NCEA Review and Maintenance Programme – 2026 updates

Review and maintenance work has been undertaken for all three levels of NZC NCEA for 2026. This pdf document contains the updated assessment materials for **Science Level 1**. In January 2026 the NCEA website will be updated with these changes for Level 1, and the pdf version will be removed as it will no longer be necessary. For Levels 2 and 3, assessment materials will be updated on TKI in January. For external assessment specifications, refer to the NZQA website.

Subject: Science
Level 1

Product	What's changed?
Conditions of Assessment across all internal standards	Updated to provide clearer guidance around authenticity.
AS1.4 91923 Unpacking	Changes made for clarity and consistency to strengthen interpretation of the Achievement Standard.

Contents

NCEA Conditions of Assessment

across all internally assessed standards

Subject:	All NZC subjects
Achievement Standard:	All NZC internal Achievement Standards

The Conditions of Assessment across all Level 1 internally assessed standards have been updated to include clearer guidance about authenticity. Any changes to Standard Specific Conditions of Assessment will be shown separately within this document.

Conditions of Assessment

for internally assessed standards

These Conditions provide guidelines for assessment against internally assessed Achievement Standards. Guidance is provided on:

- specific requirements for all assessments against this Standard
- appropriate ways of, and conditions for, gathering evidence
- ensuring that evidence is authentic.

Assessors must be familiar with guidance on assessment practice in learning centres, including enforcing timeframes and deadlines. The NZQA website offers resources that would be useful to read in conjunction with these Conditions of Assessment.

The learning centre's Assessment Policy and Conditions of Assessment must be consistent with NZQA's Assessment Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess. This link includes guidance for managing internal moderation and the collection of evidence.

Gathering Evidence

Internal assessment provides considerable flexibility in the collection of evidence. Evidence can be collected in different ways to suit a range of teaching and learning styles, and a range of contexts of teaching and learning. Care needs to be taken to allow students opportunities to present their best evidence against the Standard(s) that are free from unnecessary constraints.

It is recommended that the design of assessment reflects and reinforces the ways students have been learning. Collection of evidence for the internally assessed Standards could include, but is not restricted to, an extended task, an investigation, digital evidence (such as recorded interviews, blogs, photographs, or film), or a portfolio of evidence.

Effective assessment should suit the nature of the learning being assessed, provide opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all students, and be valid and fair.

Ensuring Authenticity of Evidence

Authenticity of student evidence needs to be assured regardless of the method of collecting evidence. This must be in line with the learning centre's policy and NZQA's Assessment Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess.

Ensure that the student's evidence is individually identifiable and represents the student's own work. The evidence must be an accurate reflection of what the student independently knows and can do, according to the Standard being assessed. This includes evidence submitted as part of a group assessment, evidence produced outside of class time or without assessor supervision, and evidence produced with any use of generative artificial intelligence tools (GenAI). GenAI use should be carefully considered in the context of the Standard being assessed and its Conditions of Assessment, discussed with students before the assessment, and its use must be acknowledged. For example, an investigation carried out over several sessions could include:

- teacher guidance on the nature and extent of acceptable GenAI use, if any
- assessor observations and conversations
- meeting with the student at set milestones or checkpoints
- the student's record of progress, such as photographic entries or any GenAI prompts used.

NCEA Unpacking the Standard

Subject:	Science
Achievement Standard:	1.4 Demonstrate understanding of science-related claims in communicated information
Credits:	5

The intent of the Standard

The purpose of this Achievement Standard is for ākonga to demonstrate their ability to identify and critique the use of science ideas in published information. Many publications present information as 'science' without verifying their sources. They can make claims based on partial information, misinformation, and disinformation. Ākonga will use their science literacy skills to examine data and the use of scientific vocabulary, graphics, and conventions in publications. Ākonga will also need to think critically about sources of information and the influences on authors in the way that they represent ideas in their writing.

Ākonga are exposed to a huge volume of information from different sources and over multiple platforms. Those who can recognise science ideas will be less likely to view disinformation as an authentic scientific claim.

This Standard aligns with the following items of Significant Learning:

- recognise that scientific ideas are developed through critical and creative thinking, regulated by evidence
- recognise that science ideas are communicated using a range of methods with discipline-specific practices
- use science understanding to critique claims or predictions made in communicated information.

Making reliable judgements

As part of the evidence provided, ākonga must show that they are able to identify, interpret, and critique the use of science information and conventions, and examine claims related to scientific ideas. Ākonga will be expected to identify two claims in the provided resource.

Ākonga will show that they understand how the intended purpose of a publication can influence the representation of data. At higher levels of achievement, ākonga will show that they understand how science language or conventions can be used to represent, or misrepresent, a science idea when a claim is being made.

Collecting evidence

Refer to the External Assessment Specifications for further information.

Possible contexts

Possible contexts could include science communications, or apparent science communications, that present data and information using science vocabulary and conventions.

The communicated information could be from any channel, source, or media such as transcribed conversations with people, radio shows, published research, advertising, and online content.

These communications could include:

- representation of data and graphs
- conflicts of interest
- claims about correlation and causation
- quotations
- sample sizes
- use of controls, blind testing, or peer review.

Literacy and Numeracy Requirements

This Achievement Standard has been approved for literacy in the transition period (2024-2027).

Full information on the co-requisite during the transition period: Standards approved for NCEA Co-requisite during the transition period (2024-2027).