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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Aide-Memoire: NCEA Level 1 trends

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<b>To:</b>	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education
<b>From:</b>	Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive
<b>Date:</b>	18 January 2024
<b>Reference:</b>	OC00598

### Purpose

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1. This aide memoire is in response to your request for information about the longitudinal trends in NCEA Level 1 uptake by students, including those who did not engage in a full NCEA Level 1 programme. It is supplementary to the Briefing Note *Provisional 2023 Enrolment-based NCEA and University Entrance National Attainment Statistics* [OC00548 refers].
2. In March, NZQA and the Ministry of Education will be providing you with an analysis of those students who have not engaged in a full NCEA Level 1 programme in 2023 and have returned to school in 2024 and those who have left.
3. NZQA proposes to proactively release this briefing as part of the next publication of documents.

### Background

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4. Engagement in NCEA Level 1 is optional. NCEA Change Programme *Change 7 – Keep NCEA Level 1 optional* was a result of discussions whether NCEA Level 1 should be retained or not.
5. Increasing numbers of schools are not offering a full Level 1 assessment programme, i.e. students are not being entered in and assessed against sufficient credits to achieve an NCEA Level 1. As a result, attainment of NCEA Level 1 by Year 11 students has been trending downwards for several years.
6. Each year there are students at secondary school who undertake courses which are not assessed using standards administered by NZQA such as Accelerated Christian Education, Cambridge International, or International Baccalaureate.

## Discussion

### *Participation in NCEA Level 1 by Year 11s and associated attainment*

7. The following table shows the final results for Year 11 NCEA Level 1 by enrolment-based measure. The 2023 results are provisional.

Year	Achieved (n)	Achieved (%)	Total enrolled students	Difference from previous year
2014	43,084	72.4%	59,538	2.5%
2015	45,213	74.5%	60,725	2.1%
2016	45,871	75.3%	60,942	0.8%
2017	44,477	75.0%	59,297	-0.3%
2018	42,972	72.4%	59,392	-2.6%
2019	43,065	70.6%	60,982	-1.8%
2020	43,835	71.8%	61,046	1.2%
2021	43,071	69.2%	62,261	-2.6%
2022	42,337	64.9%	65,219	-4.3%
2023	41,331	60.0%	68,837	-4.9%

8. Of the 68,837 Year 11 students enrolled in a school in 2023, 51,643 (75%) are deemed 'participants' in NCEA Level 1, i.e. they were assessed in 80 Level 1 or above credits. The table below shows the rate of 'participating' Year 11s over the last 10 years. There has been a steady decrease in the proportion of participating Year 11 students since 2014. The proportion of students participating has declined by 1.1% between 2022 and 2023.

Academic Year	Participated (n)	Participated (%)	Total Enrolled Year 11 Students	Difference from Previous Year
2014	50,363	84.6%	59,538	1.1%
2015	52,094	85.8%	60,725	1.2%
2016	52,277	85.8%	60,942	0.0%
2017	50,900	85.8%	59,297	0.0%
2018	50,293	84.7%	59,392	-1.1%
2019	50,385	82.6%	60,982	-2.1%
2020	49,124	80.5%	61,046	-2.1%
2021	49,003	78.7%	62,261	-1.8%
2022	49,609	76.1%	65,219	-2.6%
2023	51,643	75.0%	68,837	-1.1%

9. The Year 11 attainment rate in NCEA Level 1 for 'participating' students has also declined over the last 10 years. The table below shows the attainment rate for the subset of Year 11 students who were 'participants'.

