



Set up to succeed: How well is NCEA Level 1 working for our schools and students?

SUMMARY



Leaving school with a qualification leads to better life outcomes, so ensuring Aotearoa New Zealand's qualifications work well is essential for the success of our young people.

In 2024, changes to NCEA Level 1 were rolled out nationwide. ERO reviewed NCEA Level 1 to find out how fair and reliable it is, if it is helping students make good choices, how motivating and manageable it is for students, and the impacts of recent changes. We explored how valued it is, and how implementation has gone so far. This summary sets out our key findings and recommendations.

ERO found that despite the changes to improve the qualification, NCEA Level 1 isn't yet a reliable measure of students' knowledge and skills. There is too much variability in what students need to do, and some of the changes have introduced additional challenges in ensuring authenticity of students' work. NCEA Level 1 is not preparing all students well for the rest of their years at school or the range of post-school pathways they may choose. In addition, while NCEA Level 1 is manageable for students, it is not always motivating them to achieve or participate in learning.

ERO is recommending both quick changes to improve the fairness and reliability of NCEA Level 1, and more substantive reform. Reforms to NCEA Level 1 need to be considered alongside the changes proposed for Levels 2 and 3.

What is NCEA?

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is Aotearoa New Zealand's main secondary school qualification. NCEA has three levels in which you can gain a qualification. NCEA Level 1 is usually offered in Year 11 when students are usually 15-16 years old, NCEA Level 2 is usually offered in Year 12, and NCEA Level 3 is usually offered in Year 13.

Students earn credits by completing assessments in different subjects. A student needs 60 credits to achieve NCEA Level 1 and 20 credits in literacy or te reo matatini (reo Māori literacy) and numeracy or pāngarau (reo Māori numeracy).

Why are qualifications important?

Leaving school with higher qualifications leads to a range of more positive life outcomes, including higher incomes and better chances of employment. Young people who leave school with NCEA Level 1, compared to those who leave without NCEA Level 1, are more likely to have employment income and less likely to receive a benefit as adults.

What are the changes to NCEA Level 1?

Changes to NCEA Level 1 were brought in at the start of 2024. Key changes include:

- providing a range of assessment formats (including submitted reports)
- introducing new 20-credit co-requisite for literacy, numeracy, te reo matatini, and pāngarau
- fewer, larger standards through redeveloping subjects with four achievement standards – two internally assessed, two externally assessed, typically worth five credits each and 20 credits in total
- reducing the number of NCEA Level 1 subjects
- changing the requirements so that 60 credits are required to pass NCEA Level 1 (plus the 20-credit co-requisite)
- building aspects of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori in achievement standards and assessment materials, and ensuring te ao Māori pathways are acknowledged and supported equally in NCEA (te reo Māori and te ao haka).

Key findings

The findings of this review need to be set in context. Student achievement reflects not only their learning in Year 11, but also their learning in Years 1-10. While each level of NCEA can be achieved independently, these can be thought of as a package. This puts more focus on how the levels build coherently and collectively to prepare students for pathways beyond school. Changes to Levels 2 and 3 are planned but not yet implemented. The New Zealand National Curriculum is also being refreshed.

Area 1: Is NCEA Level 1 valued?

We looked at whether and why different groups, including teachers, students, their parents and whānau, and employers value NCEA Level 1.

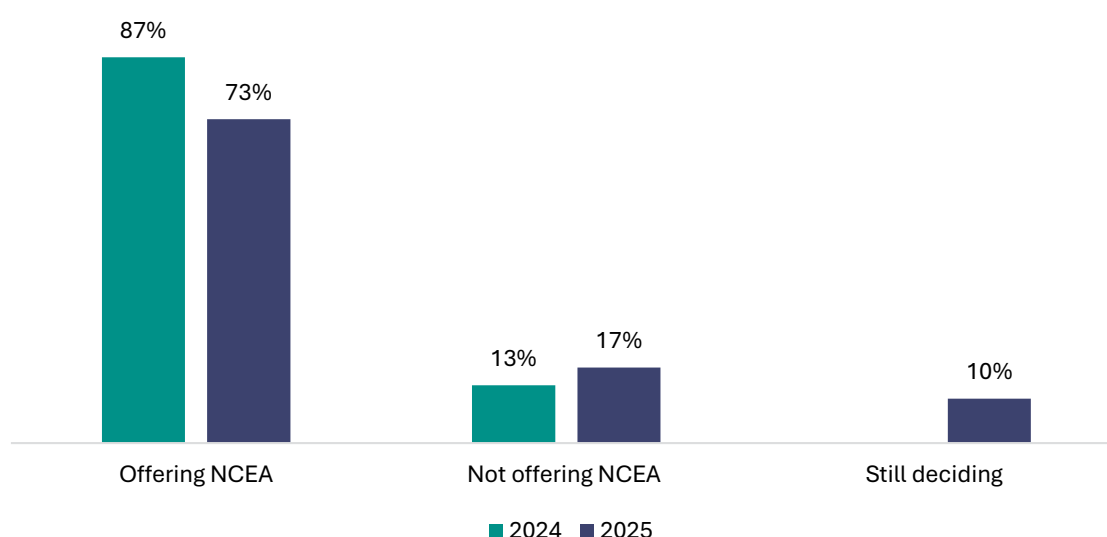
Finding 1: NCEA Level 1 remains optional. An increasing number of schools, mainly schools in high socio-economic areas, are opting out of offering it.

