

**Assessment in Uncertain Times**

**Kaitakawaenga ki te Tumuaki me ngā Pouārahi**

**Principal’s Nominee and Senior Leaders**

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**Pukapuka Aratohu­**

**Handbook**

**March 2022**

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Disruption-proof assessment

The principles of fairness, validity and transparency of assessment practice are fundamental to standards-based assessment and maintaining the integrity of the NCEA. This brief guide encourages you to use the flexibility of the qualification and the support available while assessing your students in uncertain times.

Your quality assurance systems and school policies will have been challenged and enhanced by the events of the last two years. Consider what you want to stop doing, keep doing, and start doing as you continue to meet the assessment needs of your students in changing circumstances.

You may wish to consider:

* What is our system for backing up critical staff, should they become unavailable?

PN, HODs, line managers, Data Manager?

* What flexibility exists in our policies for missed assessment opportunities, late submissions, resubmissions, further assessment opportunities, appeals, Special Assessment Condition applications and provision?
* How do we monitor delays in assessment plans, and changes to due dates?
* Will our systems to track grade verifiers, and monitor the completion of internal moderation be affected by disruption?
* How will we communicate changes in processes / requirements to students and staff?
* How will we monitor Individual Education Plans for the most capable and/or most challenged students?

Hybrid assessment

**Planning assessment activities**

Teachers should consider using assessment activities that are flexible enough to use in a range of different circumstances. The clarifications, explanatory notes and exemplars of student work on the [subject pages](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/), and assessor support on [Pūtake](https://lms.nzqa.govt.nz/), will assist teachers in assuring that their tasks meet the requirements of the standard and allow students to achieve at all levels.

Teachers should consider whether contexts, methods of assessment, resource materials and timeframes of assessment activities will be fit for purpose in a hybrid environment. Teachers can use the [Request for clarification of an internally assessed standard](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/audience-pages/secondary-schools-and-teachers/forms/) form to ask the national moderator questions about standard interpretation.

All amended assessment tasks must be [critiqued](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/secondary-moderation/internal-moderation/), as part of the internal moderation process.

Please note that **RAS pilot** standard tasks may **NOT** be changed in 2022.

**Authenticity**

When teachers change their assessment programmes, they may need to change their processes and checks for authenticity[[1]](#footnote-2). These can vary by course, standard, and student.

Authenticity is the assurance that evidence of achievement produced by a learner is their own. Strategies for authenticating assessment should be adaptable, to suit different students in changing circumstances.

**Key principles** of authenticating remote and hybrid assessment:

* Use your knowledge of students and their learning. Only assess students who are enrolled with you and have been engaged in a coherent programme of learning.
* Fit your authenticity measures to the student, and the standard, and the circumstances. If in doubt, follow up – conference with the student and consult with colleagues.

In hybrid assessment, a **mix of different authenticity processes** may be used, including:

* tracking student progress towards the completion of assessments using milestones or checkpoints rather than relying on a single point to measure authenticity
* ensuring that students working at home have a way to meet checkpoints
* using digital tools such as revision history to monitor work in progress
* talking with the student to check their understanding of what they have submitted before awarding a final grade

When assessing students working at home:

* ensure parents know not to assist or over-guide students completing work for assessment
* check that students know what authenticity means for each assessment
* provide options for students to submit work physically or digitally

When teachers are still getting to know their students:

* teachers’ knowledge of their students is a fundamental tool for maintaining authenticity. If teachers don’t know their students well enough yet to recognise their authentic work, consider what other sources of information may be available. For example – verbal questioning, related evidence from class work, peer assessment, plans and drafts.
* assessment opportunities should be part of a coherent programme of learning and assessment rather than one-off events. This allows teachers to judge when students are ready to be assessed.

When circumstances change:

* consider whether authenticity requirements are still fit for purpose. For example, if students are not able to complete assessments in class, you could require them to send photos of their work in progress or submit a log of their research actions.
* Could a student submit a video of themselves performing a practical task, or share their drafts with you?
* Could a student send a message / tweet / photo after a session working on an assignment, with their reflection on their progress or performance?

