2026 NCEA Interim Assessment Report

Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Subject: Numeracy

Unit standard: 32406

General commentary

The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level snapshot of areas of strength and weakness following the first assessment event of the NCEA Literacy and Numeracy standards, which took place during the weeks 18 – 29 May 2026. The assessment involved two parallel online Common Assessment Activities, for weeks one and two, each of which learners completed in a single sitting with no time limit.

Careful consideration must be given to simply re-entering students for the second assessment because they did not Achieve in the first one. Ensure students have undergone sufficient additional targeted teaching to address areas of weakness, and that they are well prepared before they attempt the assessment again. The following guidance has been provided by the markers of the assessments – an experienced group of teachers with insights from marking numerous student responses.

Report on individual unit standard

Unit standard 32406: Apply mathematics and statistics in a range of everyday situations

Summary

Areas of strength demonstrated by candidates who were clearly at, or above, the required standard:

- interpreted scale given in centimetres and converted between centimetres and millimetres
- interpreted the scale on a map given in kilometres
- solved division problems in the context of rates that required decimal division
- provided a statement of trend over time given a line graph
- reasoned with interior angles of polygons and divisions of 360º
- scaled a simple ratio with two measures, e.g., 5:2 so *x*:7
- applied the part-whole fractions in a ratio to a given number representing the whole
- solved a multi-step multiplication problem with rates
- described the relationship in a scatterplot supported by evidence
- found a function rule linking two variables given in a table
- evaluated the correctness of a claim about percentage discount
- evaluated a headline comparing cost and style of sneakers from a graph
- indentified the correct top view given the side and front views of an object
- explained the equality, or inequality, of two probabilities given as percentage and ratio

- calculated the remaining amount of a budget when two quantities are purchased at a given price per kilogram
- read and interpreted a circular thermometer in degrees Celsius
- established whether there was enough drink given measures in millilitres and litres
- calculated the percentage an item was discounted given the original and discounted prices
- converted between a rate in kilometres per hour and a rate given in metres per second
- found the number of possible combinations of two types of items
- intepreted the frequencies on a bar graph to evaluate a claim
- calculated the area of a rectangle that was wasted given a percentage and dimensions in centimetres
- identified a location given its grid reference on a map
- calculated the cost of a weight given the price per kilogram
- calculated the weight of an item given the number per kilogram
- interpreted a line graph to find the time of greatest change
- found the probability of an event given historic frequencies for the outcomes.

Areas requiring improvement for candidates who were not at, or were borderline in meeting, the required standard:

- proficiency and application of the mathematical and statistical concepts above
- selecting mathematical and statistical approaches that meet the demands of the situation (Outcome 1)
- interpreting questions correctly, and checking that the answers generated address the questions and provide reference to the information given
- considering the reasonableness of answers within the context, such as a sensible length for a honey bee, the number of weeks a pair of running shoes would last, and a realistic increase in temperature needed to reach a given measure
- intepreting info-graphical displays, such as diagrams, tables, and graphs, e.g. scatterplot of left and right foot-lengths, a recipe for a salad, and a map with latitude and longitude. This included visualising and organising the information that was not provided, e.g. the meaning of points on a graph, the angles in a diagram
- calculating or reasoning correctly, including recording working on paper to organise numbers and reason with problems, using calculators efficiently, and verifying the accuracy of answers (Outcome 2)
- explaining their position for a given situation using information provided in the problem, e.g. if percentages or frequencies are required, there must be percentages or frequencies included in the answer; if a calculation is asked for it must be provided (Outcome 3)
- persisting with the CAA, even if some problems seem difficult, to give answers to all questions. There has been a noticeable improvement in candidate persistence over the last three years
- using assessment techniques effectively, such as monitoring and managing time, taking short breaks (micropauses), and returning to difficult question items.

Commentary

In some content areas there were noticeable improvements from previous assessments, such as reasoning with rates, particularly speed, position, and direction from maps; and interpretation of time series graphs. Candidates, in general, are more persistent in completing the assessments.

There are several ways in which schools and teachers can prepare candidates for the Numeracy Assessments, including:

- providing a teaching and learning programme that focuses on the key proficiencies identified in the *Areas of strength* part of this report
- supporting candidates with the literacy demands of the numeracy items, such as identifying key words and information, categorising the types of problems, creating algorithms / diagrams to represent the information and action required, and checking to see that answers meet the demands of the question
- promoting a pragmatic approach to calculation that includes sensible use of written recording to represent and organise important information, combined with sensible use of the calculator to both reduce cognitive load and improve reliability

encouraging attention to the reasonableness of answers, particularly related to measurements, so candidates develop trusted benchmark measures, such as 1 litre and 1 kilogram, and develop an understanding of when and when not to apply decimal place value to units of time.