- NCEA Level 1 remains voluntary. Most schools offer it, but there is a group of schools that don't. In 2024, one in eight schools (13 percent) aren't offering it (87 percent are). For 2025, more schools (17 percent) plan not to offer it, and 10 percent are still deciding (73 percent of schools do plan to offer it).
- Schools in high socio-economic communities with higher NCEA achievement are least likely to offer NCEA Level 1, only three in five of these schools (60 percent) offered it in 2024. They are opting out to better prepare students for Years 12 and 13 and to reduce assessment burn-out. Schools in low to medium socio-economic communities are more likely to offer NCEA Level 1. They value it as an 'exit qualification' for students who leave at the end of Year 11. In 2023, 10 percent of students left at the end of Year 11, and one in five (21 percent) of these students had achieved NCEA Level 1.

Finding 2: Students and parents and whānau mainly value NCEA Level 1 as a stepping stone to NCEA Level 2. Employers value other skills and attributes over NCEA Level 1.

- Students on an academic pathway, and their parents and whānau, value NCEA Level 1 as preparation for NCEA Level 2 because it provides study skills and exam experience, when many students haven't done exams before.
- Parents and whānau assume that employers value NCEA Level 1 as a recognised national qualification, but just over two in five employers (43 percent) don't consider it when making recruitment decisions.
- Based on their experience of the previous NCEA Level 1 qualification, just over seven in 10 employers (71 percent) don't think it is a reliable measure of student knowledge and skills, and nine in 10 (90 percent) don't think it's a reliable measure of attitude to hard work.

Figure 1: *Proportion of leaders who report their schools are offering NCEA Level 1 in 2024 and 2025*



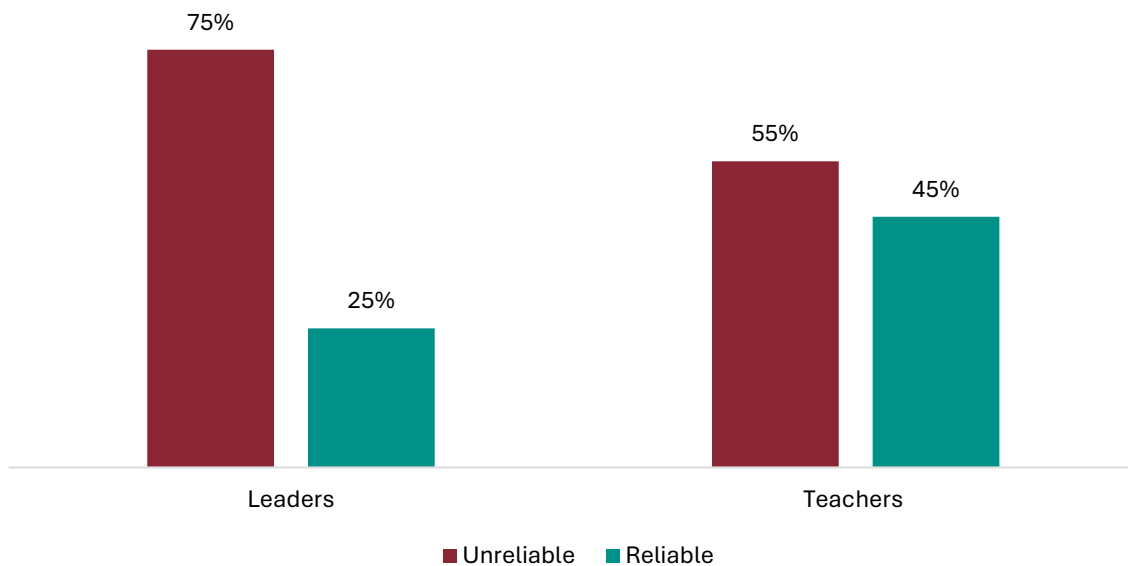
Area 2: Is NCEA Level 1 now a fair and reliable measure of knowledge and skills?

We looked at whether the new NCEA Level 1 allows students a fair chance to show what they know and can do, and whether accreditation accurately and consistently reflects student performance.

Finding 3: NCEA Level 1 difficulty still varies between subjects and schools due to the flexibility that remains.

- Teachers can choose to offer any combination of standards^a, affecting course content, difficulty, and the amount of internal and external assessment.
- This year, nearly seven in 10 schools (68 percent) offer only three of the four subject achievement standards in their courses, and schools are still using unit standards, which are less demanding. This means students have different amounts of work and different chances of achieving.
- Three-quarters of leaders (75 percent) and just over half of teachers (55 percent) report the credit values are not a reliable indicator of how much work is required.

