

Further analysis to quantify the impact on 2020 NCEA and UE attainment of the COVID-19 related mitigations and suggested approach for 2021

Date:	8 March 2021	NZQA Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In confidence	Report No.	CR 21879

	Action Sought	Deadline
Minister of Education	<p>a. note the updated information for NCEA and University Entrance 2020 achievement based on 3 March 2021 data;</p> <p>b. note that in response to recent community transmission, NZQA has received several enquiries from Auckland schools about NCEA settings for 2021;</p> <p>c. note that NZQA and the Ministry of Education have had a first meeting with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to start identifying a framework of possible interventions that could apply for 2021 in the event that there are longer periods of Level 3 or Level 4 later in the year;</p> <p>d. agree that NZQA and the Ministry of Education should focus at this stage on providing support and advice to schools about how best to arrange programmes of learning and assessment activities in distance learning modes, where that is required.</p>	

Enclosure/Appendix: Yes

Round Robin Yes

Contact for Telephone Discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	Cellphone	1st Contact
Kristine Kilkelly	DCE Assessment	04 463 3379	027 285 5815	√

The following departments/agencies have seen this report:

- Ministry of Education Tertiary Education Commission Other (specify)

Minister's Office to Complete:

- Noted Seen Approved
 Needs change Withdrawn Overtaken by Events
 See Minister's comments Declined

Referred to:

Comments:

Further analysis to quantify the impact on 2020 NCEA and UE attainment of the COVID-19 mitigations and suggested approach for 2021

Recommended Action

It is recommended you:

- e. **note** the updated information for NCEA and University Entrance 2020 achievement based on 3 March 2021 data;
- f. **note** that in response to recent community transmission, NZQA has received several enquiries from Auckland schools about NCEA settings for 2021;
- g. **note** that NZQA and Ministry of Education have had a first meeting with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group to start identifying a framework of possible interventions that could apply for 2021 in the event that there are longer periods of Level 3 or Level 4 later in the year;
- h. **agree** that NZQA and the Ministry of Education should focus at this stage on providing support and advice to schools about how best to arrange programmes of learning and assessment activities in distance learning modes, where that is required.

AGREE / DISAGREE


Proactive Release Recommendation

NZQA recommends

- i. **agree/disagree** that this report is not proactively released as part of the next publication of documents due to the matters being under consideration.
but it should be released once decisions are made.


AGREE / DISAGREE


Dr Grant Klinkum
NZQA Chief Executive


Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Deputy Secretary Early Learning and
Student Achievement
Ministry of Education

8 March 2021

8 March 2021


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
...../...../.....
25/03/21

Further analysis to quantify the impact on 2020 NCEA and UE attainment of the COVID-19 mitigations and suggested approach for 2021

Purpose of Report

1. NZQA has undertaken further analysis to quantify the impact of the COVID-19 mitigations on NCEA and UE attainment [CR 21782 refers]. This briefing presents this analysis, including both a national picture and an Auckland picture.
2. This briefing begins to outline elements of the approach that may be required to manage the impact of COVID-19 on learner achievement in 2021, following initial discussion with your NCEA Professional Advisory Group.

Background

COVID-19 mitigations for NCEA and University Entrance

3. The 2020 COVID-19 mitigations¹ for NCEA and University Entrance (UE) were designed to support students to engage and progress with their assessed learning whilst maintaining the integrity and credibility of the qualification.
4. NZQA and MoE are continuing to evaluate the data, with support from the NCEA PAG, to determine the impact of specific responses to better inform their potential future use.
5. Evaluation of the provisional data to date suggests a measured approach is warranted for 2021 given both 2020 student achievement levels and the likely increased capabilities and resilience of the system.
6. Since the recent COVID-19 community transmission and subsequent requirement for Alert Level 3 conditions, NZQA and the Ministry have been receiving questions from affected schools on our planned response. We are also particularly mindful of the situation at Papatoetoe High School.

