30 September 2025

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Tēnā koe ▮▮▮▮▮▮

**Official Information Act Request**

Thank you for part one of your request, originally received by the office of the Minister of Education on 22 August 2025, and transferred to NZQA on 3 September 2025, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), for the following information:

*All communications between the Minister and/or her office and NZQA on the feasibility of using AI to mark internal and external assessments, as outlined in the Ministers answer to Written Parliamentary Question 39418 (2025).*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982.

I attach copies of 7 documents that fall in scope of your request.

We have included information and advice that relates to the pilot, testing and implementation of Automated Text Scoring (ATS), which has been used for the NCEA co-requisite Literacy-Writing assessment, to shorten the timeframes for marking. This enables candidates to receive their results sooner, supporting further timely teaching and learning where required. We have also included general advice about the risks for AI in relation to assessment and academic integrity where relevant.

You can access the following proactively released material on our website Information releases - NZQA:
- [OC01148] May 2025 Literacy and Numeracy Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Corequisite assessment: Results Release date
- [OC01598] Shortened timeframes for NCEA corequisite results release May 2025 update

The following document is in scope of your request but is being withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) as this information relates to confidential advice to Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education where the release of this information, at this time, would prejudice the orderly and effective conduct of government decision making processes:

- [OC01831] Report: *Future options for managing the quality and consistency of internal assessment.* 7 August 2025.

A full breakdown of the documents is included in Table 1 – Document Index (Appendix 1).

We have provided Table 2 (Appendix 2), for ease of reading, excerpts of written communications from NZQA to the Minister of Education regarding the feasibility of using AI to mark internal and external assessments as these reports, apart from the information set out in the table, cover a wide range of matters that are out of the scope of your request.

As indicated in Appendix 1, we have also withheld mobile numbers of NZQA staff, and the names and email addresses of staff at the Minister of Education's office, under section 9(2)(a) to protect privacy. NZQA is not aware of any public interest considerations outweighing the decision to withhold this information under section 9.

Information that is out of scope of this request has also been redacted as noted in Appendix 1.

Our response to your request may be published on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed before publication.

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.

You have the right to seek an investigation or review by the Ombudsman of this decision under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982. Details of how to make a complaint can be found 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


Appendix 1: Table 1 - Document Index
Appendix 2: Table 2 - Excerpts of written communications from NZQA to the Minister of Education

**Appendix 1: Table 1 - Document Index**

| Number | Date | Type | Document title | Decision on release |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 3 September r 2024 | Report OC01148 | • OC01148 NZQA May 2025 NCEA Co-requisite Assessments Results Release dates 20240903 (1).pdf | Release in full (already proactively released on NZQA's website) OC01148 NCEA Co-requisite Assessments Results Release dates |
| 2. | 21 March 2025 | Aide-Memoire: Shortened timeframes for NCEA co-requisite results release May 2025 update OC01598 | • OC01598 Shortened timeframes for NCEA co-requisite results release May 2025 update.pdf | Release in full (already proactively released on NZQA's website) OC01598 Shortened timeframes for NCEA co-requisite results release May 2025 update |
| 3. | 13 March 2025 | Email from NZQA to Minister's office | • OCO1602 sent email-ATTACHED | Partial release: • Some information withheld under s 9(2)(a) |
| 4. | 10 July 2025 | Report OC01818 | • OC01818 NZQA IU Results for Co-requisite Event 1 2025 ATTACHED | Partial release: Out of scope content redacted |
| 5. | 25 July 2025 | Email from Minister's office to NZQA | • OCO1909 sent email ATTACHED | Partial release: • Some information withheld under s 9(2)(a) |
| 6. | 30 July 2025 | Email from NZQA to Minister's office | • OCO1909 sent email plus three attachments all ATTACHED | Partial release: • Some information withheld under s 9(2)(a) |
| 7. | 7 August 2025 | Report OCO1831 | • OCO1831 Report: Future options for managing the quality and consistency of internal assessment. 7 August 2025 | Withheld in full under s 9(2)(f)(iv) |