Figure 2: Leader and teacher views on whether credit values are a reliable indicator of how much work is required



^a Achievement standards assess knowledge of a subject. Students can achieve four grades: Achieved, Achieved with Merit, Achieved with Excellence, or Not Achieved. Unit standards assess industry-related knowledge and skills, developed by the Workforce Development Council and NZQA. There are only two grades: Achieved or Not Achieved.

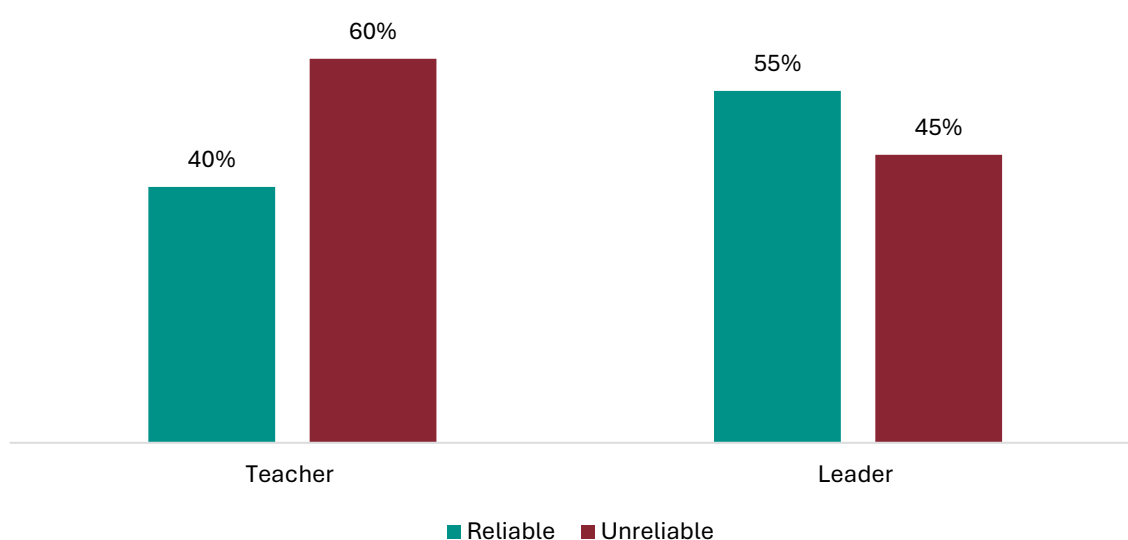
Finding 4: Authenticity and integrity are more at risk due to the changes, and the biggest concern is about submitted reports.

- Almost one in three teachers (29 percent) report the new formats of assessment make NCEA Level 1 less reliable (53 percent see no real change). They are especially concerned about the submitted report, as it is an external assessment that is carried out over several sessions.
- Artificial Intelligence is a risk for many assessments but a particular risk for the submitted reports without a secure digital platform.
- Teachers are providing different levels of support for students' internal assessments and submitted reports.

Finding 5: NCEA Level 1 is not yet a reliable measure of knowledge and skills.

- Reliability is an essential element of a high-quality qualification but, due to the remaining flexibility in the system, NCEA Level 1 is not yet a reliable measure.
- Three in five (60 percent) teachers and almost half of leaders (45 percent) report NCEA Level 1 is an unreliable measure of knowledge and skills.
- Almost half of teachers (47 percent) and just over a third of leaders (34 percent) report NCEA Level 1 as less reliable than before (only 18 percent of teachers and 26 percent of leaders say it is *more* reliable). Concerns are focused on how assessments are done and literacy-heavy assessments (e.g. in Technology) which are a barrier for some students demonstrating other skills.
- The co-requisite may help with reliability (see Finding 13) as it introduces standardised requirements for literacy and numeracy.

Figure 3: Teacher and leader views on whether NCEA Level 1 is a reliable measure of student knowledge and skills



Area 3: Is NCEA Level 1 helping students make good choices and preparing them for their future?

High-quality qualifications support students to make good choices and prepare them with the knowledge and skills needed for their future. We looked at whether NCEA Level 1 is well understood and whether it prepares students with the knowledge and skills they need for Levels 2 and 3, and for their future beyond school.

Finding 6: NCEA Level 1 remains difficult to understand, and it can be difficult to make good choices.

- NCEA is a complex qualification due to its flexible nature. NCEA needs to be well understood by students so they can make the right choices for their future.
- Students mainly choose courses based on their interest in the content (60 percent) and their future goals for education or employment (56 percent), but they don't always understand enough to make informed choices.
 - Nearly two in five students (39 percent) report they didn't know enough about NCEA Level 1 when they make their course choices.
 - Almost half of parents and whānau don't know what is required for the NCEA Level 1 qualification (46 percent) and feel unable to help their child make the right choices (48 percent).

