

## Excellence is encouraged

This assessment system encourages all students to achieve to their potential.

Students can now gain NCEA certificates with merit or excellence. If they get 50 or more of the required 80 credits at excellence level, they will earn an NCEA with Excellence. If they get 50 or more credits at merit level (or a mix of merit and excellence), they will earn an NCEA with Merit.

## Other awards

### University Entrance

Entrance to university is gained by achieving a set number of National Qualifications Framework credits at level 3, plus meeting some literacy and numeracy requirements. This entitles school leavers to attend university in New Zealand.

### Scholarship

Scholarship is externally assessed and is designed to extend very able students. It provides successful candidates with financial assistance for tertiary study.

A set proportion of students obtain scholarship in each subject.

## How students get their results

Students are able to log on to the NZQA website (Learner login on the NZQA website [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)) to check the internal and external standards they have been entered for and see what internally assessed results their school has sent to NZQA.

In January they will get results for their year's work for both internal and external assessment. This will include standards achieved and not achieved.

Scholarship results will be sent out in February.

For school leavers, a School Results Summary will list all the standards they have attempted and the results, including not achieved results.

A student's Record of Achievement (formerly called the Record of Learning) records all standards achieved during their time at school. A student can continue to add to their Record of Achievement once they leave school and complete new qualifications or undertake workplace training. Year 13 students will be sent a copy of their Record of Achievement in April with any certificates achieved in the previous year.

### International status

The NCEAs are New Zealand's national school-leaver qualifications. They are included in the UK publication *International Qualifications for Entry into Higher Education*, which is used internationally for tertiary entrance and selection. NCEA level 3 is broadly equivalent to English A Levels and Australia's Higher School Certificate.

### For more information contact:

New Zealand Qualifications Authority  
(NZQA)

P 0800 NCEAHELP or 0800 623 243

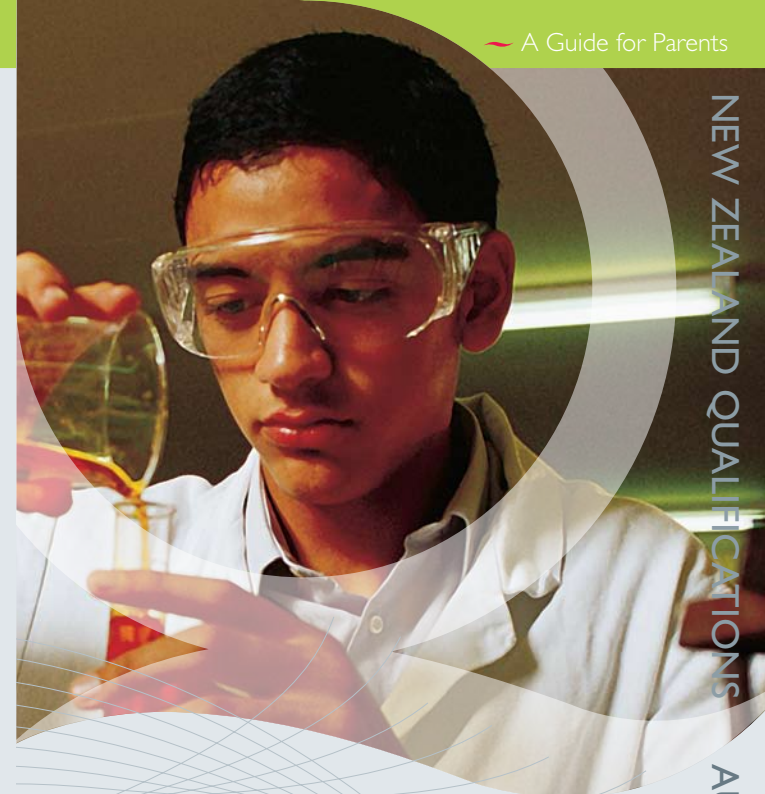
E [helpdesk@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:helpdesk@nzqa.govt.nz)

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea)

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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS

AUTHORITY

Secondary School  
Qualifications



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

## Secondary school qualifications

Qualifications in New Zealand's secondary schools today mean that:

- all students are encouraged to achieve to their potential and have their achievements recognised
- schools can be flexible in what they teach and assess for national qualifications
- when they leave school, all students are entitled to a written record of what they have achieved.

## A qualifications framework

New Zealand's main secondary school qualifications are the **National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs)**.

NCEAs for levels 1, 2 and 3 were introduced from 2002, replacing School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and Bursary. Students usually study for these in years 11 to 13.

NCEAs are standards-based qualifications. This means that students are assessed against standards that measure what they know and can do.

NCEAs are recognised by employers and universities in New Zealand and overseas as our national secondary school qualifications.

The three NCEAs are part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which comprises over 1000 national qualifications.

Many schools are now offering a range of **National Certificates** as well. Students can study towards one or more specialist National Certificates at the same time as their NCEAs. Credits from some work may count towards more than one qualification and all credits count towards the NCEAs.

National Certificates can be gained in a range of areas including business management, horticulture, tourism, boat building, information technology and childcare. For students who know what they want to do when they leave school, studying towards National Certificates is a good way to get started.

## Flexible, personalised learning

Students now stay at school longer and learn in a variety of ways including outside school. Schools can run shorter courses, combine different levels and link with industry and local business to run courses in a broader range of subjects.

This means that all schools can offer programmes to suit individual students and all students are given opportunities to achieve and be successful at school.

## How NCEA works

Student learning is assessed using national standards, which describe particular skills or knowledge. There are two types of standards – achievement standards and unit standards.

Unit standards are assessed at school by teachers or in industry settings (internal assessment). Students either reach the required standard of performance and get an achieved grade in their results, or they do not achieve the required standard and get a not achieved grade.

Achievement standards are either assessed by teachers (internal assessment) or at the end of year through exams or portfolios of work marked by NZQA (external assessment). Commonly, students will be assessed using both internal and external assessment. For achievement standards, students will get a not achieved grade if they do not meet the standard, achieved for a satisfactory performance, merit for very good performance or excellence for outstanding performance,



Generally, a traditional school subject (English, for example) is divided into five to seven standards, representing different topics or skills. These standards are linked to areas of learning in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Every time a student achieves a standard, credits are earned towards a qualification. For example, when a student earns a total of 80 level 1 credits (including 8 credits for literacy and 8 for numeracy) they qualify for an NCEA level 1 certificate.