


30 January 2023



Tēnā koe 

### Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your request of 17 January 2023, under the Official Information Act 1982, for the following information:

1. *What date will the 2023 NCEA approved calculator list be published on your website?*
2. *Why do you not publish this before most parents spend money guessing what model may be approved?*
3. *At <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/publications/newsletters-and-circulars/assessment-matters/information-for-approved-calculator-list-2022/> it says that the TI-84+ has been removed from the Approved Calculator List for 2022. At <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/approved-calculator-list/> it says that the NSpire is approved. Is the Nspire fitted with the 84+ keyboard approved?*
4. *Do you have anyone who knows the capability and configurations of these calculators? If so, how did this ambiguity around the " Nspire fitted with the 84+keyboard " arise?*
5. *The removal of the 84+ for 2022, appeared to occur on 9 Aug 2022.!! If true, this would cause users of this model of calculator quite a problem, to find, pay for and learn a new model of calculator at such short notice before having to use it in their exams. Also, those with stocks of calculators that are dis-approved at such short notice may inadvertently continue to advertise them as NCEA approved (I did), causing students and invigilators a real problem when they turn up for exams with a recently unapproved calculator. In the past, I have tried to get NZQA to release the approved calculator list by 1 Jan to minimise these issues, and not change the list for the remainder of the year, but I have been unsuccessful to date. How will you solve this problem?*
6. *I sold \$17,000 of calculators in December to schools using credit, with the intention that they pay in Feb 2023, and use them as NCEA approved calculators for 2023. I just sold another \$5500 of calculators to a school today -- did they waste their math budget? Only the release of the 2023 approved calculator list will determine that. If the model of calculator they bought is on the 2022 list, but not on the 2023 list, you have wasted their budget. The recent removal of the TI-84+ provides a disquieting level of uncertainty around that. Will you refund schools and parents in this situation?*
7. *Given that significant calculator purchases for year N are made in December of year N-1, are you able to release the approved list for year N in November of year N-1?*
8. *What are the rules around the notice period for dis-allowing calculators as being NCEA approved?*

9. *What changes will you make around dis-allowing calculators to avoid these problems and how will you communicate those changes?*

## **Response**

Q1. The list is reviewed each year at the beginning of the year. We have completed the review of the list and the 2023 list should be published by the end of January.

Q2. An important factor in the review of the list is an understanding of the use of the calculators in an examination. Therefore, any review normally does not commence until after the examination has been sat and marking complete. Organising the approved list takes some time and requires input from markers, teachers and, sometimes, calculator manufacturers. We aim to have the annual review complete, and the list published by the end of January so that the list is available at the beginning of the school year.

Q3. Yes, the NSpire (non-CAS) models fitted with the 84+ keyboard would be acceptable.

Q4. In reviewing the list each year, we work with subject teachers who use the calculators extensively and, where necessary, we collaborate with the calculator suppliers and/or manufacturers.

The NSpire (non-CAS) can be easily reset to remove any stored documents/programs unlike the TI-84+.

The addition of the 84+ keyboard to the NSpire (non-CAS) does not prevent the resetting/deletion of stored documents nor does it provide non-permissible resources to the student.

Q5. It is worth noting that the published approved list is as up to date as NZQA can possibly make it at the time. However, technological change is a constant and if that change enhances the functionality of a calculator to the point where the authenticity of the examination would be in doubt if that calculator is used, then NZQA reserves the right to remove that calculator from the list.

The late removal of the TI-84+ from the Approved Calculator list in 2022 arose from NZQA being made aware of students' ability to download and install subject specific programs onto the TI-84+. As these programs provided the candidate with unauthorised resources which were not easily removed/deleted from the calculator it was subsequently removed from the approved list for 2022.

This action was not taken lightly as NZQA is very aware of the impact such a change would have on the sector – especially at such a late date.

Q6. It is important to note that the rationale for the removal from the list of a particular calculator is based on ensuring the external assessment is not compromised and that the use of the calculator in an examination does not provide an unfair advantage to the individual student. While NZQA does publish an approved list, teachers, and suppliers such as yourself, also need to evaluate the functionality of a specific calculator to determine if it is appropriate to use or not. The answer to your question is no, NZQA will not refund the purchase of the calculator.

Q7. It is possible to review the approved list in November and release it at that time. However, doing this would compromise the ability to review the use of the calculator in an examination. In a review such as this, we aim to base our decisions on as much information as possible. Releasing the list earlier would increase the risk of NZQA needing to remove calculators from the approved list after it is published. This would mean a higher chance of schools or whānau spending money on a calculator they could not use in the examination.

Q8. Ideally, NZQA would want to publish the approved list once at the start of the year and not delist any calculators during year. The late removal of the TI-84+ was unforeseen as the ability to download and install subject specific programs/resources was not clear to NZQA at the start of the year. The programs are from a 3rd party software provider and not TI directly. This is a highly unusual situation, but NZQA cannot guarantee it will not happen again in the future.

We do not have a defined policy regarding the timing of removing a calculator from the approved list and, in theory, we could delist a calculator the day prior to the exam. This would be unfair; however, fairness goes both ways. The removal of the TI-84+ was done on the basis that candidates could program the calculator to contain notes etc., thereby providing an unfair advantage. Setting a deadline for the completion of all delisting would pose an issue should we get another example of the TI-84 after the deadline has passed.

Q9. A full review of all calculators on the list was undertaken in 2022 after the TI-84+ issue was raised. 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. All other calculators on the 2022 list are approved for 2023 after considering the 2022 examinations. Moreover, any new calculators will be reviewed and assessed before being added to the list.

If you have any questions about specific calculators, on or not on the approved 2022 list and/or upcoming approved list for 2023, do not hesitate to contact us via Team Mailbox Secondary Examinations [Examinations@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:Examinations@nzqa.govt.nz). When you do contact us, providing specific questions about specific models will ease the process.

As part of the commitment to open and transparent government, NZQA is proactively releasing responses to Official Information Act requests which 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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz). You can also telephone 0800 802 502 or write to the Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington, 6143.

Nāku nā



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