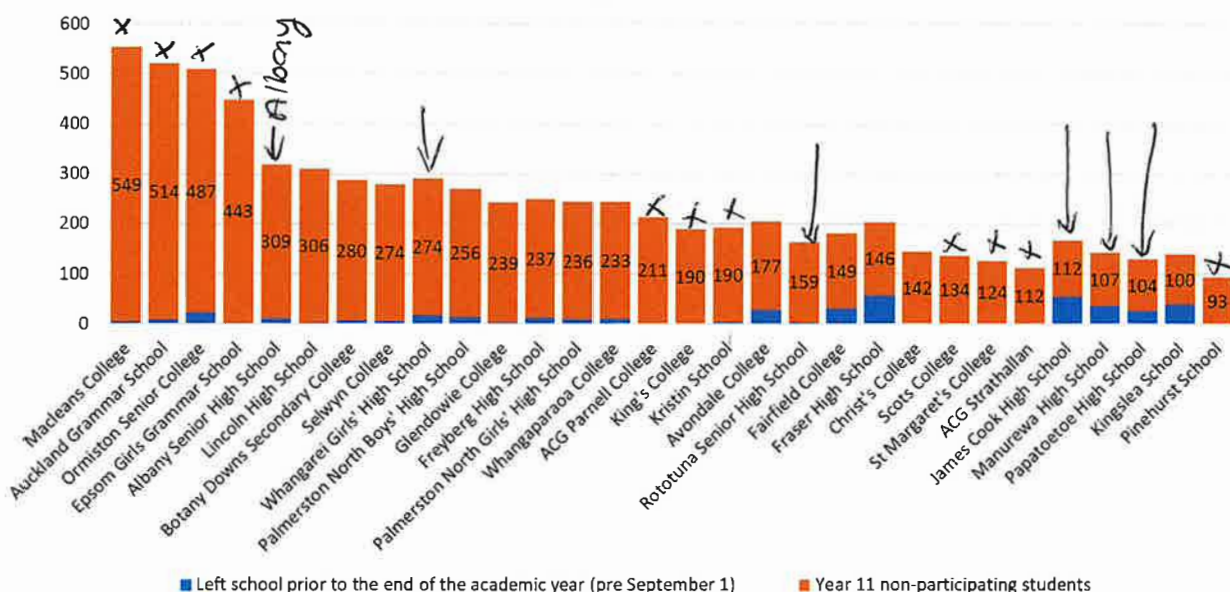
Academic Year	Year 11 - NCEA Level 1
2014	85.5%
2015	86.8%
2016	87.7%
2017	87.4%
2018	85.4%
2019	85.5%
2020	89.2%
2021	87.9%
2022	85.3%
2023	80.0%

10. Of the 68,837 Year 11 students enrolled in 2023, there were 17,194 (25.0%) students who were deemed 'non-participants', i.e. they were assessed for fewer credits than would be required to achieve NCEA Level 1.
11. The 17,194 non-participants can be broken down as follows:

Assessed for at least one credit at NCEA Level 1 or above in 2023	11,457	66.6%
No NCEA assessment at any level in 2023	5,737	33.4%
	17,194	

12. If Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (1,468 non-participating Year 11 students) and Home Education (786 non-participating students) are removed from the 17,194 non-participants, the 30 schools with the largest Year 11 cohorts of non-participating students are as follows:

Counts of 2023 Year 11 students not participating in NCEA Level 1 by School (top 30)



13. This chart shows there are a variety of schools whose students are 'non-participants' in NCEA Level 1. Many of these schools enrol students who are on pathways to alternative qualifications to NCEA, such as Accelerated Christian Education, Cambridge International or the International Baccalaureate. Others will be running programmes that prepare their students for NCEA Level 2 over two years and/or may be running their own Diploma courses at Level 1. There is also Kingslea, a specialist school where NCEA may not be the target qualification for all their students.
14. In March, NZQA and the Ministry of Education will be providing you with an analysis of those students who have not engaged in a full NCEA Level 1 programme in 2023 and have returned to school in 2024 and those who have left.
15. The following table shows a breakdown into broad counts of credits assessed for the 11,547 non-participant student that were assessed for at least 1 level 1 or above credit in 2023.

<b>Range of credits</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Range 71 or More	386	3.4%
Range 61 70	875	7.6%
Range 51 60	1353	11.8%
Range 41 50	1664	14.5%
Range 31 40	1668	14.6%
Range 21 30	2115	18.5%
Range 11 20	1662	14.5%
Range 0 10	1734	15.1%
	<b>11,457</b>	

