TE KAUWHATA COLLEGE

NCEA STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026

NAME: _____ MENTOR CLASS: _____

1. THE NCEA AWARD

NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) is administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) as part of the National Qualifications Framework. To complete the National Certificate of Educational Achievement students must earn credits. Most full year courses offer about 16-20 credits. Year 11 and 12 students taking six subjects will probably be entering for about 120 credits. Year 13 students taking five subjects at Level 3 will be entering for about 100 credits.

2. STANDARDS

A standard describes what a student must know and be able to do for a section of learning. When the student meets all the requirements of the standard, credits are awarded. There are two types of standards: **Unit standards** (competency based) **and Achievement standards** (New Zealand curriculum based).

For **unit standards** all grades may be available, but usually there are just two grades:

- Not achieved (N)
- Achieved (A)

For **achievement standards**, there are four grades:

- Not achieved (N)
- Achieved (A)
- Merit (M)
- Excellence (E)

For more info: https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/understanding-ncea/how-ncea-works/standards/

3. COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT

Evidence will be gathered that shows you have gained Achievement or Unit standards. This may be collected in a variety of ways, for example, seminars, group tasks, tests, projects, examinations. Some standards may be assessed during the year and marked by Te Kauwhata College teachers (internally assessed) and others through submissions of portfolios or common assessment activities throughout the year or examinations at the end of the year and marked by NZQA (externally assessed).

4. THE QUALIFICATIONS

NCEA qualifications are offered at three levels. The criteria for these qualifications at the different levels are 80 credits in total, made up of what is summarised in the table below:

NCEA Level 1	60 credits at level 1	Numeracy or Te Paangarau 10 credits from the new Numeracy or Te Paangarau Standards (Co-req), or from a list of other approved standards until the end of 2027.	Literacy or Te Reo Matatini 10 credits from the new Literacy or Te Reo Matatini Standards (Co-req), or from a list of other approved standards until the end of 2027.
NCEA Level 2	60 credits at level 2		
NCEA Level 3	60 credits at level 3		

Certificate endorsement

Students will gain a NCEA certificate endorsement with Excellence where they achieve 50 credits at Excellence at the level of the certificate or above.

Students will gain a NCEA certificate endorsement with Merit where they achieve 50 credits at Merit (or Excellence) at the level of the certificate or above.

Course Endorsement

Students will gain an endorsement for an individual course where they achieve, in a single school year:

1. 14 or more credits at Achieved, Merit or Excellence at the lower level that supports the endorsement.
2. At least 3 credits from externally assessed standards and 3 credits from internally assessed standards.
3. A course endorsement can be awarded even if a qualification for that level is not achieved.
    - **Note:** L2 and L3 Physical Education and level 3 Visual Arts will be exempt from (2) above.

University Entrance (UE)
To gain UE to a New Zealand university the minimum requirement is:

- NCEA Level 3 - Including the 20 literacy and numeracy CAA or additional standards
- 14 credits at Level 3 in each of three approved subjects
- UE Literacy - 10 credits at Level 2 or above, made up (5 in reading, 5 in writing) in specified standards.

University Entrance is usually awarded in January. Universities have their own requirements for admission to programmes. You should check with the university you wish to attend what its requirements are.
Universities often consider Level 2 results when they make decisions, before Level 3 results are released.

Scholarship awards
New Zealand Scholarship assessments enable candidates to be assessed against challenging standards and are demanding for the most able candidates in each subject. Assessment is by either a written/spoken examination or by the submission of a portfolio or report of work produced throughout the year.
For more info on the monetary Awards follow these links: New Zealand Scholarship: Monetary Awards

5. COURSE INFORMATION / ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

Within three weeks of the start of the year you will be provided with information about every NCEA subject course you take. An assessment statement will be provided that will include important information about your course, credits available, whether they are internal or external standards and other crucial information.
It will also allow you to record the standards you achieve and keep track of your credits total.
It is recommended you attach them to this booklet and keep them secure.