**Appendix 2: Table 2 – Excerpts of written communications from NZQA to the Minister of Education**

| Reference | Description | Extract |
|---|---|---|
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 11 September 2024 (OCO1156) | Auto-Marking Pilot | As part of the September assessment event, we are piloting at scale an autotext scoring tool for marking the Literacy (Writing) assessment to reduce the time between the assessment and results release [OC01148 refers]. We have been engaging with the supplier to confirm procurement details. |
| | Co-requisite assessment processes | Radio NZ asked whether it's possible to return results from corequisite assessments faster, and whether assessed scripts can be returned to students.<br><br>NZQA responded that significant reduction in turnaround times is expected from the first assessment event in 2025, and that while it is international best practice not to return student scripts for this kind of assessment, there are a range of resources available for teachers to support students in preparing for assessment. |
| | Co-requisite attainment data | TVNZ requested achievement data for the first assessment event for reading, writing and numeracy standards, and asked whether it's possible to return results from co-requisite assessments faster.<br><br>NZQA provided the data requested and noted that a significant reduction in turnaround times is expected from the first assessment event in 2025. |
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 9 October 2024 (OCO1239) | Second Literacy and Numeracy \| Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau co-requisite assessment event | Marking is underway following the second NCEA co-requisite assessment event with results to be released on 5 December.<br><br>The Auto Text Scoring trial for the Literacy-Writing assessment has commenced and will run in parallel with human marking.<br><br>Schools and kura can submit Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Kete Manarua (digital submissions) between 1 October and 30 October. Results from these submissions will be released with the End-of-Year examination results in mid-January |
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 23 October 2024 (OCO1278) | Second NCEA co-requisite assessment event | The evaluation of the Auto Text Scoring pilot for the Literacy (Writing) assessment will be completed by 31 January 2025. We will brief you on the results of the pilot at that point. We have developed clear success criteria and metrics for the comparison of machine and human marking that we have shared with our vendor.<br><br>From late November, we will include early insights from the pilot in your upcoming fortnightly reports as these insights become available. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | "Auto-marking of co-requisite assessments" | Radio NZ asked about "auto-marking" in the NCEA co-requisite standards, and what stage is NZQA at with this work.

We acknowledged that the time required for marking, quality assurance and release of results and preparation of feedback reports for students and teachers is a concern for schools, and that automated marking in the May 2024 Reading assessment allowed the return of Reading results several days earlier than results for other standards.

We also outlined the trials on automated text scoring on Writing assessments, based on May and September assessment responses, and that (pending trial results) we plan to use automated text scoring in the Writing assessments from May 2025.

We further noted that the 'results confirmation process' will continue to be available for schools if there is concern about the accuracy of a student's result, and that in addition to reducing the time required for the actual marking process, short turnaround times for results depend on schools and kura assessing these standards digitally |
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 4 December 2024 (OCO1369) | Shortened timeframes of co-requisite result release | We have extended the Automated Marking pilot schedule for the writing co-requisite slightly from the initial plan to ensure accuracy and robustness of the solution. 900 student essays have been checkmarked to assess the validity of the input data.

Two models with differing characteristics are being developed so that a robust solution is piloted. These best-practice models will enable effective evaluation against pilot criteria.

Targets have been set for accurate benchmarking of the solution against human marking, whereby the models are trained based on previously human-marked scores across the co-requisite assessment events held from September 2023.