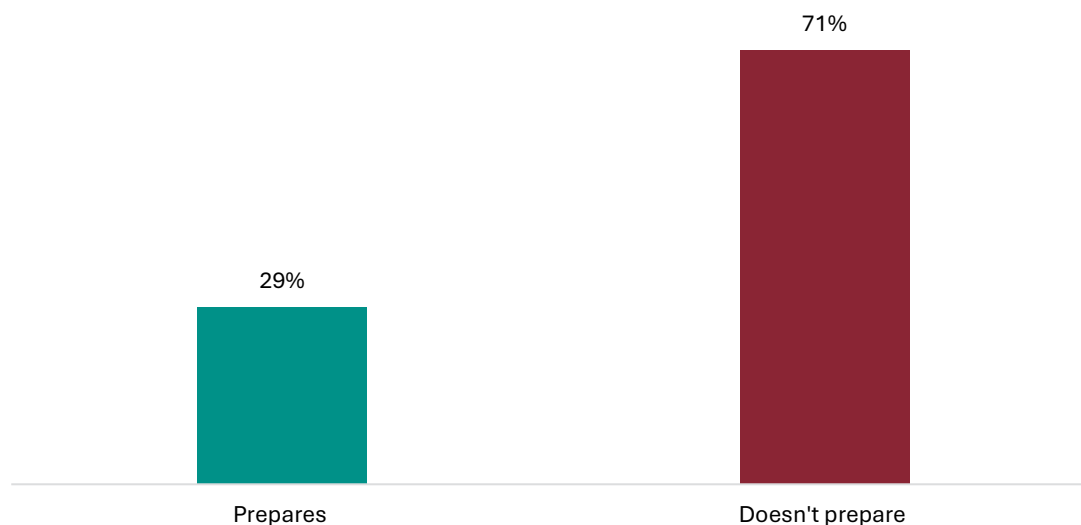
Finding 7: NCEA Level 1 wasn't set up to, and so doesn't, provide clear vocational pathways.

- Vocational pathways aren't prioritised until NCEA Level 2. This means students aren't able to specialise at NCEA Level 1 in vocational areas that interest them such as construction or creative industries. This prevents students specialising too early but means NCEA is working less well for students wishing to pursue vocational pathways.
- Almost half (45 percent) of students on vocational pathways report NCEA Level 1 isn't preparing them for their future and around a quarter (26 percent) report it isn't preparing them for NCEA Levels 2 and 3.
- Based on their experience of NCEA Level 1 before the changes, almost half of employers (46 percent) report it doesn't prepare young people for work – more than half report it doesn't give them good enough maths (55 percent) or reading and writing skills (57 percent). This may change with the introduction of the co-requisite.

Finding 8: NCEA Level 1 isn't always preparing students with the knowledge they need for NCEA Level 2.

- In the absence of a strongly defined national curriculum, assessment is driving what is taught in Year 11. This is a problem when courses don't cover all four subject achievement standards, and especially for subjects that build sequentially (e.g. Maths and Statistics, Science, and Music) or require a full range of skills (e.g. Languages).
- Seven in 10 leaders (71 percent) report NCEA Level 1 doesn't prepare students for the current NCEA Level 2 – this may be because NCEA Level 1 has changed and NCEA Level 2 hasn't.
- It was a jump between NCEA Level 1 and NCEA Level 2 before the recent changes, but teachers report the jump is now bigger for some subjects. This is due to the design of some of the new standards, the merging of subjects, and schools teaching fewer than all four subject achievement standards.

Figure 4: Leader views on whether NCEA Level 1 prepares students for the current NCEA Level 2

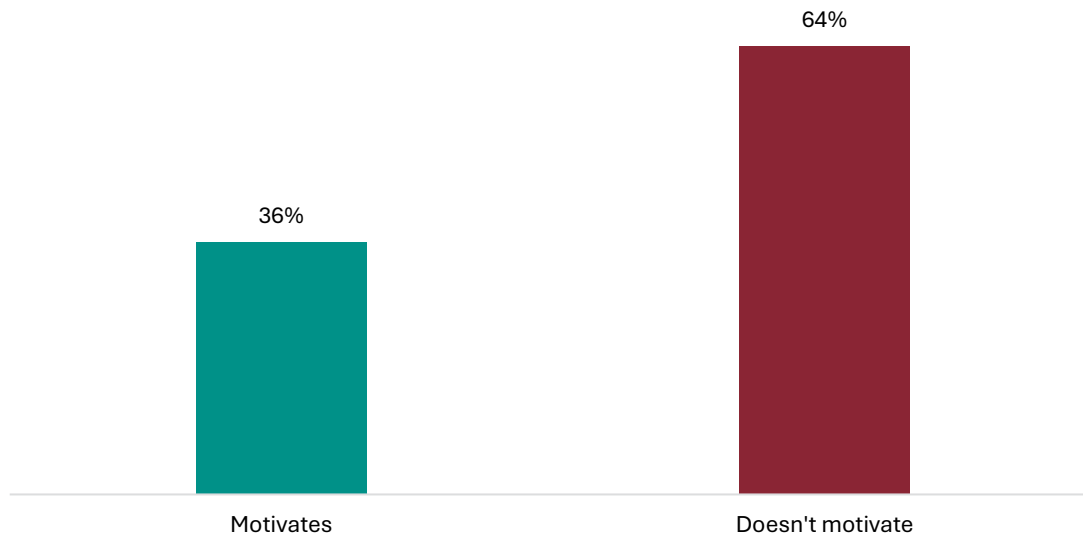


Area 4: Is NCEA Level 1 motivating and manageable for students?