Notes on provisional 2020 data

7. On 19 January 2021, you were provided with a briefing on the provisional 2020 enrolment based NCEA and University Entrance national attainment statistics. These statistics were based on data in NZQA systems as at 14 January 2021. Based on patterns observed in previous years, these provisional attainment statistics increase by a further one to two percentage points by April 2021 when they are finalised.²
8. The attainment statistics have been refreshed for this briefing based on 2020 data in NZQA systems as at 3 March 2021. There have been across the board increases in 2020 attainment compared to that reported to you in the 19 January briefing [CR 21782]. Appendix 1 to this briefing provides you with graphs of attainment with 2020 data based on NZQA systems data as at 3 March 2021.

Quantifying the impact of the COVID-19 mitigations on attainment

¹ These included introduction of Learning Recognition Credits and changes to NCEA and UE.

² Attainment statistics change over the January to March period as schools continue to submit corrected and late reported internally assessed results and any summer school results, and because of successful review and reconsideration applications (remarks of examination papers)

Overall attainment

9. Table 1 below illustrates the impact of the COVID-19 mitigations on overall NCEA and University Entrance attainment in 2020, and for NCEA Level 3 and UE for ethnicity. With the mitigations removed, attainment would fall well below 2019 rates across all NCEA levels and for UE.

Table 1

2019		2020 (provisional as at 3 March)		2020 (without COVID mitigations applied) compared with 2019	
<i>National attainment</i>		<i>National attainment</i>		<i>National attainment</i>	
Level 1	70.6%	Level 1	+1.0pp	Level 1	-9.2pp
Level 2	77.5%	Level 2	+2.5pp	Level 2	-4.2pp
Level 3	67.3%	Level 3	+5.0pp	Level 3	-4.5pp
University Entrance	49.3%	University Entrance	+4.3pp	University Entrance	-8.3pp
<i>NCEA Level 3 attainment by ethnicity</i>		<i>NCEA Level 3 attainment by ethnicity</i>		<i>NCEA Level 3 attainment by ethnicity</i>	
Māori	55.1%	Māori	+5.9pp	Māori	-5.3pp
European	70.8%	European	+4.0pp	European	-5.1pp
Pacific	60.3%	Pacific	+8.5pp	Pacific	-5.4pp
Asian	71.3%	Asian	+5.3pp	Asian	-2.8pp
<i>UE attainment by ethnicity</i>		<i>UE attainment by ethnicity</i>		<i>UE attainment by ethnicity</i>	
Māori	29.9%	Māori	+4.5pp	Māori	-8.1pp
European	55.1%	European	+4.1pp	European	-9.3pp
Pacific	30.3%	Pacific	+3.4pp	Pacific	-8.7pp
Asian	59.3%	Asian	+4.8pp	Asian	-5.9pp

Auckland region compared to the rest of New Zealand

10. Students in Auckland received additional support for their NCEAs including extra Learning Recognition Credits (LRCs) and a lower threshold for NCEA certificate endorsement. Table 2 shows NCEA Level 3 and UE attainment rates for Auckland and the rest of New Zealand, with the mitigations removed for comparison purposes.

Table 2

2019		2020 (provisional as at 3 March)		2020 (without COVID mitigations applied) compared with 2019	
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NCEA Level 3		NCEA Level 3		NCEA Level 3	
Auckland	69.7%	Auckland	+6.4pp	Auckland	-3.5pp
Outside Auckland	66.1%	Outside Auckland	+4.1pp	Outside Auckland	-5.2pp
University Entrance		University Entrance		University Entrance	
Auckland	52.5%	Auckland	+4.7pp	Auckland	-6.4pp
Outside Auckland	47.6%	Outside Auckland	+4.1pp	Outside Auckland	-9.4pp

Commentary

11. In summary, the analysis presented indicates that had the modifications to the qualification and UE not been in place, attainment would have fallen well below 2019 levels for all demographics. In particular, there would have been a large reduction in the number of students achieving UE. Based on historical trends, approximately 3,700 students would not have achieved UE who would have been expected to do so.
12. Provisional 2020 NCEA and UE attainment across all demographics show greater relative increases between 2019 and 2020 compared to historical year-on-year attainment increases.
13. Commentary from schools suggests that significant effort was put into supporting NCEA Level 3 students and this may partially explain the somewhat higher increase at NCEA Level 3 and UE compared to the NCEA Level 1 and 2 increase across the 2019 and 2020 years. Attendance and retention also increased in 2020 which likely had some impact on increased attainment.
14. The 2020 attainment statistics suggest that students and schools broadly adapted well, noting that a range of equity issues persisted or were exacerbated during this time.
15. NZQA and the Ministry also received feedback from schools that the mitigations gave students confidence that they would not be disadvantaged compared to previous years and encouraged students to stay engaged in their learning and assessment. Schools report that for many students there was a much needed reduction in worry and stress at a very difficult time.