With the extra time taken to ensure the viability of the solution, we are targeting final expected outcomes in the next fortnight, depending on the process for evaluation of the models and the degree to which the |

| | | final outcome is fit for purpose. |
|---|---|---|
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 19 February 2025 (OCO1500) | Shortened timeframes of corequisite results release update | Progress to shorten the time between assessment and results release for the May 2025 co-requisite assessment is on track.<br><br>The AI pilot is complete across the writing co-requisite, enabling evaluation of the model to ensure that it is fit-forpurpose. |
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 30 April 2025 (OCO1677) | Shortened timeframes for NCEA co-requisite results release – communication to schools and kura | On 10 April, schools and kura received information on the shortened timeframes for the NCEA co-requisite results release for the May assessment event (see Assessment matters circular A2025/6 Information on May co-requisite results release 2025 - NZQA |
| | Use of artificial intelligence in marking co-requisite assessments | Stuff.co.nz asked about the co-requisite assessment round in May and the use of artificial intelligence technologies to mark these assessments.<br><br>We responded with information about the co-requisite assessments, automated text scoring and automated machine marking. We also noted the trials of automated text scoring undertaken in 2024 which give confidence in the accuracy of automated text scoring, and the human check marking process which will be in place as additional quality assurance of automated text scoring decisions. |
| Extract from Fortnightly Report to Minister of Education 23 July 2025 (OCO1837) | AI use in marking | Following the agency meeting on 15 July, there were two items we are providing further information on:<br>• Advice and guidance given to schools on teachers using AI for Marking<br><br>Support for Schools<br><br>The Ministry of Education and NZQA have jointly developed guidance on the use of generative artificial intelligence in schools. This is published on the Ministry of Education's website: Generative AI - Ministry of Education The current guidance includes the following key messages:<br>- Teachers and the school are responsible for final decisions on learners' work.<br>- Teachers should avoid using AI tools to mark work.<br>-<br>AI systems have not seen enough work by young people in the context of New Zealand's national curriculum to have a good understanding of what is expected and may be unfair or discriminatory.<br><br>NZQA provided guidance for senior leaders and Principal's Nominees |

| | | on the use of AI at the beginning of the school year. Schools are encouraged to develop policies that promote safe and ethical AI practices, with support from NZQA. School Relationship Managers support where necessary.

NZQA's position on AI in Assessment

While AI is not explicitly prohibited for internal assessment marking, NZQA requires that moderation and verification will be completed by a subject specialist with standard-specific knowledge.

NZQA is an active participant in the N4L led / Faculty AI whole of education system project to identify an AI roadmap for education. We note that one of the core enablers being recommended in the work is the need to fuller guidance, support, and PLD for teachers in all aspects of AI, including in relation to assessment. |
|---|---|---|

Thanks very much for the catch up this am s 9(2)(a).

**High level points on AI marking that can be used in international domain (noting that we need to socialise this domestically before any announcements):**

- Following two small scale pilots, the results of an at-scale (circa 35,000 responses) pilot show approx. 80% agreement rate between AI marking and human marking for the writing co-requisite assessment.

- Proxy for human-to-human marking agreements rates across three key data points are 87% (supervisor sampling and check marking of end of year external assessments), 83% (results of student reconsideration requests of external exams), and 75% (external moderation of internal assessment).

- For the anticipated cohort size in May 2025 (50,000), using human check marking for 5,000 responses closest to the boundary results in a theoretical agreement rate of 83% and that increases to 93% at 20,000 instances of human remarking slightly further out from the boundary.

- Our current plan is to use AI marking for the writing co-requisite assessment in May of 2025, but we will step into this very carefully with circa 40% of AI marking being remarked by humans. Our focus of remarking will be at the boundary of achievement so that there is confirmation of students who meet or do not meet the standard.

- The human check marked result will automatically override the AI mark if there is a difference.

- The key advantage of moving to AI augmented marking is that we can reduce the period between the assessment and students seeing the results. This ensures students have more time to prepare for the next round of assessment, in the event a student needs to re-sit the assessment.

- Our turn-around time for writing falls from 9 weeks to 5 weeks for writing (but please remember that the 5 weeks point falls in the schools holidays, so as per our memo to you in September of 2024, we won't actually release for 6.5 weeks – this is because students need the support of schools if they have failed to meet the standard)

- Due to the costs of integrating this functionality into existing technology stacks, there are no cost savings in the short to medium term, even while NZQA will be paying less for markers.