We looked at the extent to which NCEA Level 1 motivates students to engage in learning throughout the year and to achieve as well as they can, and whether their overall assessment workloads are manageable.

Finding 9: NCEA Level 1 is not motivating all students to achieve as well as they can, and some students disengage early.

- Qualifications need to motivate students to both achieve as well as they can in assessments and participate in their learning throughout the year. But teachers are clear NCEA Level 1 does not do this. Almost two-thirds of teachers (64 percent) report NCEA Level 1 doesn't motivate students to achieve.
- NCEA Level 1 is reducing engagement and participation in education for students who 'fail' early in the year because there isn't a way of catching up. High-achieving students can reach the required credits needed for NCEA Level 1 before the end of the year and also disengage.
- Some students are demotivated by literacy-heavy assessments, including for courses they expect to be more practical, like Technology and Physical Education.
- Not achieving is demotivating – students who are failing most of their credits are three times more likely to report they aren't enjoying NCEA Level 1.

Figure 5: Teacher views on whether NCEA Level 1 motivates students to achieve**Finding 10:** NCEA Level 1 is manageable, but not stretching the more academically able students.

- Most students (68 percent) find their NCEA Level 1 workload manageable.
- Although the larger achievement standards are better for spending longer on topics, for some students they still can lead to piecemeal learning, and many standards aren't challenging enough to stretch academically able students. Some schools are offering NCEA Level 2 standards, as well as NCEA Level 1 standards, to keep students challenged and motivated.
- Because of the larger standards, assessments are more often ending up happening at the same time (bunching together) because teachers and students need time to teach and learn the content before assessments can be set. This may settle down once schools become used to the new NCEA content.
- Girls are more likely to find their workload unmanageable (36 percent compared to 25 percent of boys) and more likely to be stressed (58 percent compared to 35 percent of boys).

Area 5: Is NCEA Level 1 working for all students?

All students should have the opportunity to achieve. We looked at how well NCEA Level 1 is working for a range of students.

Finding 11: Some aspects for NCEA Level 1 aren't working as well for Māori students, Pacific students, and students who qualify for Special Assessment Conditions (SACs).

- Māori students and Pacific students more often don't know enough about NCEA Level 1 to make their subject choices (43 percent of Māori students and 47 percent of Pacific students, compared to 38 percent of non-Māori and 38 of non-Pacific students).
- Māori students are more likely to report that NCEA Level 1 is too difficult (29 percent compared to 22 percent of non-Māori students), to find the workload unmanageable (39 percent compared to 31 percent of non-Māori students), and to be stressed by their assessments (54 percent compared to 48 percent of non-Māori students).

- Pacific students are more likely to report that NCEA Level 1 is too difficult (29 percent compared to 23 percent of non-Pacific students) and to find their assessment workload unmanageable (37 percent compared to 30 percent of non-Pacific students).
- Students who qualify for SACs are more likely to report that NCEA Level 1 is too difficult (36 percent compared to 22 percent of non-SACs students) and find their assessment workload unmanageable (41 percent compared to 29 percent of non-SACs students).

Area 6: Is NCEA Level 1 manageable for schools?

We looked at whether teachers and leaders are finding NCEA Level 1 manageable, both in terms of preparing for and teaching the new achievement standards and administering assessments.

Finding 12: Schools are finding the new NCEA Level 1 unmanageable in its first year, and it is likely that some issues will remain after the initial change.

- Implementing changes to any qualifications will have challenges. Some will settle after the changes are embedded.
- Three-quarters of leaders (74 percent) and two-thirds of teachers (66 percent) say NCEA Level 1 is unmanageable. The additional workload for the Principal's Nominee (staff member responsible for organising NCEA at the school) is especially high and is unlikely to reduce over time.
- Administering additional external assessments (co-requisite and submitted reports) is logistically challenging. Three in five schools (61 percent) report they don't have the necessary staff capacity and half (53 percent) report a lack of physical space.
- Half of teachers (49 percent) report not having the capability for mana ōrite (having equal status for mātauranga Māori in NCEA). Science is finding the inclusion of mātauranga Māori into achievement standards especially difficult.