**Feedback and scaffolding**

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students’ learning as both student and teacher respond to the information it provides. Teacher feedback is an important component of learning in person, online and in a hybrid environment. When student work for assessment is collated over a longer period, and in a range of circumstances, it is however important for teachers to understand the amount of feedback that is appropriate[[2]](#footnote-3).

To prevent feedback and scaffolding compromising the authenticity of student work, teachers should consider:

* retaining a holistic focus when giving students feedback on their drafts, to ensure that the final product remains a true representation of the student’s ability
* ensuring that feedback (comment on progress) and feed forward (suggestions for next steps) become less specific the closer the student is to the submission date, in order to avoid the teacher effectively doing the assessment for the student

The risk of over-scaffolding can be minimised when teachers:

* assess learners when they are ready
* give learners adequate opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge, and competencies through the learning process
* ensure learners understand the requirements of the standard and the assessment instructions
* discuss exemplars of successful work in different contexts with learners.

**Managing deadlines and assessment programmes**

Students should be assessed when they are ready. If student circumstances change, then teachers may need to adapt their assessment programmes.

Consider:

* having different due dates for students in the same class, if authenticity isn’t compromised
* having different contexts and methods of assessment for students doing the same standard
* collecting evidence for assessment from different sources
* entering students in a range of different standards within the same course.

To keep track of changes to deadlines and assessment programmes, you could:

* get teachers to update your internal moderation monitoring spreadsheet to include when student work will be assessed
* get students to nominate their own due dates within an agreed timeframe
* ensure that mentor teachers are updated with any changes to assessment programmes
* consider ways that teachers can record evidence collected over time
* assist students to track their own progress

**Naturally occurring evidence**

Evidence for assessment can include any valid, authentic, and standard-specific evidence produced by a student. Performance criteria in a standard could be achieved at different times of the year, and/or include a range of assessment methods. A more flexible approach to collecting evidence may be useful when usual one-off high stakes assessments and pre-determined due dates are not feasible.

Evidence may occur naturally in the teaching and learning process, and/or in written, digital, photographic, audio-visual and portfolio formats.

Some ideas are to:

* ensure you are familiar with the evidence requirements of the standard and check benchmark and NZQA exemplars.
* identify when and how students are likely to generate evidence within the learning process, and plan to record that evidence.
* create a tracking system, such as a spreadsheet, where you can record the evidence gathered against the criteria for the standard.
* give students options for how they will provide evidence for a standard.

Learner performances in formal assessments can fall short of their previous work. Teachers can supplement evidence of achievement from formal assessment activities with standard-specific evidence drawn from authenticated classwork, assignments, or practical activities.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Please note that evidence for **RAS pilot** standards must be collected as indicated in the materials provided.

**Practical components**

Consider how the conditions of assessment[[4]](#footnote-5) for a planned practical task could be adapted to cater for a range of student circumstances. Incorporate options into task instructions where possible. Consider how aspects of a practical activity could be varied so that authenticity is not compromised if students complete the activity at different times or submit their evidence in different formats.

Many teachers of performance-based subjects are familiar with building a picture of learner achievement over time. They do this by collecting (or asking students to collect) evidence of achievement in a portfolio of work. The evidence may come from a range of activities, such as:

* Observation checklists
* Practice activities
* Home and class work
* Workplace activities

These activities can be completed by learners during the teaching and learning process.

When practical components cannot be assessed because of disruption, consider

* referring to the 2020 remote assessment guides, published on the [NZQA subject pages](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects).
* creating a tracking system, such as a spreadsheet, where you can record the evidence gathered against the criteria of the standard. Please note that actual evidence **must** be gathered
* whether it is possible to collect naturally occurring evidence of students completing practical components, and whether it is possible for students to record this evidence authentically themselves.

Ensuring Equity

**Digital Access**

[Hybrid Learning 2022 - Ministry of Education](https://assets.learningfromhome.govt.nz/s3fs-public/2022-02/Hybrid%20learning%202022%20%28final%29_0.pdf?CfSAeeW0DpuQRdFrj8FQv.e0UVgkp_gu) includes guidance for providing learning programmes for students without access to a device and/or internet. This equally applies to assessment opportunities.