- The writing standard parameters for the literacy co-requisite being marked by AI are tightly defined and therefore more amenable to reliable AI marking (and therefore it is too early to reach a view about how widely AI marking can be used at this point in 'regular' external end of year exams)

- We know many jurisdictions are gently stepping into this space too and New Zealand would be happy to collaborate with other countries.

**Background context to be aware of in relation to Australia**

- Australian jurisdictions use machine marking for multichoice questions (as does NZQA). An early attempt to use AI marking in 2017 and 2018 was abandoned, with a high level of residual caution.
- NAPLAN still uses human marking for all text responses, however they are interested in understanding NZQA's work in this space and we are meeting with the CE of Australia Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority this month on this topic.

Kind regards, Grant.

# NZQA
**Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

**Information Update:**  Results for Co-Requisite Event 1 2025:  Literacy – Writing, Numeracy, and Te Reo Matatini

| To: | Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cc: | | | |
| Date: | 10 July 2025 | **Priority:** | High |
| Security Level: | Unclassified | **OC No:** | OC01818 |
| Key Contact: | Jann Marshall | **DDI:** | 027 246 0768 |
| Deputy Chief Executive: | Jann Marshall | **DDI:** | 027 246 0768 |

**Request**

This information update provides you with the results from the first 2025 NCEA co-requisite assessment event covering:

- Literacy – Writing;
- Numeracy;
- Te Reo Matatini Torohū; and
- Te Reo Matatini Whakaputa

These results are shared with you ahead of their release to students and schools on Monday 14 July in the afternoon.

Results for Pāngarau were still being finalised at the time of writing this briefing.  460 students attempted this assessment.  We will provide you with an update on these results on Monday 14 July in the morning.

Overall results will also be published on our website on 14 July.

This update also includes information on overall NCEA co-requisite attainment now that we are halfway through the 2025 academic year.

**Background**

The first NCEA co-requisite assessment event was held between 19 and 30 May 2025[1].

The results for Literacy – Reading were released to schools and students on 25 June. Information updates on the results for Literacy – Reading were provided to you on 23 June (OC01785 refers) and 2 July (OC01805 refers).

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[1] For Literacy - Writing and Numeracy, separate assessment activities were provided in weeks 1 and 2 to protect the integrity of the assessments.  For Te Reo Matatini Whakaputa, the assessment was a Kete Manarua (digital submission) due 30 May 2025.

**Marking Process Overview**

For assessment event 1, we have used a combination of automated machine marking, automated text scoring and human marking to reduce the time it takes to mark assessments and return results. For the first time, automated text scoring has been used on all digitally submitted Literacy - Writing assessments. For these, we also used a human check-marking process where students were on the boundary of achieving or not achieving.

More information on our marking processes for the co-requisites is available here How we mark co-requisite assessments - NZQA.

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Kia ora Elizabeth

The Minister has asked NZQA to plan comms about the world-leading use of AI in assessment, please – include talking points for the Minister and Q and As, alongside NZQA's communication plan. It would be good to have this available for the release of the NCEA Consultation on the 4 August.

Ngā mihi

withheld under section 9(2)(a)
ducation) | Office of Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education | Minister of Immigration

M: withheld under section

Email: withheld under section 9(2)(a)     Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

| From: | Gavin Middleton |
|---|---|
| To: | s9(2)(a) |
| Cc: | Elizabeth Templeton |
| Subject: | RE: NZQA to plan comms about the world-leading use of AI in assessment |
| Date: | Wednesday, 30 July 2025 4:17:21 PM |
| Attachments: | AI in Assessment - Communications Plan.docx |
| | AI in Assessment - Talking Points.docx |
| | AI in Assessment - QAs.docx |

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Please find attached the requested talking points and Q&A about the use of AI in assessment, along with the communications plan for NZQA.