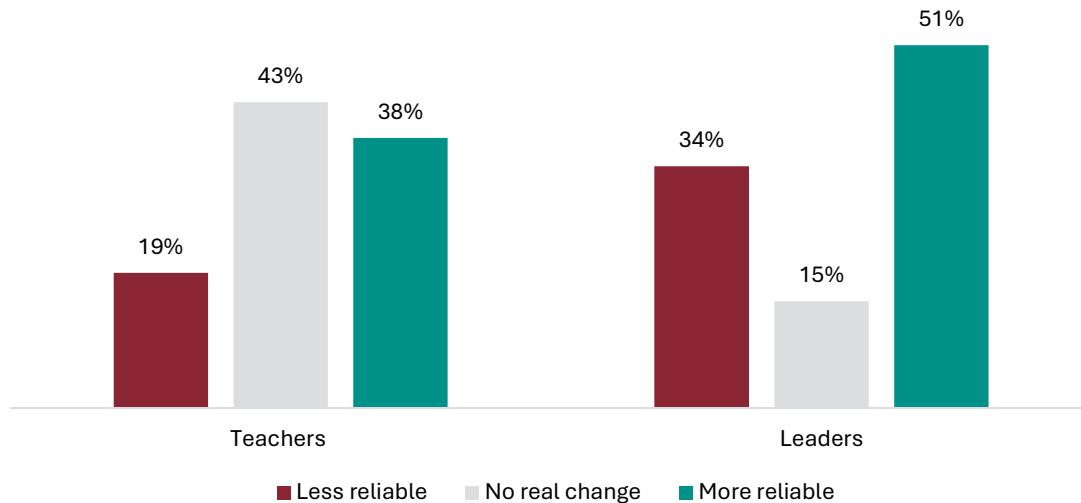
Area 7: What are the implications of the co-requisite?

From 2024, NCEA certification at any of the three levels requires a 20-credit co-requisite. Currently, this can be achieved by participating in the co-requisite assessments, known as Common Assessment Activities (CAAs), or by gaining 10 literacy and 10 numeracy credits from a list of approved standards. We looked at how this change is being delivered and the impacts.

Finding 13: Schools value the standardisation introduced by the co-requisite, but administering the assessments is logistically challenging.

- Nearly two in five teachers (38 percent) and half of leaders (51 percent) say the co-requisite makes the NCEA Level 1 qualification more reliable by standardising the measurement of literacy and numeracy.
- Administering external assessments is a particular issue for the co-requisite as many students sit this at the same time and finding spaces that allow for exam conditions can be difficult at some schools.
- In the first assessment for 2024, the pass rate for the co-requisite assessments (CAAs) was only 59 percent for reading, 56 percent for writing, and 46 percent for numeracy (with lower rates for Māori and Pacific students). There is a risk that, when the co-requisite becomes compulsory, many students who leave school aged 16-17 will leave with no qualification, unless there is an uplift in teaching and learning in Years 0-10.

Figure 6: *Teacher and leader views on whether the literacy and numeracy co-requisite makes NCEA Level 1 a more/less reliable measure*



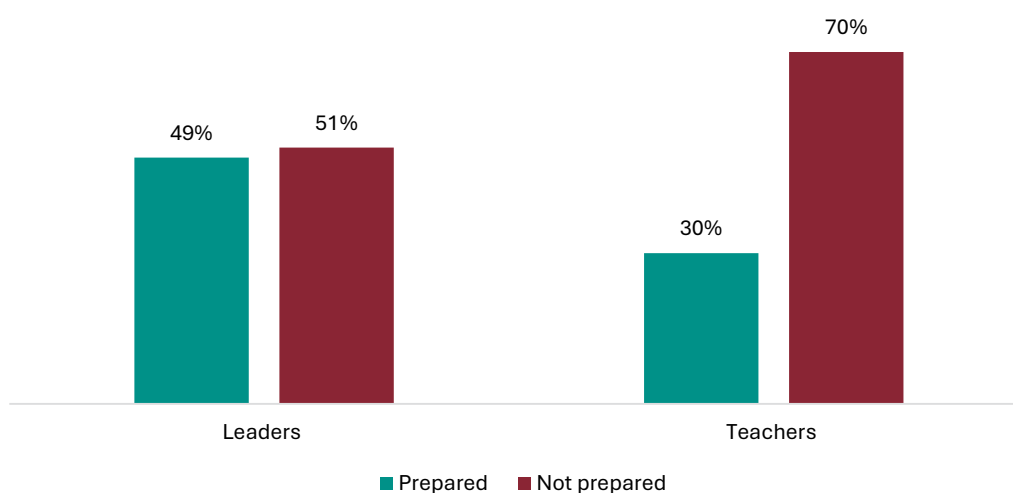
Area 8: What has and hasn't worked from implementation – what lessons have we learnt?

Change is always challenging. We looked at usefulness of resources and supports to help schools implement the changes to NCEA Level 1 and what can make it more manageable.

Finding 14: Implementation has not gone well.

- Seven in 10 teachers (70 percent) and half of leaders (51 percent) report they weren't prepared to fully implement the changes at the start of this year. They feel like they are 'building the plane while flying it' and are frustrated they couldn't start implementation earlier due to a lack of guidance and resources.
- Information has been unclear and inconsistent, and changes have been happening late into implementation.
- Most teachers (93 percent) have accessed professional learning and development (PLD) and most of them (72 percent) found it useful. However, almost one in three teachers (28 percent) said the PLD wasn't very useful. They want PLD that is more practical and classroom focused.
- Access to useful resources and guidance is an important part of supporting implementation. Most teachers have accessed the Ministry of Education and NZQA websites (89 percent and 96 percent respectively) and most find them useful (60 percent and 73 percent). However, many don't – two in five teachers (40 percent) don't find the Ministry of Education website useful and just over a quarter (27 percent) don't find the NZQA website useful.