**Special Assessment Conditions**

Wherever possible, please continue to make SAC applications, and continue to provide SAC entitlements for students when they are being assessed against standards.

Include students with [Special Assessment Conditions](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/special-assessment-conditions/) when reviewing if assessment opportunities meet student needs in a hybrid learning environment.

The underlying principle is that, as SAC is an entitlement, a SAC student should not be disadvantaged if an entitlement cannot be provided through circumstances beyond the control of the student.

Consider enhancing assessment support for SAC students by:

* consulting students on assessment approaches
* modifying assessment strategies e.g. video conferencing, blog entries
* using software to support reading/writing
* a Reader or Writer working remotely with the student e.g. a video conference
* training a temporary Reader or Writer in the student’s “bubble” while assuring authenticity
* postponing assessment.

Contact [sac@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:sac@nzqa.govt.nz) for clarification.

**COVID-related absences**

The flexibility of the NCEA qualification enables a range of options. Many of the strategies you have used over the last two years will remain useful in adapting to suit students isolating, absent with illness, staffing changes and other potential disruptions to planned learning and assessment programmes. Consider

* assessing fewer standards than planned for in a normal school year, without compromising programme integrity, or students’ ability to gain qualifications
* whether an assessment is needed. It is important to cover all aspects of the curriculum, but not everything that is taught needs to be assessed.
* assessing students remotely if they are in self-isolation or at home
* reviewing content, skills, and assessment contexts to suit individual circumstances
* reordering the sequence of learning, and combining tasks, assessments, and learning areas where feasible
* prioritising assessment which is gathered over longer time intervals such as projects, research, and portfolios rather than one-off assessment events such as tests.  ​

**Missed assessment opportunities and late assessment**

Each school determines its own policy with regard to [missed assessment opportunities and late assessment of student work](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/assessment-of-standards/generic-resources/gathering-evidence-of-achievement/missed-late-assessments/). Check that your current policy is fit for purpose in the current environment. Students need to receive consistent messages from teachers about acceptable reasons for missing an assessment or submitting work late, with individual circumstances considered when talking to students and their whānau. For example, evidence you require students to provide, such as medical certificates or counsellor notes, may not be readily available.

Evidence and moderation

**Collecting evidence**

Evidence for assessment of internal standards must be collected in 2022. Evidence must be verifiable – able to be checked against the standard by a verifier who is a subject expert.

Evidence Gathering Templates or similar tools to track progress towards assessment are to be used as guides only.

Evidence may be sourced from a range of formal and informal assessment types, including evidence from the learning process.

Some different forms of evidence include:

* Written assignments
* Portfolios
* Transcripts of oral explanations
* Videos of performances
* Detailed checklists of observed performance
* Audio-visual recordings

If a video is impractical, or the evidence has come from a dialogue with learners, assessors must provide a checklist or annotated file note with a standard-specific description of the evidence viewed that supports the judgements made. In group performances, the learners must be identified and assessed individually.

If it meets the criteria for the standard being assessed, you may gather evidence from any valid and authentic work completed by the student.

Please note that evidence for **RAS pilot** standards must be collected as indicated in the materials provided.

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| **You DO need to** | **You DON’T need to** | **You CAN** |
| * ensure assessment happens within coherent teaching and learning programmes * collect sufficient standard-specific evidence to make a valid judgement against the criteria of the standard * collect sufficient evidence to be confident that the student could repeat the performance if assessed again at a later date * ensure the evidence is authentic * ensure that evidence is collected so that it can be checked by a verifier or later submitted for external moderation | * keep doing assessments under test conditions * assess every student in the same way​ or at the same time | * use a spreadsheet or similar for recording the collection of evidence * use a portfolio approach to collect partial evidence​ over time, to be assessed later in its entirety for marking * consider a range of sources of evidence​ * collect and collate evidence for use with other standards with relevant outcomes / criteria |

**Grade Verification**

If there are disruptions to staffing or school operations, teachers may find it more difficult to access their usual verifiers to quality assure internal grades.

Consider asking your SRM for assistance if an appropriate verifier is not available in the school or through local networks. NZQA requires verifiers who are subject experts with recent standard-specific knowledge and have a history of positive external moderation outcomes.