If you have any questions etc, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Nāku noa, nā

Gavin


Gavin Middleton
Principal Communications Advisor | Te Kaitohutohu Matua o Ngā Pāpātanga
Office of the Chief Executive | Tari o te Pou Whakahaere
**NZQA | Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa**

DDI 04 463 3218

Gavin.Middleton@nzqa.govt.nz


**From:** s9(2)(a)
**Sent:** Friday, 25 July 2025 10:38 AM
**To:** Elizabeth Templeton <Elizabeth.Templeton@nzqa.govt.nz>
**Subject:** NZQA Fortnightly Report 9 July 2025

Kia ora Elizabeth

The Minister has asked NZQA to plan comms about the world-leading use of AI in assessment, please – include talking points for the Minister and Q and As, alongside NZQA's communication plan. It would be good to have this available for the release of the NCEA Consultation on the 4 August.

Ngā mihi


s9(2)(a) ducation) | Office of Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education | Minister of Immigration

M: s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(a)          Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

# Te mahere whakapā tāngata / Communications plan

## Te tirohanga whānui / Overview

Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides a wide range of opportunities and risks for education. NZQA is at the forefront of using AI in secondary school level assessment, particularly in the marking of student work.

The communications set out in this plan would demonstrate the approach NZQA is taking to adopting AI, the safeguards we have in place to protect integrity, and the opportunities to further improve assessment with additional AI tools.

## Ngā whāinga whakapā / Communications objectives

This plan aims to:
- Promote understanding of how NZQA is using AI in assessment
- Demonstrate the approach NZQA is taking to AI
- Recognise additional possible use cases for AI in assessment
- Support confidence amongst students, parents, employers and other stakeholders in the credibility of AI involved in assessment.

## Ngā hua angitū o te mahere mahitahi / Key success indicators of the engagement plan

This plan will be successful if, because of these activities:
- There is greater awareness of NZQA's use of AI in assessment
- Feedback from students, parents, employers and other stakeholders shows NZQA's use of AI in assessment is seen as responsible and credible

## Ngā kōrero matua / Key messages

- Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are creating many new opportunities in education. New Zealand is making strong early progress in applying AI to secondary school assessment.

- New Zealand is leading the way in using AI to mark assessments. 'Automated Text Scoring' allowed NZQA to mark around 55,000 Writing assessments in May faster and more consistently, with students receiving their results 3.5 weeks faster (in 6.5 weeks, compared to 9 weeks in 2024).

- Students attempting the Writing standard in May who scored close to the achievement boundary had their assessments check-marked by experienced human markers.

- NZQA will also use AI to improve the website chatbot (Awhina), allowing it to answer a much wider range of questions about NCEA assessment, by drawing on content from the NZQA website.

- NZQA has appropriate processes that guide us when identifying potential use cases for AI, developing appropriate guardrails and safeguards (including around privacy and Māori data sovereignty), and what to consider when scoping, designing and delivering AI tools.

- NZQA's next steps are to undertake very careful pilots to test:
  - Extending AI marking to selected end of year NCEA assessments
  - Using AI as part of an Exam Development Team
  - Using AI to support moderation, enabling us to better target the moderation of internal assessment and deliver more targeted support.

## Te hunga whaipānga / Audiences and stakeholders

| Priority (A/B) | Audience/Stakeholder | Desired outcome |
|---|---|---|
| A | Schools/kura and teachers/kaiako | Build confidence |
| A | Whānau and students | Build confidence |
| A | Other public sector agencies | Inform |

## Ngā tūmahi whakapā / Communications activities

| Communications activity | Intended Audience | Communicated by | Timing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Website News item on Automated Text Scoring outcome from May assessment event | Schools, media | Communications Team | 7 August |
| Showcase & presentation to *AI Accelerate* event | Cross public sector leaders | DCE Strategic & Corporate Services | 14 August |
| Website News item summarising *AI Accelerate* presentation | Public sector, schools | Communications Team | 16 August |
| Website News item introducing AI chatbot, explaining AI guardrails and NZQA's approach to AI | Website users (particularly students who use the chatbot) | Customer Experience / Communications Teams | w/c 25 August |
| Social media posts promoting the website news items | Teachers and whānau (through Facebook), sector leaders (through LinkedIn) | Communications Team | 7 August – 31 August |

