

# NCEA

& OTHER SECONDARY  
SCHOOL  
QUALIFICATIONS



# NCEA

The main secondary school qualification is the National Certificate of Educational Achievement, commonly called NCEA. The three NCEAs (level 1, level 2 and level 3) are usually worked towards by students in years 11-13 (previously Forms 5-7).

## TIPS AND ADVICE FOR PARENTS

- if your teen tells you, “It’s ok, I only need to get Achieved”, remind them that higher grades may be the difference between them or someone else getting the job they want or getting into the university of their choice
- most schools also hold very helpful qualification information sessions for parents
- ask your teen how NCEA works – most students understand it well
- if your teen is unsure what they want to do when they leave school, encourage them to keep their options open
- celebrate the credits as they are achieved.

## HERE'S A QUICK OVERVIEW OF WHAT'S INVOLVED

- The main qualification at secondary school is the National Certificate of Educational Achievement, also called NCEA.
- For NCEA, your teen’s learning will be assessed against set standards that describe what students need to understand, know or do.
- Each course has several standards.
- Meeting a standard earns the student a certain number of credits. Standards are very clear about what your teen has to be able to do in order to earn credits.
- When many of us were at school, the marks were scaled so that only so many people could pass exams. In this system, anyone who provides evidence of skills and knowledge required for an individual standard will be awarded the credits.
- Achievement and unit standards are used for assessing core curriculum subjects such as maths and English. Unit standards are also used for assessing workplace related subjects such as hospitality, tourism and engineering.
- All standards contribute to NCEA and other national (NQF) qualifications.
- Achievement standards have four different grades: not achieved (NA), achieved (A), merit (M) or excellence (E).
- Most unit standards have only two grades: achieved (A) or not achieved (NA). However, there are some that may be awarded with merit.
- Teachers use assessment activities and samples of student work developed by expert teachers to help make consistent judgements on their own students’ work.
- External assessment is:
  - through an exam usually held later in the year. One exam covers several standards in the same learning area
  - or through a portfolio that is collected through the year and marked by external markers.
- For NCEA Level 1, a student must have eight literacy and eight numeracy credits, normally gained through English or Te Reo Māori and maths in year 11. Make sure your teen is doing the right course to meet this requirement.
- An official certificate is awarded for each level of NCEA that a student achieves or any other national certificate gained.

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## NCEA & OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS

Thinking about university? Take the right pathway at school.

If your son or daughter is thinking about or wants to get into a New Zealand university they will need to have:

- 14 credits or more in numeracy at Level 1 or higher on the NQF
- 8 credits or more in literacy at Level 2 or higher on the NQF – four reading + four writing
- 42 credits or more at Level 3 or higher on the NQF, made up of:
  - 14 credits or more at Level 3 or higher in a subject from the approved subject list
  - 14 credits or more at Level 3 or higher in another subject from the approved subject list
  - 14 credits at Level 3 or higher from one or two additional approved subjects or domains.



able students going on to tertiary study. Students can sit Scholarship at any age but most students that do are in years 12 or 13. There are strict rules about the monetary awards so it is worth checking all this out on the NZQA website if your teen is considering entering Scholarship. Scholarship is not available in every subject – check the website.

### CHECK ...

Some tertiary programmes have additional entry criteria. If your teen has a particular tertiary course in mind, check out the entry criteria as soon as possible to ensure they achieve the right standards at school. Access the information online because you need the most up to date information. It is so important that it is often a good idea to double check if you are uncertain.

### Important point

The approved subject list can change. For the latest approved subject list and more information about the numeracy and literacy requirements, ask your teen's teacher or visit the website links below.

### Other qualifications

Some schools offer other qualifications that are recognised by universities – talk to the school or check out the school directory on [www.teamup.co.nz](http://www.teamup.co.nz).

### Scholarship

Scholarship is a series of examinations (including portfolios) designed to challenge and financially reward very

### DID YOU KNOW?

Through some schools, students can start studying towards other qualifications such as business management, childcare, horticulture or tourism. Check out what's available through your teen's school. This may be recognised through national certificates.