Figure 7: Leader and teacher views on whether they were prepared to implement the NCEA Level 1 changes



Recommendations

Based on these key findings, ERO has four areas of recommendations.

- **Area 1: Quick changes** – to address fairness and reliability and help schools to administer external assessments.
- **Area 2: Reform** – including reporting about the purpose of Level 1.
- **Area 3: Implications for NCEA Levels 2 and 3.**
- **Area 3: Lessons for future implementation.**

Area 1: Quick changes

In order to improve the fairness and reliability of NCEA Level 1 and help schools to administer external assessments, ERO recommends the following quick changes.

Recommendation 1: Replace the submitted reports, which are presenting logistical challenges for schools and risks for authenticity and integrity. There is widespread support to discontinue the submitted reports and replace them with a different external assessment.

Recommendation 2: Resource schools for the additional external assessments they are required to administer. Administering external assessments at the scale required for the co-requisite and submitted reports is a big shift, requiring additional staff resources and funding for software to ensure authenticity. Replacing the submitted reports will help, but the co-requisite will remain challenging.

Recommendation 3: Extend the transitional period for the literacy and numeracy requirements to give schools more time to adjust to the co-requisite. The co-requisite helps improve the quality of the NCEA qualification but risks high failure rates and students leaving school with no qualification. More time is needed for teaching and learning to be lifted in Years 1-10 and for interventions to be put in place in Years 11-13 for students who need them.

Recommendation 4: Rethink how external assessment is conducted for practical knowledge and skills. For example, video recording the Drama and Physical Education assessments is logistically challenging and raises concerns around whether a few minutes of video footage provides a fair chance for students to demonstrate their abilities.

Recommendation 5: Review achievement standards, where there's concern, so that credits are an equal amount of work and difficulty. Although most achievement standards are now worth five credits, they are not yet equal. Addressing this can improve the fairness and reliability of the NCEA Level 1 qualification.

Recommendation 6: Revisit whether achievement standards for some subjects are too literacy-heavy. For example, students highly capable in specific aspects of Maths are unable to demonstrate their skills with literacy-heavy assessments. Also, literacy-heavy assessments may not be the best way to assess practical subjects like Physical Education, Drama, and Technology.

Recommendation 7: Provide results more quickly for the co-requisite so that teachers can provide timely support to students who need it and know who needs resubmitting for the next round of exams ahead of the deadline, and so students can be motivated by their achievement.

Recommendation 8: Provide schools with exemplars for the full range of assessment formats so that teachers feel confident to use them. The broader range of assessment formats for NCEA Level 1 increases the ways that students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills so that all students can achieve.

Recommendation 9: Provide resources that schools can use to help parents and whānau understand the requirements for NCEA Level 1 and improve career guidance to support students' decisions. If parents and whānau understand the requirements better, they can support their children to make the right choices.

In order to allow schools to make the right choices for their students in the short-term, NCEA Level 1 should remain optional.

Recommendation 10: Keep NCEA Level 1 optional for now. Some schools value it as an exit qualification. However, other schools are opting out because it doesn't meet the needs of students on other pathways. It isn't always preparing them well for NCEA Level 2. In addition to this, three years of assessment can lead to burn-out, which can undermine achievement at Level 3, which matters for tertiary pathways. Until NCEA Level 1 has been reformed, it should remain optional.

Area 2: Reform

In trying to be everything to *all students* – including students exiting school, those on vocational pathways, and academically able students on tertiary pathways – NCEA Level 1 may not be serving *any students* very well.

However, we can't view NCEA Level 1 on its own. We need to consider how it fits with teaching and learning in Years 0-10, and especially Years 9 and 10, which prepare students for NCEA Level 1. We also need to consider how NCEA Level 1 fits with Levels 2 and 3 and whether we want students to have three years of assessment. Most other countries do not. While each NCEA level can be achieved independently, they can be considered as a package to ensure learning and assessment requirements build coherently to prepare students for their intended pathways.

To improve the quality and credibility of the qualification longer term, ERO recommends reform.

Recommendation 11: Decide on the purpose of NCEA Level 1 and revise the model to fit the purpose. The three main options are set out below.

- a) **Drop it entirely.** This will avoid assessment burn-out for students who remain in school until the end of NCEA Level 3 and avoid disengaging students who don't achieve before they reach vocational options which start at NCEA Level 2. But this leaves students who leave at the end of Year 11 without a formal, recognised qualification.
- b) **Target it as a foundational qualification.** Keep the breadth of NCEA Level 1 and consider options for the co-requisite, including:
 - i) keeping NCEA Level 1 and the co-requisite but significantly increase support for students struggling with the co-requisite, including offering it earlier (e.g. in Year 9) when more time can be dedicating to preparing them
 - ii) allowing students to pass NCEA Level 1 with or without the co-requisite, which can be accredited separately on the certificate
 - iii) replacing NCEA Level 1 with a different national foundational qualification for students who intend to leave school at the end of Year 11.
- c) **Make NCEA Level 1 more challenging to better prepare students for NCEA Level 2 and stretch the most academically able.** This could potentially raise achievement for these students. However, in retaining three years of high-stakes assessment, it risks student burn-out, and non-academically able students may disengage unless there are good vocational subjects.