## Ngā tūraru me ngā take / Risks and issues

| Risk | Likelihood H/M/L | Impact H/M/L | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focusing solely on adoption of AI could create concern that proper precautions are not in place (particularly around accuracy or privacy). | Medium | Medium | Communications will include messages around trialling and human oversight, the guardrails in place with NZQA's chatbot, and the principles NZQA follows to give assurance AI is being properly used |

## Te hunga/māngai whakapā / Contacts and spokespeople

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **For this communications plan** | Gavin Middleton, Principal Communications Advisor | Gavin.Middleton@nzqa.govt.nz |
| **Communication Team contact** | Gavin Middleton, Principal Communications Advisor | Gavin.Middleton@nzqa.govt.nz |
| **Media spokespeople** | Jann Marshall, DCE Assessment<br><br>Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive | Jann.Marshalll@nzqa.govt.nz<br><br>Grant.Klinkum@nzqa.govt.nz |

# AI in assessment

## Talking points

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping education globally. Here in New Zealand, we are embracing its potential to improve how we assess student learning.

While we are still in the early stages of this technological shift, New Zealand is making strong early progress in applying AI to secondary school assessment.

NZQA has made early progress in relation to AI marking:

- In 2024, NZQA piloted the use of Automated Text Scoring on over 36,000 Writing assessments.

- In May this year, over 55,000 writing assessments (typically undertaken by Year 10 students) were marked using Automated Text Scoring.

- To ensure accuracy and fairness, over a third of student responses - those near the achievement boundary – were check marked by experienced human markers.

- This process produced student results that were as accurate – or more accurate than humans marking the same work.

- AI marking helped NZQA deliver results 3.5 weeks faster.

NZQA's next steps are to undertake very careful pilots to test:

- Extending AI marking to selected end of year NCEA assessments

- Using AI as part of an Exam Development Team

- Using AI to support moderation, enabling us to better target the moderation of internal assessment and deliver more targeted support.

In all cases, NZQA will be piloting with historic digital assessment material, and only be rolling out the greater use of AI if the results are as good or better than human work.

Where AI is used, it will act as 'a member of the team', with outputs checked by subject specialists to uphold the integrity of student outcomes.

The objective is to increase quality, consistency, speed and evidence-based decision making. In the foreseeable future no costs savings are expected from AI use.

In NZQA's wider work to support the integrity of assessment and support students, they are using AI for exam breach detection, and AI is beginning to answer customer questions, by querying NZQA's website content and presenting tailored information.

NZQA is taking an open but cautious approach to AI- recognising its potential while carefully managing any risks to the credibility of assessment.

NZQA is closely collaborating with Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) on wider adoption of AI, and their approach is fully aligned with DIA's guidance to public sector agencies around Enabling Safe and Responsible AI.

The work done so far has attracted some international interest, and NZQA will continue to partner with other jurisdictions and organisations. All New Zealand government education agencies are working with Faculty AI, based in the UK, to develop a road map for the effective and safe use of AI in education. This coordinated effort supports a consistent, future-focused approach across the sector.

# AI in assessment

## Q&As

**1. What is the aim of using AI in assessment?**

NZQA aims for emerging technologies - including AI - to:

- be adopted responsibly and ethically for appropriate uses, in line with strategic objectives
- support NZQA's responsibilities for credible and robust assessment
- benefit learners, schools, kura and tertiary providers.

**2. Why is AI useful in assessment?**

Our objective for using AI is to increase quality, consistency, speed and evidence-based decision making.

We are only at the start of our journey in the age of AI, but it is already allowing NZQA to mark Year 10 writing assessments more efficiently and return results to students more quickly.

For the Literacy – Writing assessments in May, this faster return of results is allowing more time for teachers to support students who did not achieve, by extending the period between the release of the results of the first assessment event and the start of the second assessment event.

