Aide-Memoire: NCEA Corequisite Assessment Event two preparations

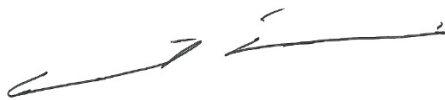| To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education
From:	Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive
Date:	4 September 2024
Reference:	OC01171

Purpose

1.	The second assessment event for literacy, te reo matatini, numeracy and te pāngarau co-requisite standards runs between 9 to 20 September 2024. This aide memoire outlines our preparations for this assessment period.

2.	NZQA proposes to proactively release this briefing as part of the next publication of documents.

Discussion

3.	As of 2 September 2024, we have received 178,797 entries across Literacy - Reading, Literacy - Writing, Numeracy, Te Reo Matatini Reo Torohū, Te Reo Matatini Reo Whakputa and Te Pāngarau.

4.	During the first assessment event in May/June, more than 175,000 assessments were completed over the two-week assessment window, with our platform never approaching capacity. Since June we have implemented platform changes which further increase the number of students able to log in simultaneously and complete assessments.

5.	The preparation and support activities for the upcoming assessment event are focused on ensuring large numbers of students can sit digital assessments for a small set of standards over a two-week period.

6.	For each of these assessment event windows, a set of technical go-live readiness checks is completed by NZQA and our vendors to ensure systems and processes are working as expected and that any changes to these have been tested for performance, scalability functionality and security. Leading into this assessment round, performance testing reaffirmed 10,000 concurrent logins per minute with 50,000 students is achievable and this aligns with our vendor's testing.

7.	In August, we commissioned an independent check on our technical readiness for this assessment period. This identified three priority areas to be addressed: two relating to internal processes (clarity around escalation roles and responsibilities and security and sign off pre-'go live') and one about additional end user acceptance testing from a student's view. The security risk and sign off item is being mitigated through an internal review process assured by our independent assurance reviewer and the other two have been addressed. An expanded external assurance review will be undertaken in preparation for the end-of-year examinations.

8.   Over the last three weeks leading up to the assessment event period, we have had a cross-functional group meeting daily. This group continues to meet right through to results release. This is to ensure tasks are on track with a particular focus placed on any platform performance and functional checks, and any other activities that are reported as being 'at-risk'.

9.   NZQA will also have a dedicated phone line to support the external assessment event. Calls coming through this line will be treated as a priority, with extra capacity available to respond if necessary, throughout the assessment period. Our staff are fully trained to handle all matters related to examination administration and digital assessment tool support, ensuring swift responses to any issues.

10.   Since the release of the independent external review into last year's digital assessment platform issues, we have met or exceeded the recommended actions and timeline. Our action plan is available on our website (see https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/external-review-of-the-digital-platform/) and updated monthly.

11.   As previously advised [OC01109 *NZQA Fortnightly Report to the Minister of Education, dated 28 August 2024* refers], we have run six webinars to help schools and kura to prepare for the second co-requisite assessment event. These webinars were aimed at staff administering the assessments, with 84 participants from 48 schools and kura.

12.   We are also providing targeted support to schools and kura participating in the co-requisite assessments for the first time. This support will continue through the leadup to the assessment event.

Dr Grant Klinkum

Chief Executive
4 September 2024

Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Education

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