Proposed approach for 2021

16. In the event of further COVID-19 disruption in 2021, a range of interventions are available. Given the achievement rates in the 2020 data, we would advise that even a large outbreak and subsequent lockdown would require increased caution in providing broad interventions to the same extent as for 2020. Where interventions are required, these would be refined based on our evaluation of the 2020 data and understanding of the specific impacts of COVID-19 disruption and the interventions.
17. It should also be noted that schools proved to be resilient in 2020 and began to adjust to teaching and assessing remotely. Schools and students in 2021 are likely better prepared in many aspects and more confident with distance learning, and this should be taken into account when considering interventions.

18. The flexibility inherent in the NCEA system is the first line of defence, supported where required, by NZQA distance learning material (evidence gathering templates and assessment matrices, etc.) and advice. These were well-received by schools and provided meaningful support to the sector through and after the lockdowns. These supports could be rapidly updated, based on feedback from the sector, in 2021 without presenting cost or equity issues.

19. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] redacted s9(2)(f)(vi)

20. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

21. Further advice on interventions will be informed by engagement with the peak bodies, and impacted school leaders, and developed by NZQA and the Ministry working closely with the NCEA PAG. The first engagement with the PAG on 4 March was extremely useful.

22. Any advice provided on future interventions will have the credibility of NCEA as a core consideration, alongside the simplicity and equity of the intervention, and equity of the likely impacts on student engagement and achievement.

Next steps

23. NZQA can immediately commence work on refreshing the interventions that support distance teaching, learning and assessment, namely the subject matrices and assessment evidence gathering templates, along with their other resources and information.

24. The advice from agencies and from PAG is that there is no need for an immediate response to the current Auckland COVID disruption. PAG members did stress, however, that agencies should not underestimate how disrupted the start of 2021 has been for Auckland schools and that some schools will have experienced that disruption more strongly than others, reflecting a broader equity context.

25. NZQA and the MoE will continue to work with the PAG and other key sector stakeholders to co-create a proposed response for your consideration to any ongoing COVID-19 disruptions to school teaching, learning and assessment.

26. Over the next two weeks, NZQA and the Ministry will continue to analyse the impact COVID-19 had on student results in 2020 to inform our proposed response.

27. Depending on further disruptions, we may need to consider a high-level communication with the sector. This communication would:

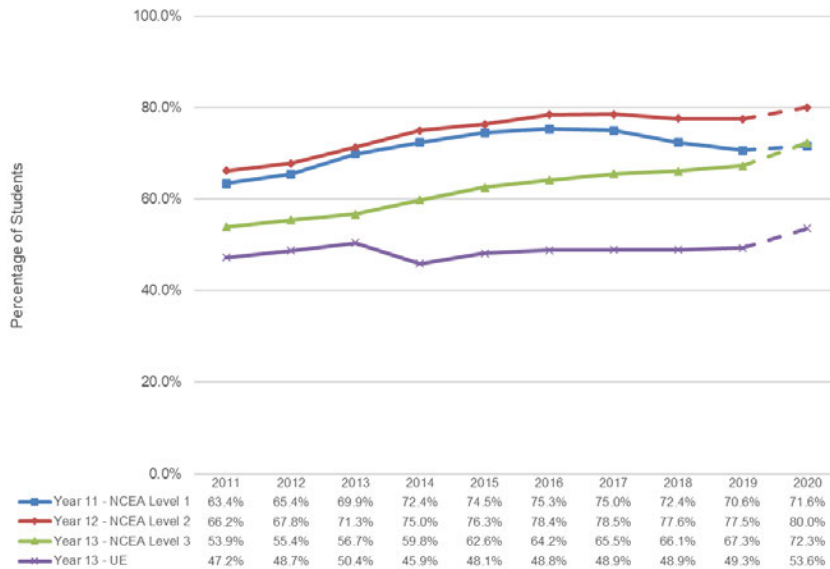
- emphasise that agencies are working alongside peak bodies and the PAG to consider options for 2021;
- again emphasise NCEA's flexibility as its strength and that schools can adapt how they deliver teaching, learning and assessment programmes; and
- reinforce the support already in place for distance teaching, learning and assessment provided by NZQA.