16. The following table shows the proportion of the 11,547 non-participant students assessed in one or more Level 1 or above credits by subject down to and including 1% of these students.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>%</b>
Mathematics and Statistics	7895	68.9%
English	6925	60.4%
Science	3215	28.1%
Physical Education	3132	27.3%
Visual Arts	1477	12.9%
Physics	1415	12.4%
History	1260	11.0%
Chemistry	1241	10.8%
Biology	1233	10.8%
Geography	876	7.6%
Digital Technologies	680	5.9%
Economics	677	5.9%
Health	661	5.8%
Generic Technology	564	4.9%
Design and Visual Communication	526	4.6%
Business Studies	515	4.5%
Media Studies	461	4.0%
Music	404	3.5%
Drama	402	3.5%
Construction and Mechanical Technologies	398	3.5%
Accounting	377	3.3%
Dance	332	2.9%
Home Economics	327	2.9%
Agricultural and Horticultural Science	313	2.7%
Te Reo Māori	313	2.7%
Social Studies	232	2.0%
Processing Technologies	165	1.4%
Psychology	160	1.4%
Spanish	128	1.1%
Religious Studies	121	1.1%
Earth and Space Science	119	1.0%
Japanese	117	1.0%

17. The 32 subjects are from a list of 65 subjects assessed for these students in total and only includes subjects based on Achievement Standards.

*Survey of schools about their intentions with NCEA Level 1 in 2024*

18. In September 2023, we surveyed schools and kura about their intentions with NCEA Level 1 to assist us to better support them in the first year of implementation of the new NCEA level 1 subjects in 2024.

	Total (including schools and kura)	Kura
Response rate	92% (467 of 509)	57% (33 of 58)

19. Responses to the question 'Is attaining NCEA Level 1 the intended assessment outcome for the majority of their Year 11 learners/ākonga?'

	Total (including schools and kura)	Kura
% that stated attaining NCEA Level 1 is the intended assessment outcome for the majority of their Year 11 learners/ākonga	73% (341 of 467)	88% (29 of 33)

- Based on previous information we hold, we estimate that half the schools who responded 'No' to this question are already not offering a full Level 1 assessment programme in 2023.
  - In most regions, between 70% and 90% of respondent schools answered Yes. The regions with the lowest rates of responding 'Yes' were Auckland (53%) and Southland (50%).
  - Schools with fewer socio-economic barriers to achievement had the lowest rates of responding 'Yes' (52%).
20. The following table applies to Level 1 subjects derived from either the New Zealand Curriculum or Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, averaged across all subjects (within each curriculum).

	% that would offer all 4 standards in a subject	% that would offer 3 of the 4 standards	Undecided standards
New Zealand Curriculum	38%	20% On average, 95% of these said they would offer two internals and one external	26%
Te Marautanga o Aotearoa	9%	2% On average, 81% of these said they would offer two internals and one external	79%

*Tracking Year 11 cohorts over time*

21. NZQA tracks Year 11 cohorts over the three years of senior secondary to determine what their highest qualification outcome is at the end of three years of senior secondary schooling. Students who leave school before the end of three years of senior secondary schooling are still counted, and their highest attainment up to their departure from school is included. We publish this information each year at the end of May in our *Annual Report: NCEA, University Entrance and NZ Scholarship Data and Statistics* and companion A3 summary *Attainment by the numbers*. The 2022 A3 is attached as an appendix to this briefing.
22. The table below provides this information for the last five Year 11 cohorts, i.e. for 2017 Year 11s, 2018 Year 11s, 2019 Year 11s, 2020 Year 11s and 2021 Year 11s. This shows that the proportion of students leaving school with no NCEA qualification has increased slightly when looking at the last five cohorts of Year 11 students and the proportion leaving with University Entrance and NCEA Level 3 has also decreased.

23. The Ministry of Education advises that approximately 1,500 students leave school with a non-New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) qualification, e.g. Cambridge International. NZQA does not hold data on these students or whether the number of such students is growing.

Highest qualification	2017 Year 11s by end of 2019	2018 Year 11s by end of 2020	2019 Year 11s by end of 2021	2020 Year 11s by end of 2022	2021 Year 11s by the end of 2023 (provisional)
Enrolled Students:	58,344	58,497	60,000	60,071	61,247
University Entrance & NCEA Level 3	37.9%	41.1%	40.4%	38.2%	34.9%
NCEA Level 3	13.7%	14.2%	14.4%	13.7%	14.0%
NCEA Level 2	25.5%	21.6%	22.8%	24.6%	24.5%
NCEA Level 1	8.5%	7.6%	6.6%	8.2%	9.0%
No NCEA qualification*	14.4%	15.5%	15.8%	15.3%	17.6%

\* Approximately 1,500 students leave school with a non-New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) qualification, according to the Ministry of Education (based on 2022 figures).



