

Aide-Memoire: 2025 NCEA co-requisite standards assessment event scheduling

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education
From:	Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive
Date:	21 June 2024
Reference:	OC00939

Purpose

1. The purpose of this aide memoire is to advise you of our intended approach to the scheduling of the assessment events for the NCEA co-requisite standards for 2025, and the rationale behind the approach.

Background

2. In 2020, the Ministry of Education developed the new externally assessed Literacy and Numeracy | Te Reo Matatini me Te Pāngarau unit standards for the award of the NCEA co-requisite. The Ministry tasked NZQA with all aspects of delivering assessment against these co-requisite standards.

2021-2024 assessment event scheduling

3. In 2021, in a limited pilot, one 'one-week' assessment event was offered to schools, kura, and tertiary institutions in term 3.
4. In 2022 and 2023, this increased to two 'one-week' assessment events. The first event was in term 2 in both years; the second event was in term 3 in 2022, and in response to sector feedback, this was moved to term 4 in 2023 (in the week before the commencement of the end-of-year examinations). Three events were planned for 2024.
5. To manage operational challenges for both schools and NZQA, the decision was made to offer two events in 2024, and to balance any negative consequences and disadvantages of having two events instead of three per annum, we extended the window for each event from one to two weeks. This was also to provide schools and providers with greater flexibility in scheduling during the assessment window, especially for schools with large cohorts.

Options considered for 2025 and beyond

6. For 2025 and beyond, we have explored two options: two 'two-week' windows and three 'one-week' windows.

7. The following broad areas were taken into consideration to inform our decision on the number and the timing of the co-requisite assessment events:

Timing

- Prior to May
 - We have been advised that schools do not wish to conduct the assessments before May, as there is insufficient time from the start of the year for teaching, learning, and preparation for assessment.
- Use of term 4:
 - Following the term 4 event in 2023, feedback from schools was mixed. Some schools told us they appreciated the convenience of being able to use classrooms already set up for external examinations scheduled for the following week and the availability of NZQA examination supervisors, if they wished to use them.
 - A significant number of schools though, have indicated they do not want the co-requisite assessments in term 4, particularly in October prior to the examination period. It places additional pressure and administrative burden on them at an already busy time of the year, negatively impacts on their examination preparations and farewell celebrations with senior students and disrupts end-of-year programmes with Year 9 and 10 students.

Scheduling

- *Two events*
 - Schools appreciate the added flexibility of a two-week window to spread out the assessments, rather than the tight scheduling enforced by one week, which allows no contingency for on-site technical difficulties.
 - Two events also offer schools greater flexibility to work around other significant events in their school calendars.
- *Three events*
 - Tight scheduling of three events, spread across terms 2 and 3, limits the assessment events to one-week windows to fit the three cycles into the available time. This allows insufficient time for schools to review their students' results between events 1 and 2, and between events 2 and 3, submit entries, and adequately prepare their students for further assessment.
 - Some schools have told us that three events will create too much of an administrative burden, especially alongside the other external assessments¹ now being administered by schools. They feel it will cause them to spend too much time on assessment at the expense of teaching and learning.
 - Schools that favour three events have said it provides greater flexibility to assess students when they are ready, allows assessment to be conducted closer to the teaching and learning, and noted that schools do not have to use all three events.

8. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 1 show the timelines for scheduling two two-week windows or three one-week windows, using 2024 as an example.

Marking and Results release

9. Following an assessment event, the process of marking, preparation of results for release, and provision of student feedback reports currently takes a further eight to nine weeks.
- There is a dependency on when the school holidays fall within this timeframe as markers are practising teachers and the bulk of the marking is completed during school holidays.
 - NZQA requires two weeks after marking is completed for setting the achieved boundary

¹ For most of the new Level 1 subjects, assessment of one of the two external achievement standards is through method other than by examination.

cut-scores, preparation of student feedback, and quality assurance of results in preparation for results release. During this period, work is also undertaken to detect and follow-up possible breaches that occurred during the assessments.