28. NZQA and the Ministry will provide you with a follow-up briefing with joint advice following another meeting with the PAG in late-March.

Appendix 1

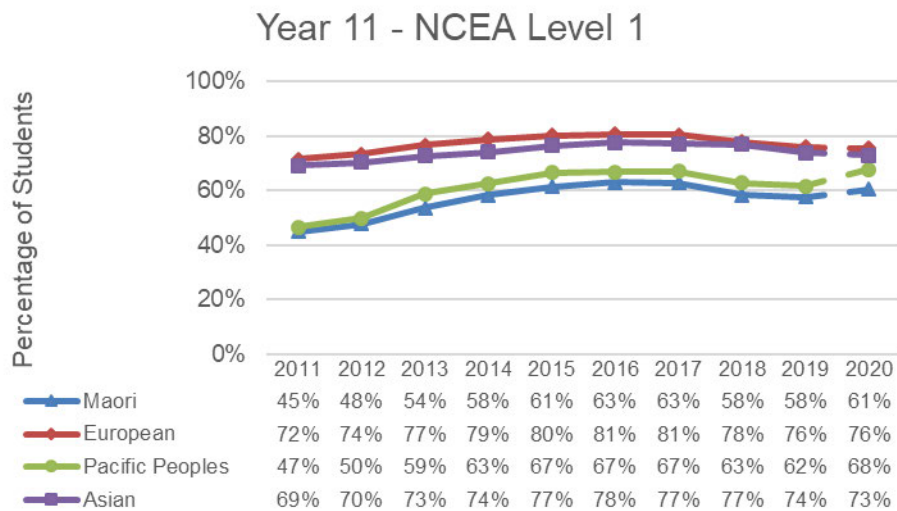
NCEA and UE attainment 2011 to 2020, with 2020 data updated based on NZQA systems data as at 3 March 2021

National Data:

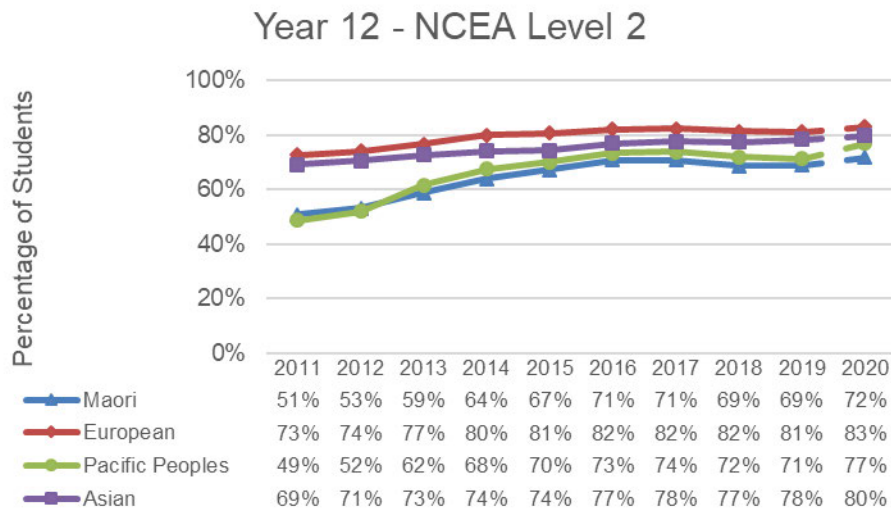


By Ethnicity

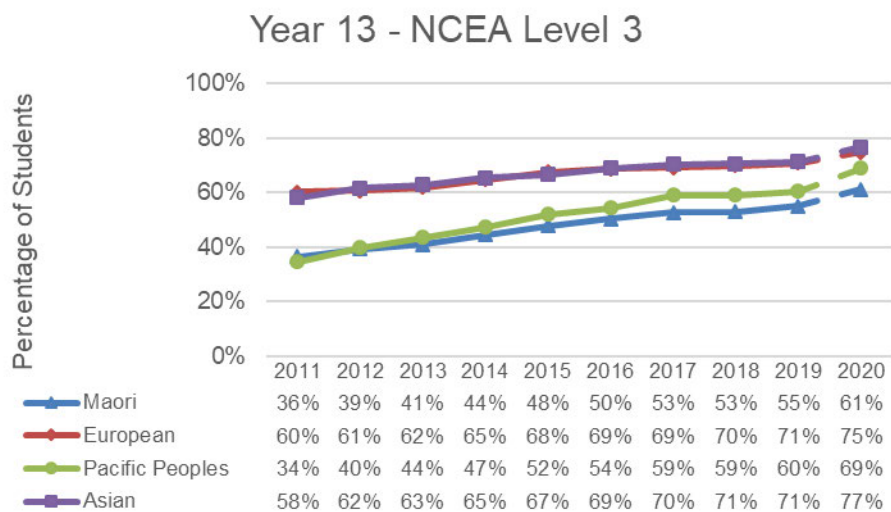
NCEA Level 1:



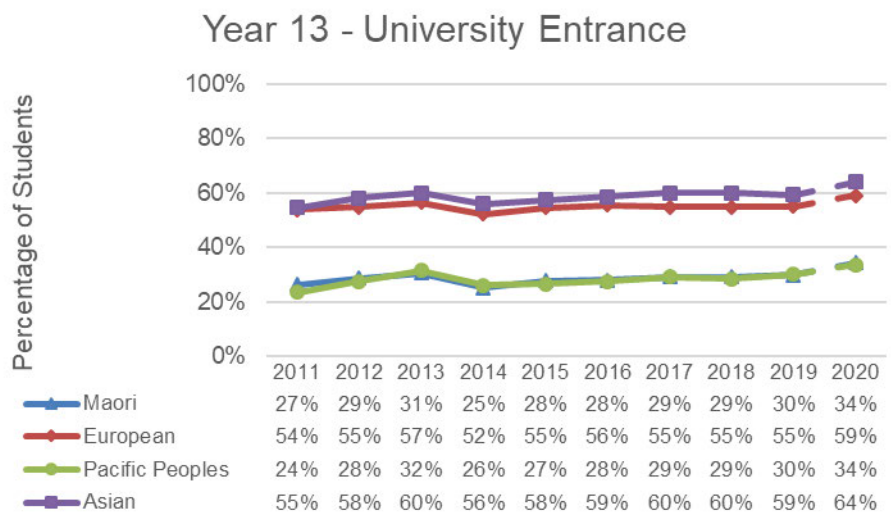
NCEA Level 2:



NCEA Level 3:

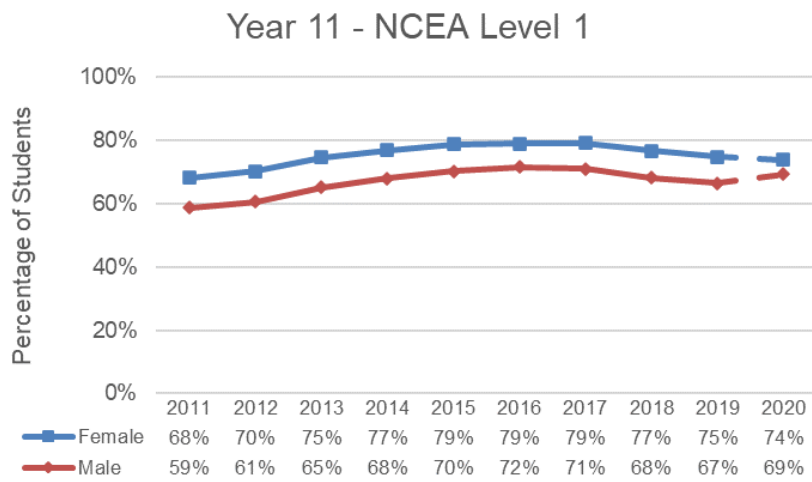


University Entrance:

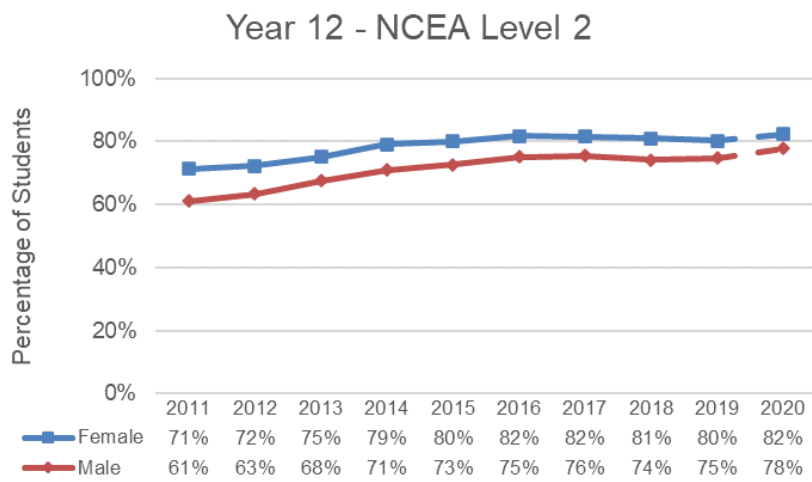


By Gender

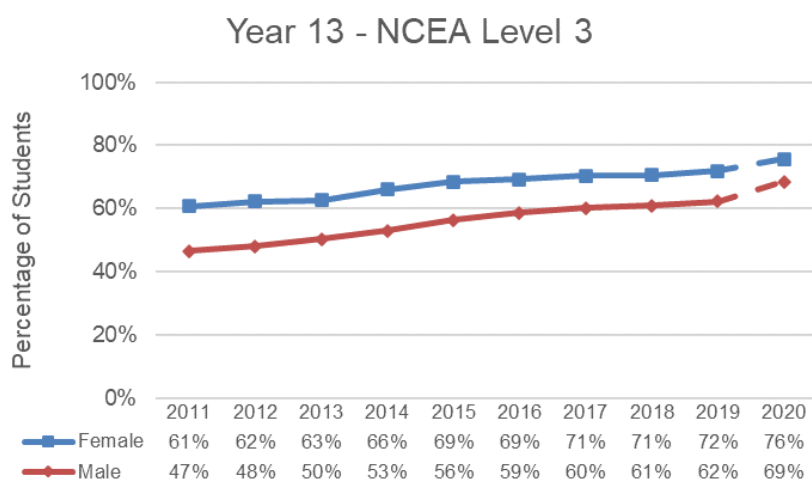
NCEA Level 1:



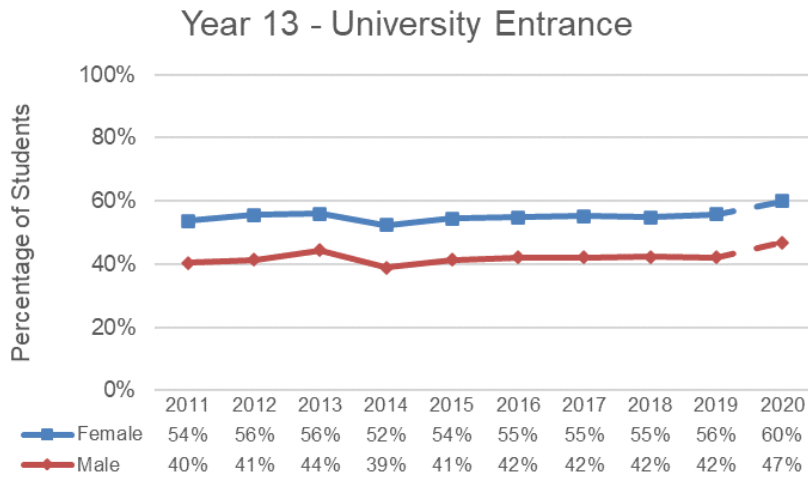
NCEA Level 2:



NCEA Level 3:

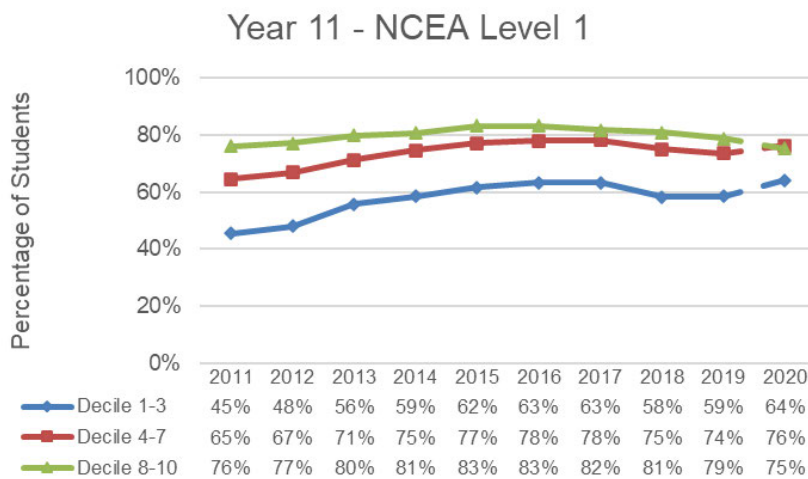


University Entrance:

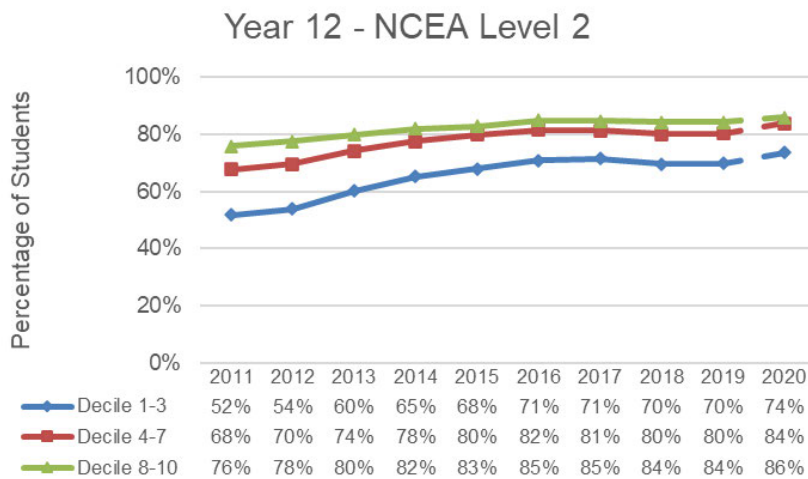


By Decile

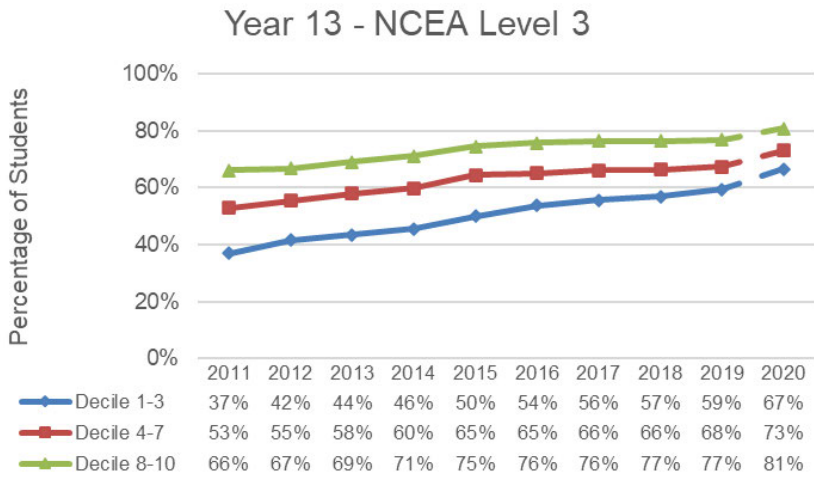
NCEA Level 1:



NCEA Level 2:



NCEA Level 3:



University Entrance:

