



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Aide-Memoire: Special Assessment Conditions – further details

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education
From:	Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive
Date:	22 February 2024
Reference:	OC00673

Purpose

1. This aide memoire is in response to your comments and questions arising from our Aide Memoire on *Special Assessment Conditions for national school qualifications* [OC00599 refers].
2. NZQA proposes to proactively release this briefing as part of the next publication of documents.

Discussion

3. Responses to questions:
 - a. Is NZQA aware of whole classes using reader/writers in exams?

We are not aware of any practices where large numbers of students are being inappropriately supported in the corequisite assessments. In some schools, they may have classes specifically set up to support small groups of students with learning needs, and, where schools see there is an appropriate need, may provide readers and writers to them all.
 - b. Para 5: Has the Notifications Gateway model already been put in place?

It is being trialled as an optional process for new Level 1 SAC applications in 2024. In 2023, NZQA carried out extensive workshops to introduce the sector to the trial, as well as putting together online resources and guidance.

During the trial, we will be monitoring the use of the notification system, and plan to carry out audits where there is a large discrepancy between previous applications and notifications. Later in 2024, we will evaluate the overall use of the trial notification gateway with the view to implement it across all levels of NCEA. Where schools would like to defer decision making to NZQA, the existing application system will be retained as an alternative.

- c. Para 6: Increase in SAC applications (almost doubled between 2015 and 2021) – yearly breakdown please. When did the bulk of increase happen?

Yearly breakdowns provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: No of applications approved, received, and the percentage of the total student enrolled cohort, between 2018–2022

Year	Total Approved	Total Received	Percentage of total student enrolled-cohort
2015	6839	7088	4.2%
2016	8358	8737	5.2%
2017	9948	10214	6.0%
2018	11,022	11,269	6.7%
2019	12,573	12,788	7.1%
2020	13,324	14,557	7.5%
2021	16,803	16,874	8.6%
2022	18,469	18,580	8.8%

Annual increases reflect an ongoing programme of work by NZQA and MoE to ensure all schools were aware of SAC availability combined with an increasingly streamlining application process.

- d. Para 10: So no approval needed for SAC for corequisites?

Yes, that is correct.

SAC approvals/notifications are required for assessment towards NCEA, which generally starts from Year 11. During Years 9 and 10, schools gather evidence to assess whether students require SAC, and if so, what types of SAC, and then notify NZQA.

- e. Para 11: SAC entitlements are “expected” to reflect the support.... Is this in writing anywhere for schools

This is in the *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024, Schedule 3 Candidate Special Assessment Conditions Processes, Section 3.1.1.c*, published on our website (see <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/rules-fees-policies/nzqa-rules/nzqa-assessment-rules-for-schools-teos/#e10586>)

- f. Para 17: Polly (text to speech application) – how many students used it?

We cannot determine that information from the online platform. Polly is available to all students, not only students that may require it for SAC, normalising the use of text-to-speech tools that are available in everyday life.

- g. Para 19: Is the new Notifications Gateway for NCEA and the corequisites?

The Notifications Gateway is not required for corequisites as school make decisions about the support made available to students.

h. Appendix One: Needs to be as a percentage (%) of total sitting examinations, not enrolled.

Table 1 provided in Appendix One of OC00599 has been updated to include the requested information (see highlighted column).

Table 1: No of applications approved, received, and the percentage of the total student enrolled cohort and total sitting examinations, between 2018–2022

Year	Total Approved	Total Received	Percentage of total student enrolled-cohort	Approved % of external candidates
2018	11,022	11,269	6.7%	7.4%
Th	12,573	12,788	7.1%	8.4%
2020	13,324	14,557	7.5%	9.7%
2021	16,803	16,874	8.6%	11.1%
2022	18,469	18,580	8.8%	10.2%

4. You also requested information on the following:

a. The use of computers and “writers” in writing specific assessments

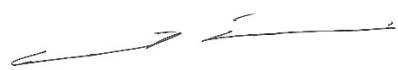
A human writer has been available for all assessments for those students who, as a result of a disability or learning difficulty, the school has determined requires this level of support.

b. NZQA instructions for writers have been developed further for the writing standards to ensure students are able to meet the criteria of the standard; e.g. students are required to indicate where sentences start and finish where a question is being asked, and the spelling of some key words. How does provision of support compare to overseas?

NZQA reviewed the instructions the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) provides for writers for its National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and based our updated instructions on these.

c. How appropriate to use “speech to text” tool for writing assessment

A ‘speech to text’ tool can assist students who have difficulties with the physical skills of writing or typing. The tool removes a barrier for students who may otherwise not be able to demonstrate their ability to craft pieces of ‘writing for different purposes’ (the requirement of the Literacy-writing standard). Use of this technology requires separate accommodation for students (as does the use of a human writer). Unlike Polly (text-to-speech) assistive technology, speech-to-text functionality is not currently built into our assessment platform.



Dr Grant Klinkum

Chief Executive

22 February 2024

Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Education

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