There are a range of other potential uses for AI in marking a wider range of assessments, developing assessment 'item banks', detecting work that may not be the student's own and better understanding student performance through data analysis.

**3. Who decides how and when to use AI?**

Operational decisions sit with officials. In line with broader government advice, NZQA has tools that help them identify potential use cases for AI, and to develop AI in ethical, responsible ways.

**4. Why are teachers advised not to use AI in marking?**

It is important that assessment marking is consistent and accurate, which requires a range of proper protections and safeguards to be in place.

AI models used by NZQA have been piloted and carefully evaluated to ensure consistency, accuracy, and fitness for purpose using tens of thousands of student assessments within a secure controlled platform – conditions that may not be met by general-use AI tools.

NZQA also has a process which sees experienced human markers check-mark assessments that are near the achievement boundary.

### 5. Is NZQA ensuring proper safeguards and protections are in place?

NZQA aims to balance openness to the opportunities presented by AI with a cautious implementation approach.

NZQA has tools that help with developing appropriate guardrails and safeguards (including around privacy and Māori data sovereignty), and that set out what needs to be considered when scoping, designing and delivering AI tools.

NZQA will pilot any potential AI tools with historic digital assessment material, only rolling out AI if the results as are as good as (or better than) human work.

Where AI is used, it will be 'a member of the team', checked by subject specialists to avoid disadvantage to students.

### 6. What safeguards are in place to ensure AI isn't introducing bias or 'hallucinating'?

In the case of Automated Text Scoring, the AI model is trained using human marking from previous digital assessments. To ensure confidence in the May Writing results, NZQA had a human check-marking process where students were on the boundary of achieving or not achieving the Writing standard.

### 7. Is New Zealand moving too fast in adopting AI?

No – while moving at pace, we are ensuring proper safeguards and protections are in place. This includes extensive security testing, monitoring for bias, training on New Zealand contexts and taking steps to protect Māori data sovereignty.

Any potential AI tools are piloted with historic digital assessment material, and where AI is used, it is 'a member of the team', checked by subject specialists to avoid disadvantage to students.

### 8. How are other similar nations adopting AI in assessment?

No OECD country currently allows the use of AI tools under exam conditions, that we are aware of, but several are interested in the regulated use of AI in assessments outside of exams.

Countries are generally focused on managing the risks of AI to authenticity and integrity, with less priority being placed on utilising AI to improve assessment development or student experience.

Where teachers are able to use AI for some marking (such as the UK), this is limited to "low-stakes" areas such as homework or quizzes, and teachers must always check its results.

### 9. What support is available for teachers/schools in using AI?

Since early 2024, NZQA has provided advice and guidance to schools about the effective use of AI in assessment, and how to identify authentic student work in internal assessment.

### 10. How do you know Automated Text Scoring is accurate in marking student assessment?

A small-scale trial of Automated Text Scoring following the May 2024 assessment round - and a large-scale pilot (on 35,000 student scripts) after the September 2024 assessment round - gave NZQA confidence that Automated Text Scoring is accurate and consistent.

In each of these trials, student assessments were marked by humans then re-marked with Automated Text Scoring. Students received the human-generated marks.

In addition, students who scored close to the achievement boundary in May 2025 had their assessments 'check-marked' (re-marked) by experienced human markers. 36% of all May writing scripts were human check marked.

This process provides confidence that the results students receive are as accurate, or more accurate, than human marking.

### 11. What does Automated Text Scoring mean for NZQA's marker workforce?

Automated Text Scoring is helping reduce pressure on NZQA's marker workforce by handling large volumes of assessments more efficiently. However, experienced human markers remain essential – particularly for quality assurance.

NZQA used 43 experienced markers for the Writing assessment in May to provide certainty that students who scored close to the achievement boundary in May 2025 received accurate results. Many of these markers are experienced teachers, who also gain valuable insights into student learning through the marking process, which can inform their teaching.