

23 March 2023

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your request on 9 March 2023, under the Official Information Act 1982, for the following information:

NZQA public enquiry system

Sorry, that I had to lodge an OIA request, because I know there is an overhead in preparing such a reply. I found it necessary to do that because my queries lodged by the NZQA website form, and phone calls on the matter, over a number of weeks did not go anywhere. I am wondering if it is possible to fix the NZQA website and call centre to avoid that in future? The issue seemed to be that the staff directing the website queries and phone calls did not know where to send the query.

Another issue is that they would not give me an email address of any kind.

Perhaps you could develop a mapping at NZQA that maps each webpage to an expert who can be consulted regarding information on that page. If this existed, then the mapping for <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/approved-calculator-list/> would point to that person.

Anyway, I am trying the Examinations@nzqa.govt.nz email address here, as advised in the OIA reply, so let's see if that works OK.

Please help students to get their calculators and publish the list

In your response, you stated "This review was confirmed in the early part of this year and the list will be published by the end of January for the 2023 examinations." (My emphasis.)

Visiting <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/approved-calculator-list/> just now, I see that this has not occurred.

I sold \$54,000 of calculators to students and schools since the time you said you would publish the list for 2023. I have one school who wishes to make a \$20,000 purchase, but it is hard for them to finalise their decision without a published list. Right now, this is delaying 200 students from getting their new calculator. So, once again, I request that you publish the list.

About 70% of calculators for the 2023 academic year have already been purchased. Whatever your reasons for delaying publication of the list, I feel it is fair to say that NZQA has failed to provide approval for 70% of NCEA calculator purchases this year. Is the list supposed to advise parents and schools what calculators they should buy? If so, it's a >= 70% failure.

Please help students to get their calculators by publishing the list.

Title of webpage for approved calculators

Here is the title of the webpage for approved calculators: "Approved Calculator List".
If I'm visiting that on 6 March 2023, then I would assume it currently applies, in the absence of any year specified.

Indeed, any mention of the applicable year is not specified, except for a passing mention under the following section on Scholarship exams (which I expect most people do not read, since it does not apply to them):

"In addition to calculators from the previous list, 2022 candidates entering Level 3 Statistics..."

However, I'm confused. Do the words "previous list" in that phrase mean...

- the list from previous year, or perhaps,
- the list from further up the page?

Whatever is intended, I think it best that:

- The title of the webpage contains the year to which the webpage applies !!
- The ambiguity around "previous list" is eliminated

nSpire with 84+ keyboard

Please specifically state that the nSpire with TI-84+ keyboard is allowed, since it is not clear in the 2022 list that this is true (but you did advise me this was true in the attachment). E.g. where it says,

- TI-Nspire (all non-CAS variants)

this could be changed to

- TI-Nspire (all non-CAS variants).

Note: The TI-Nspire fitted with the TI-84+ plug-in keyboard is allowed, however the TI-84+ calculator by itself is not allowed

Next steps

The way you manage the NCEA calculator approval list affects schools, parents, students and those who are trying to do their best servicing the school calculator market. In these days of uncertainty around sourcing stock and increased lead times, I find it very frustrating that there are unnecessary complications due to the publishing of a simple list you have told me was already finalised over a month ago, and you are over a month late publishing it from the promised date.

Schools need access to immediate stock in NZ when they place an order, but I am reluctant to commit funds in buying stock given the present situation. This leaves schools open to paying higher prices due to decreased competition in the market.

If the new list is not published within 24 hours, I will make another Official Information Act Request with the above information in an attempt to get some visibility on this from your Chief Executive and Senior Advisor to the Chief Executive and Ministerial Services.

Response

I apologise for the difficulties you experienced in obtaining a response from us and for the delay in advising you of the updated calculator list.

The approved calculator list is reviewed annually and was published on 1 February. There are times when we need to update the list, where modifications to a calculator on the approved list resulted in us having to remove a previously approved calculator. This is done on the basis that the authenticity of the students' work would have been in doubt if they continued to use the calculator.

As a result of your feedback, we have now added the date when the list was updated and the applicable assessment period. We will also review the language used regarding the term “previous list” as well as adding additional information about TI-Nspire (all non-CAS variants) to clarify those that are permitted for use in external assessment. Thank you for bringing these matters to our attention.

As part of the commitment to open and transparent government, NZQA is proactively releasing responses to Official Information Act requests that are of public interest. NZQA intends to publish its response to this request on its website as part of its next quarterly release of documents. 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.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982, to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz. You can also telephone 0800 802 502 or write to the Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington, 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Grant Klinkum
Pouwhakahaere/Chief Executive