirement and knows how to prepare students for it, and provides example questions.

Is there a detailed syllabus statement for the exams, along with at least two example questions for each syllabus statement?

I feel this is a minimum requirement from NZQA to provide this information.

Will this additional testing displace any time currently allocated for learning? It seems there is a lot of testing, and I wonder if this leaves adequate time for learning.

The reason I am unclear on all this is because it seems like an ill-defined exam

requirement, across many subjects, compared to the testing against individual subjects.

I really need to know more details on what questions could be asked, please.

We thought we would not be required to get special conditions for exams signed off by NZQA until next year. It seems we now need to get this in place within the next few weeks.

Also, will there be any internal mock exams in school time to prepare for this?

Please explain how we can apply for these special conditions, and the timeline. Our other child had the special conditions approved, but NZQA failed to provide these conditions in 4 out of 4 exams. This resulted in a failure of the examination process. What steps will NZQA put in place for this new requirement to ensure they do not fail [REDACTED] Due to this, I will be contacting the school 2 weeks prior and 2 days prior to ensure the special conditions are available. I will also be accompanying my child to the exam. Last time, their sibling had to see 5 different people at the time of the exam before being admitted. On another occasion, their paper was in the room but they were not allowed to enter. Please sort this out.

Second set of questions:

1. Have taxpayers contributed to the development of these?
2. Why can't NZ parents not easily access these documents, especially if they have helped pay for them (it would be a shame that so much time and resource is wasted in developing them, only for that to be wasted in a lack of access)?
3. Even if the user name and password is freely given out by NZQA, what are the chances that a parent would decide to expend additional effort in asking NZQA for access once they reached the webpage? Less than 50%?
4. Even if a parent does make an enquiry to NZQA about this, experience proves that the NZQA web contact page, and help line, do not deal effectively with such enquires. My previous OIA request documents several weeks of delay in obtaining a simple answer to a query about NCEA approved calculators. The answer only came when I lodged an OIA request. So, even a parent did make an enquiry for the username and password, what are the chances that the query would even reach the person responsible at NZQA?
5. To help answer this question, I rang your 0800 number on 10-03-2023, and I was on the phone for 21 minutes. I did not get an answer after 21 minutes, but they promised someone would ring back. I suggest a 21 minute phone call is a big barrier to gaining access to the practice exams, and a waste of time for your staff.
6. Do you think that making random queries to your own help line and web page would help you realize how ineffectual your help contact centre is? I wish to emphasize that the staff at the help centre are excellent; it's just that they do not have the training or knowledge to answer simple questions, or know who to contact. This is the same result as with the query about NCEA approved calculators (the promised calls never eventuated, so I lodged an OIA request).
7. Assuming that the track record of requiring OIA requests continues, do you think many parents will go to the trouble of lodging an OIA request in order to attempt access to the practice exams?
8. Please state the user name and password and publish the answer to this OIA request question in the public domain.

Third set of questions:

1. Why does NZQA not make the practice exams available to parents, except by making parents break copyright law?

2. *Please state the copyright owner's contact details. I wish to inform them that I will be using their copyrighted material unlawfully due to NZQA's management of the practice exams.*
3. *Why do you say access to the exams can be obtained, but not provide the NSN to ensure that promise can be kept?*

Response

Literacy and Numeracy Corequisite

Literacy and Numeracy will become a mandatory co-requisite of the NCEA qualification in 2024. This was first announced publicly in 2020 as one of seven changes aimed at strengthening the NCEA, following public engagement in 2018.

The Ministry of Education is the standard setter and the owner of the NCEA qualification. All decisions around implementation and teaching and learning lie with the Ministry of Education.

NZQA is the New Zealand Crown entity tasked with administering educational assessment and qualifications, including for the new literacy and numeracy corequisite for NCEA. NZQA has responsibility for the development of the assessment activities and marking of student work.

Assessments against the new literacy and numeracy standards were piloted in 2021 and 2022. 2023 is a transition year, prior to full implementation next year. The transition year enables all schools who wish to engage with the standards, to enter students who they think are ready to attempt the assessments. The pathways for meeting the existing NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements will remain in place for students currently studying toward these.

More detail on the transition year, and the implementation of the new Literacy and Numeracy corequisite can be found here:

<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/understanding-how-ncea-requirements-are-changing>

<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/te-reo-matatini-me-te-pangarau-literacy-and-numeracy-transitional-year-2023>

Students from Year 9 to Year 13 may undertake these assessments. There is no requirement to achieve the standards by the end of Year 10, or even Year 11. From 2024, students will need to meet the co-requisite requirement at some stage in their learning journey to be awarded their NCEA. For some students, this may even be post school, in a tertiary or workplace learning environment.

It is recommended that students only attempt the assessments when they are ready. However, there is no limit to the number of times a student can attempt an assessment. In 2023, there will be two opportunities to undertake the assessments: the week 12 – 16 June and the week 6 – 10 November. Each school will decide on the day or days their students will complete the assessments, within those weeks.

Details on the standards and assessments can be found by using the following links. The standards include what students need to know and be able to do to meet the requirements and achieve the standard. These links also include Assessment Specifications, Assessment Reports, marking schedules for 2021 and 2022 and student exemplars.