6. SAC CONDITIONS

For some individuals, Special Assessment Conditions are available for both internal and external assessments to meet a range of physical, emotional, sensory, medical, and learning needs. They can include: the use of a reader or writer assistant, rest breaks, extra time, access to quiet spaces, Braille or enlarged papers or computer use. Applications need to be made through the school's SENCO to NZQA.

- Student referrals to SENCO may come from teachers, parents or outside agencies, starting in junior school when trial SAC conditions are used for the Literacy and Numeracy CAA assessments.

7. AUTHENTICITY OF STUDENT WORK

Appropriate conditions for assessment can include:

- students completing work outside of class time
- students receiving feedback from others about their work
- open book assessment
- students working as a group.

In all situations, however, students must be able to attest to the authenticity of their work. Work presented for assessment that is not authentic will not be considered as part of the body of evidence on which an assessment decision is based and may result in consequences from the Deputy Principal in charge of NZQA.

8. BREACHES OF RULES

Examples of a breach of the rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism (submitting work that is not the student's)
- The misuse of AI to create pieces of work submitted as their own "The knowledge and skills can't be generated by AI for it to be authentic".
- Impersonation
- False declarations of authenticity
- Using notes in a test or exam
- Collusion (communicating with others, disruption or assisting or hindering others during a test or exam)
- Dishonesty (lying about reasons for submitting late work)
- Altering answers prior to seeking an appeal
- Copying from another student, or deliberately allowing work to be copied by others

If a breach of the rules is suspected

- The teacher/supervisor will inform the student about the observed misconduct but allow them to continue to sit the assessment.
- The teacher will retain evidence of the breach and discuss the situation with the Principal's Nominee who will investigate the matter and consult with other relevant specialists as required to establish the degree of misconduct and decide on the appropriate sanction. This may result in a report of 'Not Achieved' if the breach is proven.
- In the case of Repeat / Serious Offences, the PN will send a letter to the parent / guardian informing them of the situation.
- NB If the student's behaviour is disruptive to others sitting the assessment then after one warning, if the disruptive behaviour continues, the student would be withdrawn from the assessment and the steps above would be implemented.

9. MISSED AND LATE ASSESSMENTS

Work that is submitted for marking after the stated deadline will not be included in the body of evidence used to make an assessment decision.

Wilful absence

A wilful absence will be considered as intent to avoid assessment. A further assessment opportunity will not be provided to a student who wilfully misses an assessment. If other valid, authentic standard specific evidence is not available a result of Not Achieved will be reported.

Exemptions

A student may, in discussion with subject teachers and whanau, prior to an assessment start date choose to apply for an exemption from a standard. If approved, this will result in the student being withdrawn from the standard and not having the opportunity to gain the credits. This standard will not show on the student's record of achievement. The student will need to fill out the *Assessment Exemption application form*. This is NOT to be used as a means to remove a likely "Not achieved" grade when a student has had ample opportunity but has failed to complete an assessment in time or to the adequate level for achievement.

Extensions

1. When an assignment has been set on a subject it must be handed to the teacher during the class period of the due date, or by the time stated in Google classroom.
2. Any student who envisages being unable to complete an assignment on time through circumstances beyond her/his control (sickness, family trauma) should request an extension of time from the teacher. Valid reasons for requesting an extension of time or a new assessment date are:
   - Sickness: a medical certificate or a note from a parent/caregiver must be supplied
   - Family trauma: a note from the parent/caregiver, Guidance Counsellor, Dean, or mentor group teacher must be supplied
   - School sporting/cultural activity: the teacher in charge of the activity signs the 'Missed Assessment' form. (Note: this reason is only valid if the student informs the teacher in advance of the assessment or due date.)
   - NOTE – **family holidays are not classed as a "valid reason".**
3. For planned absences, an application for an extension must be made on the *Assignment Extension/Missed Assessment Form* at least three school days before the due deadline. For unplanned, sudden absences, an email to the teacher with valid reason may suffice at the teachers discretion.
4. At that time of the request, work done to date must be displayed. Failure to submit sufficient and satisfactory evidence of work done so far will result in no extension being granted unless the student was absent for valid reasons (see 2 above).
5. Note: A planned holiday is not considered a "valid" reason (see 2 above), but some assessment types have flexibility. So negotiation around assessment dates with the teacher in charge might be possible if requested well in advance. As it is not a valid reason though, there is no guarantee of this, as some assessments do not have flexibility.