Whichever model is adopted, to improve the reliability, fairness, and inclusivity, reform should also involve the following.

Recommendation 12: Reduce flexibility in the system. Assessments should be driven by the curriculum (rather than the other way around) and should assess students' understanding of the full curriculum. This requires a less flexible approach to course design, which could include:

- a) a set number of standards (internally and externally assessed) with limited flexibility to choose which ones; or
- b) a set group of standards (internally and externally assessed) for a subject, with no choice at all.

Recommendation 13: Reduce variability between credits. Continue to review and revise achievement standards so that credit values reliably reflect the difficulty and amount of work required.

Recommendation 14: Retain fewer, larger standards to support deeper learning and reduce flexibility in the system, but put more weight on assessments later in the year. Scheduling more assessments later in the year or weighting them differently is typical in other countries and can keep students in school and participating for longer as they still have a chance to pass, for example if they have missed a lot of school or moved to a new school within the year.

Recommendation 15: Strengthen vocational options and develop better vocational pathways. Vocational options and subjects remain underdeveloped in the Aotearoa New Zealand system. There is a need for NCEA Level 1 subjects that are motivating and prepare students for apprenticeships and employment without closing off options to switch to an academic pathway at NCEA Level 2. This becomes more possible if teaching in Years 0-10 equips all students with foundational numeracy and literacy skills they need before they reach NCEA Level 1.

Area 3: Implications for NCEA Levels 2 and 3

Some issues at NCEA Level 1 will also apply at NCEA Levels 2 and 3. ERO recommends changes at NCEA Levels 2 and 3.

Recommendation 16: Reduce flexibility in the system so students can have more complete subject knowledge and credits are an equal amount of work and difficulty.

Recommendation 17: Decide on the model for NCEA across all three levels, including deciding how many years of assessment is right and how to achieve the right balance between both academic and vocational pathways. Further work is needed in this area. Similar countries typically only have two years of high-stakes assessment, to avoid burn-out and give more space for learning. Dual pathways are used in some countries to prepare students for vocational pathways and build equal status with academic pathways.

Area 4: Lessons for implementation of future changes

Implementation of NCEA Level 1 has lessons for implementing further changes.

Recommendation 18: Sequence changes and signpost earlier. Schools want to see when changes are coming so they can prepare, and future NCEA changes need to be sequenced with curriculum changes.

Recommendation 19: Provide information, supports, and resources to schools earlier. Schools need earlier information, PLD, and teaching and learning resources. Ideally, they would be available to schools from at least Term 3 in the year preceding changes, so leaders and teachers are ready for full implementation.

Recommendation 20: Involve experts in the changes. Working with subject associations gives access to teachers with subject matter expertise and helps identify challenges and opportunities from a school-based perspective.

Recommendation 21: Coordinate information and resources better. Avoiding inconsistencies and gaps in information can help build trust in the change process and ensure it runs smoothly across all schools.

Qualifications are important to life outcomes. These findings tell us that NCEA Level 1 still isn't a fair and reliable measure of student knowledge and skills. Due to remaining flexibility in the system, the difficulty and the amount of work differ by school and learning area, and students sometimes miss out on important subject knowledge. To improve the quality and credibility of NCEA Level 1, it is critically important to act on these findings and recommendations.

Want to know more?

To find out more about how well NCEA Level 1 is working for our schools, check out our main evaluation report and insights for school leaders. These can be downloaded for free from ERO's Evidence and Insights website, www.evidence.ero.govt.nz.

What ERO did

Data collected for this report includes:

Who	Action
Over 6,000 survey responses from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 1,435 teachers → 254 leaders → 2,376 Year 11 students → 1,675 parents and whānau of Year 11 students → 102 employers of school leavers → 290 schools in follow up survey
Interviews and focus groups with over 300 participants including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 106 teachers → 67 leaders → 119 Year 11 students → 10 parents and whānau of Year 11 students → eight subject associations → one employer (of school leavers) → three secondary tertiary providers → five school boards → five other expert informants
Site visits to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 21 secondary schools across the country
Data from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → a review of the international and Aotearoa New Zealand literature → analysis of administrative data from NZQA, the Ministry of Education, and the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI)^b

We collected our data in Term 2 of 2024. For our school visits and surveys, we collected data across a range of English medium state and state-integrated secondary and composite schools, across key characteristics.

We appreciate the work of those who supported this research, particularly the students, parents and whānau, school staff, subject associations, employers, secondary tertiary providers, school boards and experts who shared with us. Their experience and insights are at the heart of what we learnt.



^b The IDI analysis was carried out by the Social Investment Agency (SIA) for the purpose of this review. The results are not official statistics. The IDI is a large research database that holds de-identified microdata about people and households. It is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit <https://www.stats.govt.nz>



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Set up to succeed: How well is NCEA Level 1 working for our schools and students? – Summary

Published 2024

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Digital: 978-1-991126-74-0

Print: 978-1-991126-73-3



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