- US 32403 – Read written texts to understand ideas and information
<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/literacy-and-numeracy/literacy/reading/unit-standard>
- US 32405 – Write texts to communicate ideas and information
<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/literacy-and-numeracy/literacy/writing/unit-standard>
- US 32406 – Use mathematics and statistics to meet the numeracy demands of a range of situations
<https://ncea.education.govt.nz/literacy-and-numeracy/numeracy/unit-standard>

Further information on Literacy and Numeracy can be found at <https://ncea.education.govt.nz/> under the tab New Zealand Curriculum. Past assessments are available digitally to students and teachers with an authorised username and password at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-exams-and-portfolios/external/digital-exams/find-past-digital-exams/>.

In terms of NZQA supplying you with the contact details of the copyright owners, NZQA does not hold this information. NZQA relies on section 49 of the Copyright Act 1994 when creating examination content and therefore does not contact copyright owners about the use of copyright material for the purposes of an examination. This request is refused under section 18(g)(i) and (ii) of the OIA as the information is not held by NZQA, and there are no reasonable grounds to believe it is held by, or more closely connected with the functions of, another agency or Minister.

Special Assessment Conditions

All Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) provisions currently available to students are applicable for the assessment of literacy and numeracy for students who have SAC entitlements. Details regarding special assessment conditions can be found here <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/special-assessment-conditions/literacy-and-numeracy-te-reo-matatini-me-te-pangarau-sac-2023/>.

A formal SAC application approved by NZQA is not required to provide this support for the corequisite. Schools will determine the type and level of support that their students may require, based on the student's needs and the professional judgement of the teacher. If you have not done so, we recommend you discuss your child's needs with their school.

Practice Assessments

One of NZQA's roles is to develop assessments for externally assessed standards. We do not develop practice assessments. We offer sample assessments for new standards to enable students and teachers to familiarise themselves with the format of assessments they are approaching for the first time. NZQA also releases past assessments for achievement standards, following the conclusion of the assessment period. Teachers have access to the complete versions, and they are authorised to provide access to their students for the purpose of preparing them for assessment.

Resources published by teachers' subject associations are developed and quality assured by experienced, well-qualified teachers. NZQA has not quality assured these materials. The Ministry of Education has advised that the questions developed by NZAMT (New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers) were written by a group of experienced secondary teachers.

The standard, "Unpacking Numeracy" document, and information about the assessment from schools that were in the 2021 pilot, were used to write these questions. The questions present a range of contexts where mathematics and statistics can be used. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and use these questions in class to revisit concepts with learners and build understanding of where, when, and how mathematics and statistics is used in contexts familiar and unfamiliar to learners.

The Google link provided is typically found via nzamt.org.nz/resources with a tab labelled "NEW Numeracy corequisite resources 2023." The folder containing the Book of Questions details information related to the standard itself. The Book of Questions explicitly associates the process idea and content idea(s) from the numeracy standard that each question item is associated with.

We are not aware of a similar resource for literacy. The Ministry of Education is also unaware of similar resources for literacy.

In terms of your question "*Have taxpayers contributed to the development of these?*", the answer is yes.

Copyright Legislation

2021 and 2022 pilot assessments are available in pdf format. Where material has been removed in compliance with copyright legislation, references are provided that will enable anyone downloading these documents to access the resource material themselves.

NZQA is bound by the Copyright Act 1994. Under Section 44A of the Act, which restricts the provision of copyrighted material to authorised users for purposes specified in the Act, a person can only access the stored material through a verification process that verifies that he or she is entitled to access the stored material. This means the person requesting access must be a participant in the course of instruction for which the material is stored, i.e., a student or teacher. Authorised users are provided with usernames and passwords that enable them to access the assessments in a way that ensures compliance with copyright legislation.

NZQA does not give out usernames or passwords. These are set up by organisations to protect the security of information and data they hold, and by individuals to protect their privacy and personal information. For this reason, usernames and passwords are kept confidential. In this context, the student is the authorised user, and the student will be provided with a username and password by their teacher.

Further information about the Copyright Act can be obtained from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. A feedback and enquiry form can be found on this page: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/about/contact-us/>

Students' NSN Numbers

The National Student Number (NSN) is a unique number allocated to every student by the Ministry of Education. The use of the NSN is governed by the Education and Training Act 2020. Authorised users are allowed to use NSNs for specific purposes, that includes online learning and ensuring student records are accurate.

All students enrolled in a course that offers external examinations or assessments can access past digital assessments at least until the middle of the year following the examination. The student's school or NZQA will assist the student with locating their NSN number. The request for assistance to NZQA must be made by the student.

NZQA staff members are only authorised to provide NSN details to the person they belong to (the student), and only after asking security questions to ensure the requester is who they claim to be. In some cases, if a student agrees that a parent can have access to the NSN, then it would be given, but only with the student's direct authorisation.

Delay in responding to initial inquiry


I apologise for the delay in responding to your initial correspondence. Thank you for your feedback on the performance of our staff and communication processes. We have noted your comments and advice and will be following this up.

As part of the commitment to open and transparent government, NZQA is proactively releasing responses to Official Information Act requests that are of public interest. NZQA intends to publish its response to this request on its website as part of its next quarterly release of documents. Your name and contact details will be removed before publication, as with your son.

If you require further assistance or believe we have misinterpreted your request, please contact Elizabeth Templeton in the Office of the Chief Executive, email elizabeth.templeton@nzqa.govt.nz or telephone (04) 463 3339.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982, to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz. You can also telephone 0800 802 502 or write to the Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington, 6143.

Nāku nā



Dr Grant Klinkum
Pouwhakahaere/Chief Executive