



## Education Report: NCEA – Decisions Required to Progress Change Programme

<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	28 August 2020	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1239183
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No
<b>Consulted</b>	NZQA		

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this brief report is to:

- Recommend we progress the Review of Achievement Standards (RAS) with eight NCEA subjects not affected by the NCEA Level 1 subject list consultation.

### Summary

1. On 2 August 2020 you made the decision that the NCEA Level 1 subject list would be confirmed after the 2020 election period [METIS 1235705 refers].
2. At this time our advice was that the overall timelines of the RAS (which forms the backbone of the NCEA Change Programme) would be challenging but may still be achievable in full by 2025.
3. With the change in timing to the 2020 election period due to the COVID-19 disruption, we are at almost certain risk of not being able to fully implement the NCEA Change Programme until beyond 2025, unless we commence some RAS work. This brief report recommends an approach that progresses (as soon as possible) eight Subject Expert Groups to develop subjects that are not impacted by decisions around the NCEA Level 1 subject list.
4. The eight subjects selected are among those that had no change to the status quo suggested in the Provisional Subject List, and did not attract significant feedback during engagement.
5. This approach would build on progress made so far through the development of four subjects in the Trial & Pilots initiative (English, Science, Visual Arts and Religious Studies), bringing the total subjects under active development in 2020 to 12.

## Recommended Actions

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The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **Note** that with the change in timing to the 2020 election period due to the COVID-19 disruption, we are at almost certain risk with the Review of Achievement Standards timeline, however, this brief report recommends an approach that minimises this risk.

**Noted**

- b. **Agree** to for the Ministry to commence development with **eight** NCEA Level 1 Subject Expert Groups that are **not affected** in the NCEA Level 1 subject list consultation process.

**Agree**  **Disagree**

- c. **Note** that while recommendation b. significantly decreases the likelihood that the Review of Achievement Standards will need to be delayed by an additional year, our timelines are still very tight, and we cannot rule out the potential for further disruptions.

**Noted**

- d. **Note** that this approach will allow one definitive subject list to be decided after the election period, and with further advice provided by the NCEA Professional Advisory Group.


**Noted**

- e. **Note** that we have nearly completed the subject list analysis and will provide a briefing to the incoming Minister of Education [your feedback on METIS 1235705 refers] for the NCEA Level 1 subject list, and that in the meantime development work is progressing on all seven of the Wāhanga Ako aligned to Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (same as currently supported).

**Noted**

- f. **Agree** to proactively release this report after final decisions and public announcements have been made on the NCEA Level 1 subject list.

**Agree**  **Disagree**

  
Ellen MacGregor-Reid  
Deputy Secretary  
Early Learning and Student Achievement

28/08/2020

  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education

8 / 9 / 2020

## Background / Comment

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6. On 2 August you decided that the final decision on the NCEA Level 1 subject list would be considered after the election period [METIS 1235705 refers]. At this time our advice was that the overall timelines of the RAS (which forms the backbone of the NCEA Change Programme) would be challenging but may still be achievable in full by 2025.
7. We have identified a recommended approach that delays finalising the subject list until after the election period ends, but begins work with eight Subject Expert Groups on subjects not affected in the provisional subject list consultation process. This would also build on progress made so far on the four Trial & Pilots subjects (English, Science, Visual Arts and Religious Studies), bringing the total subjects under active development in 2020 to 12.
8. With the change in timing to the 2020 election period due to the COVID-19 disruption, we are at almost certain risk of not being able to fully implement the NCEA Change Programme until beyond 2025, unless we commence some RAS work. This brief report recommends an approach to the RAS that minimises this risk by progressing (as soon as possible) eight Subject Expert Groups to develop subjects that are not affected by decisions around the NCEA Level 1 subject list.
9. This approach also enables public engagement on the alternative options for Science at NCEA Level 1 to be completed, and for the NCEA Professional Advisory Group (PAG) to provide further advice prior to the finalisation of a definitive NCEA Level 1 subject list. It should allow the Ministry to meet critical timeline targets and mitigate the risks of delaying the RAS, and therefore full implementation of the NCEA Change Programme.
10. The eight Subject Expert Groups were selected based on the following criteria. This total number was limited by the staffing resource that can be mobilised, but it represents an opportunity to maintain the RAS momentum. The criteria are:
  - a. are included on both the current subject list, and provisional subject list; and,
  - b. are not impacted by potential changes as outlined in the provisional subject list; and,
  - c. did not attract significant feedback during the Provisional Subject List public engagement process.
11. The eight Subject Expert Groups are:
  - a. **Mathematics and Statistics** – no significant feedback was received on this subject and its learning area is discrete with no development co-dependencies to other subjects at Level 1.
  - b. **Geography** – no significant feedback was received, other social science subjects have dependencies that may be reliant on future decisions.
  - c. **Agriculture and Horticulture** – no changes were proposed, feedback was not significant.
  - d. **Music, Dance and Drama** – no changes were proposed to these three subjects within the Arts learning area.
  - e. For the **Learning Languages learning area**, we have internal staffing expertise to stand up **only two Subject Expert Groups** to develop support for languages at this time. The supports developed may be applicable across

multiple languages. Further languages support will need to be developed in the next tranche.<sup>1</sup>

12. Upon approval of this report, we will commence sector-driven work with the eight Subject Expert Groups. Work would include engaging with Subject Expert Groups, producing and reviewing draft materials, and working to develop the initial products followed by wider testing (subsequent to final subject list decisions).
13. Te Marautanga o Aotearoa RAS development work is progressing. This includes developing products for all seven of the Wāhanga Ako (same as currently supported).

## Risks

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14. The risk of delaying full implementation of the Review of Achievement Standards by a year has increased. We can mitigate this risk substantially by progressing work on some subjects prior to final decisions on the NCEA Level 1 subjects.
15. However, commencing work with some Subject Expert Groups prior to the Level 1 subject list announcement carries risk of confusing the sector. We will mitigate this by providing clear communications for key stakeholders and to the sector. Our communications plan has been updated and will be shared with your Office.

## Next Steps

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16. After the election period, we will prepare a full report on the decisions around the Final NCEA Level 1 Subject List for submission to the incoming Minister of Education.

## Consultation

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17. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority was consulted and the NCEA PAG has been informed.

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<sup>1</sup> However, further consideration on Latin is required as part of the final decisions on Level 1 subjects.