10. The length of time required for marking, quality assurance of results and preparation of feedback reports for students and teachers is a concern for schools. We are working towards being able to provide results to students within a shorter timeframe. Literacy-Reading is currently auto-marked with marking being completed within two to three weeks of the conclusion of the assessment.
11. We are exploring the possibility of auto-marking Numeracy and for Literacy-Writing. We expect the technical solutions will enable us to provide results to students within a shorter timeframe through improved efficiency and consistency of marking in all three Literacy and Numeracy standards².

2025 arrangements

12. After working through the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and with consideration of feedback from schools, we have settled on the two 'two-week' windows option (to be held in terms 2 and 3) for 2025 with the same arrangements that were applied in 2024. Table 1 below shows the confirmed dates for 2025.

Table 1: 2025 two 'two-week' window timelines

Assessment Event 1				Assessment Event 2			
Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release	Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release
5 May	Weeks 4 & 5, Term 2 19-30 May [LitNum and TRMTP]		28 July TBC	18 Aug	Weeks 8 & 9, Term 3 1-12 Sept [LitNum] Weeks 7 & 8, Term 2 25 Aug - 5 Sept [TRMTP]		10 Nov TBC
		<i>School Holidays 28 June – 13 July</i>				<i>School Holidays 20 Sep – 5 Oct</i>	
Kete manarua option for TRMTP (by submission) Due date is 29 October.							

13. This gives schools certainty through not changing the current arrangements, which will support their future planning, while enabling us to review the current scheduling before setting dates for 2026. At the point that the turnaround time for marking is significantly reduced through automated marking, we think this will be the time to look at implementing three one-week options.
14. We have tested this 2025 approach with our key stakeholder peak bodies³. While they are not all in full agreement, four of the five bodies have endorsed the proposed arrangements and scheduling; they have noted that early notification is the key for their planning. The fifth peak body, SPANZ, had mixed views across their executive. All the peak bodies acknowledged the challenge we face in identifying windows and scheduling that meets the diverse needs of

² Entries in Te Reo Matatini me Te Pāngarau are too small for the use of auto-marking solutions.

³ Post Primary Teachers' Association, the Secondary Principals' Council, Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa, and the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand.

schools, kura and providers.

15. Schools will be advised of the 2025 arrangements when we publish the dates for 2025 external assessment at the end of June.



Dr Grant Klinkum
Chief Executive

21 June 2024

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Two 'two-week' window timelines (as applied in 2024)

Assessment Event 1				Assessment Event 2			
Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release	Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release
6 May	Weeks 4 & 5, Term 2 20-31 May [LitNum] Weeks 7 & 8, Term 2 10-21 June [TRMTP]	5 Jun – 26 Jul	Week of 5 Aug	26 Aug	Weeks 8 & 9, Term 3 9-20 Sept [LitNum and TRMTP]	25 Sep-15 Nov	5 Dec
		<i>NB. School Holidays 6-21 July</i>				<i>NB. School Holidays 28 Sep – 13 Oct</i>	
Kete manarua option for TRMTP (by submission) Due date is 30 October.							

Table 2: Three 'one-week' window timelines (indicative example for 2024)

Assessment Event 1				Assessment Event 2				Assessment Event 3			
Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release	Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release	Entries due by	Assessment Dates	Marking/processing results	Results Release
6 May	Week 4, Term 2 20-24 May	29 May – 21 Jul	Week of 29 Jul	5 Jul	Week 2, Term 3 29 Jul-2 Aug	7-Aug-27 Sep	Week of 7 Oct	6 Sep	Week 9, Term 3 16-20 Sep	25 Sep-25 Oct	Week of 28 Oct
		<i>NB. School Holidays 6-21 July</i>				<i>NB: No holidays to mark</i>					
Kete manarua option for TRMTP (by submission) Due date is 30 October.											