**Dr Grant Klinkum**

Chief Executive, NZQA

18 January 2024



**Hon Erica Stanford**

Minister of Education

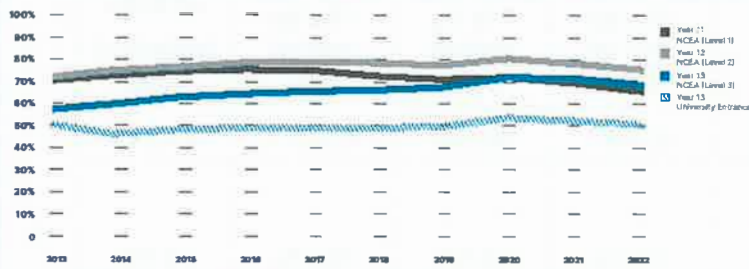
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# Attainment BY THE NUMBERS 2022



FOR NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (NCEA) AND UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE

## Overall NCEA and University Entrance attainment



This shows a 10-year view of overall NCEA and University Entrance (UE) attainment – Year 11 Level 1, Year 12 Level 2, Year 13 Level 3 and Year 13 UE.

In 2020, 2021, and 2022, teaching, learning and assessment were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To recognise the disruptions, changes were made to the NCEA and University Entrance award criteria in these years. Caution should be exercised when comparing 2020 to 2022 attainment data with previous years.

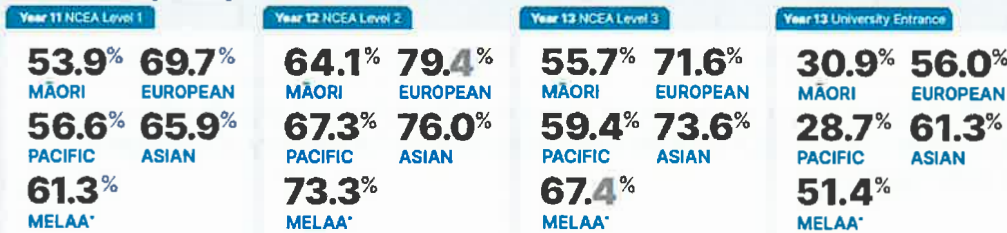
New UE requirements came into effect in 2014 and accounts for the 2014 dip in UE attainment.

The measure of attainment used is enrolment-based. The reporting population includes all domestic students in Year 11 to 13 aged less than 18 years in the reporting year and who were enrolled at a secondary school for one day or more.

### 2022 overall national

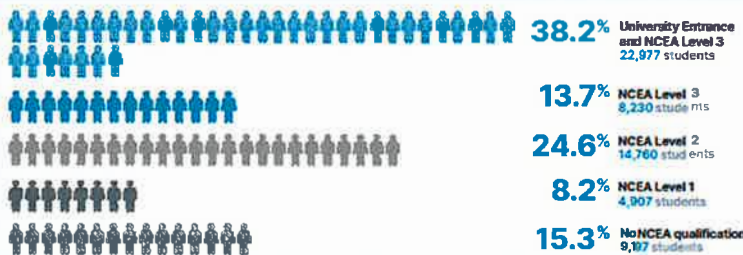


### Attainment rates by ethnicity



\*Middle Eastern/Latin American/African

### Tracked 2020 Year 11 cohort



This shows the highest NCEA attainment (including UE) at the end of 2022, for the 60,071 students who were in Year 11 in 2020.

Students who have left New Zealand secondary schooling during the 2020-2022 period and those who take more than 3 years to complete a qualification are included. Students who participate in and complete other non-NZQCF assessments such as Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) are included, but only their NCEA qualifications are included.

Approximately 1,500 students leave school with a non-NZQCF assessment, according to the Ministry of Education (based on 2022 figures).

### Results by assessment standard type

Three categories of assessment standards can contribute towards the achievement of NCEA qualifications: externally assessed achievement standards, internally assessed achievement standards, and unit standards. This shows the proportion of results reported to NZQA by assessment standard type for levels 1, 2, and 3. The percentage point change over the last five years (since 2017) is also shown.