10. RETURN OF WORK AND APPEALS

- All assessment results will be returned to the students within three weeks of the assessment (unless in extenuating situations, and this will be communicated).
- When the assessment is handed back students must have the opportunity to hear an explanation of the judgement statements and how judgement decisions were made. They should compare their responses with the judgement decisions and ask for clarification of decisions about their responses.
- Students sign (e.g. on assessment cover sheet or printout from Kamar) to indicate that they accept the grade awarded.

- A student does not forfeit their right to appeal by acknowledging the return of their work or by sighting their grade.
- If a student thinks that work has been incorrectly assessed they can ask the teacher to reconsider.
- If a student is unhappy with the teacher's explanation, they can seek reconsideration of a judgement decision through an appeal using the appeals form
- The appeals pathway is from students to their class teacher, to the Head of Department, and then to the Principal's Nominee. The Principal's Nominee may consult with the Learning Area Leader or a subject specialist outside the school. The decision of the Principal's Nominee is final.

11. Resubmission and Further assessment opportunity

A resubmission may be offered to a student who did not achieve the standard if the teacher judges the student has made a minor error or omission that they should be capable of discovering and correcting on their own. No more than one resubmission may be provided. The result of a resubmission is limited to an Achieved grade (as of 2021).

When a student has not provided evidence of achievement for any grade from previously assessed work, schools can offer a maximum of one further opportunity for assessment of a standard within a year. This will require a new assessment or a new context. It is the school's decision whether a further opportunity will be offered for any standard. Students should be advised from the outset if there is only one opportunity to be assessed against that standard.

12. DERIVED GRADE PROCESS

Candidates who have been prevented from sitting examinations or otherwise presenting materials for external assessment, or who consider that their performance in an external assessment has been seriously impaired because of exceptional circumstances beyond their control, may apply to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority for a derived grade.

1. Advice to candidates:
   Practice assessments may be used to generate a derived grade. Therefore, greater consideration may need to be given by students to achieve to the best of their ability in all school based assessments.
2. What situations allow for a derived grade:
   - impairments must be of a serious nature. This excludes claims on the basis of stress due to examinations, family disturbances, and minor illness.
   - medical certificates supporting the claim must be provided if the impaired performance is for a medical reason.
   - The impairment must have affected the student during the examination period or have occurred within the month preceding exams.
   - impairment candidates should sit the external exam wherever reasonable and practical.
3. A derived grade is possible where:
   - A result has been recorded for an authentic, moderated assessment task. This requires that the full assessment has been completed under examination conditions and reflects accurately what the actual external assessment task would encompass.
   - A derived grade cannot be awarded if there is no grade from practice assessments for an external standard because a student was absent, did not complete an assessment, or because the timing of the teaching has meant no practice assessment was given, or if practice assessments were not done under exam conditions or split over more than one session.

See here for more info.

13. NATIONAL SECONDARY EXAMINATIONS 2026

The 2026 End of year examination timetable for NCEA and New Zealand Scholarship will run from Tuesday 10 November until Friday 4 December.
The exam sessions start at either 9.30 am or 2.00 pm.
Students are assessed against up to three external achievement standards in a three-hour session for each subject.
Examinations have traditionally been paper-based but NZQA is introducing digital exams that students can sit using a computer. These have been done for a small number of subjects at Te Kauwhata College and teachers will advise if a digital exam is offered so you can choose paper or digital option.
External submissions throughout the year will have submission dates provided by teachers in course statements when known.