If internal assessment is completed over time, there is no need to wait until every student is assessed before verifying results. When selecting work for verification, remember that a ‘sufficient’ sample means that enough work has been checked that the marker and verifier can be confident that the grades reported are credible and meet the requirements of the standard. This can occur more than once in the year, as needed. Where a verifier’s judgment differs from that of the assessor’s, the reasoning to support the grade change should be recorded.

**Storage of Evidence for External Moderation**

It is easy for assessment materials to go missing when there are staff changes or disruptions to planned assessment programmes. Materials not sent for External Moderation negatively impact your school’s overall level of consistency.

Improve storage of student work for External Moderation by:

* + clearly labelling and storing work in an accessible place. Store any digital material in shared drives so that it is readily available if a teacher is not available to retrieve it.
* planning to submit digitally generated or stored student evidence online for external moderation, to avoid access issues and courier delays.
* including storage in your monitoring of moderation processes and department reviews.

Ensure teachers are familiar with the new requirements for selecting student work for external moderation, in [Mythbuster: Selection of work for external moderation](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Assessment-and-moderation/NCEA-Myths/Mythbuster-7.pdf)

External assessment

**Collecting school-based evidence for exception processes**

**(Derived Grades and Unexpected Event Grades)**

You should have a plan for how to generate Derived Grades and Unexpected Event Grades[[5]](#footnote-6) if school practice exams can’t go ahead as planned. Schools are required to use the process to report results as a back-up in case students cannot sit examinations.

You need to know that:

* the assessment task has been critiqued and checked against the standard
* student work can be authenticated, whether in person or remotely
* students who are unable to attend school can access any planned assessment

Standard specific evidence:

* meets the requirements of the standard
* need not be a single event, or under examination conditions
* could be gathered from formative and/or summative activities
* must be collected before the start of the examination period

Your teachers may use templates to track the collection of evidence for these grades. In 2022, actual evidence **must** be collected by teachers. You need evidence that the derived grade is credible, using grade [verification or justification processes.](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/derived-grades/4-schools-pns/deriving-grades-from-school-based-evidence-for-external-assessment/) NZQA *may* choose to review or verify evidence in certain circumstances.

Grades should be submitted in your regular data files. They can be updated and amended in subsequent data submissions. Check with your SMS vendor if you are unsure about setup or submission. You will be able to review the grades submitted through the *Reports* section of your Provider Login.

**Digital practice examinations on Assessment Master**

Digital practice examinations will be available for a limited range of subjects in Assessment Master in Term 3. The content for these practice examinations comes from the relevant subject associations. To prepare for any disruption during this period, you can:

* ensure that students are familiar with the format of [digital examinations](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-exams-and-portfolios/external/digital-exams/)
* confirm digital entries as soon as possible, to assist with planning
* once instructions and training become available, ensure that affected staff are familiar with using Assessment Master as supervisors and markers
* ensure students register for and use their NZQA learner logins.

1. References

   [Managing authenticity when assessing remotely](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Publications/EmaiLink/COVID19-2021/Managing-authenticity-when-assessing-remotely.pdf)

   [Authenticity](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/assessment-of-standards/generic-resources/authenticity/)

   [Mythbuster – Managing authenticity](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/ncea-the-myths/myth-3/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. References

   [Assessment opportunities in schools](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/assessment-of-standards/generic-resources/gathering-evidence-of-achievement/assessment-opportunities-in-schools/)

   [Mythbuster – Resubmission](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/ncea-the-myths/myth-4/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Reference

   [Gathering evidence of learner achievement](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/assessment-of-standards/generic-resources/gathering-evidence-of-achievement/assessment-opportunities-in-schools/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. References

   [Mythbuster: Assessment practice and gathering evidence](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/ncea-the-myths/myth-2/)

   [Mythbuster: Further assessment opportunity](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/ncea-the-myths/myth-5/)

   [Mythbuster: Courses and programmes](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/ncea-the-myths/myth-10-courses-and-programmes/)

   [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. References

   [Mythbuster: Derived Grades](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/ncea-the-myths/myth-9/)

   [Unexpected Event Grades](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/derived-grades/4-schools-pns/unexpected/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)