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 Course Outlines for **Visual Arts 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: Visual Arts

Level 1

Product	What's changed?
Course Outline 1	Changes made for clarity and consistency to align with changes to Achievement Standard 1.1.
Course Outline 2	Changes made for clarity and consistency to align with changes to Achievement Standard 1.1.



Visual Arts NCEA NZC Level 1 Course Outline 1

Purpose: This example Course Outline (CO) has been provided to support teachers to understand how the new subject Learning Matrix and NCEA Achievement Standards might be used to create a year-long programme of learning.

Significant Learning	Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities
	Drawing as seeing: building practical knowledge
	Duration — 2 weeks
 Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas 	Explore visual arts processes, materials, and techniques (PMT) in class and engage with established practice and key concepts. This can include:
Use creative thinking processes and demonstrate understanding of creative intent	 visual diary techniques and presentation of ideas: visual and annotative
through purposeful art making and exploration	fundamental art making techniques in wet and dry media
 Value the process, embracing both expected and unexpected outcomes 	 learning specific techniques and skills for recording visual information:
	still life: sketching objects, modelling, and sculptural practices
	landscape: site-based drawing including landscape photography and digital and moving image conventions
	portrait: sketching portraits including wet and dry media, photography, design, and digital editing conventions including the use of Visual Arts literacy.
	 how to discuss the elements processes, materials, techniques, purpose, and function of art and artefacts.
	Capture visual imagery from around your school using drawing to record. For example, record scenery, landscape, flora and fauna, buildings, signs and markings, objects that are accessible in and around the school.
	Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own art making.
	Unpacking Māori cultural contexts
	Duration — 2 weeks
 Understand, use, and value both mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori in making art that reflects on and responds to Aotearoa New Zealand's unique history 	Discuss key Māori cultural contexts and concepts that ākonga could investigate alongside their artmaking. Contexts/concepts should resonate with ākonga individually, and/or be decided as a class. For example:
 Understand the role and value of taonga within a mātauranga Māori context 	kaitiakitanga
through research, authentic experience, and art making	ko wai au?

turangawaewae

ngā taonga.





Explore how these concepts are presented or portrayed visually in places, spaces, art, objects, and artefacts including

Significant Learning Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities elements, symbols, patterns, and processes linked to these concepts. Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91912 (1.1) Use practice-based visual inquiry to explore an Aotearoa New Zealand Māori context and another cultural context. Connecting to a local context: Aotearoa New Zealand's unique history Duration — 1 week Facilitate a class field trip to gather visual information. This should be to a local, easily accessible place such as a marae, Understand the intergenerational connections that can exist between people, places, and objects park, school setting, library, or museum where ākonga can: • learn and experience key Māori foundational concepts and contexts associated with place, space, or taonga, including Understand, use, and value both m\u00e4tauranga M\u00e4ori and te ao M\u00e4ori in making art that reflects on and responds to Aotearoa New Zealand's unique history kupu, concepts, tikanga, and kawa research and gather information through drawing, photography, and annotation in a visual diary Understand the role and value of taonga within a mātauranga Māori context through research, authentic experience, and art making identify the key Visual Arts elements associated with this place, space, or taonga record visual and cultural information from a Māori context to base practical art making on. Before any trip or exchange akonga should be aware of: tikanga — to ensure that any places, spaces, people, and objects you visit are approached respectfully and appropriately appropriation — to ensure good practice around imagery and acknowledging sources, and avoiding appropriation whanaungatanga — building relationships and korero with those that hold knowledge on these art forms, such as kaumātua, artists, curators, and historians. This topic provides an opportunity for group work. It also encourages working in a local context with your school's community, whānau, iwi, and hapū to gather cultural knowledge within an authentic context. Ensure cultural safety for akonga and any sites, artefacts, and individuals during this activity. Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91912 (1.1) Use practice-based visual inquiry to explore an Aotearoa New Zealand Māori context and another cultural context. Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91913 (1.2) Produce a significant resolved artwork appropriate to established art making conventions. Ahurea tuakiri Duration — 4 weeks Engage in learning that connects own and others' artwork to te ao Māori, and Introduce and explore ahurea tuakiri as a context for akonga to make connections to themselves and the artworks that they are observing and creating. other cultures, in local, historical, contemporary, and authentic contexts Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political viewpoints, and personal perspectives, and create artwork as a representation, Explore ahurea tuakiri within wider contexts of different groups, communities, or subcultures ākonga may identify with, or response, or means of self-expression through artistic movements that have their own established cultures. This may involve:





Understand Visual Arts within Aotearoa New Zealand as part of a wider context of



Significant Learning

Pacific artmaking histories and practices, rooted within diverse knowledges, cultures, and contexts of Pacific peoples

Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities

- mind-mapping
- interviewing
- visiting places and connecting with others
- recording stories from within their whānau, connected to their chosen context.

Spend time with ākonga unpacking the cultural context they identify with. Guide ākonga to connect to visual, tangible, and intangible qualities of their identified culture.

Ākonga consider their ahurea tuakiri or chosen cultural context and choose a place, space, or taonga (significant object) to engage with to:

- research and note the key cultural concepts and contexts associated with their place, space, or taonga (significant object), including words and concepts
- visually record a wide range of information through drawing, photography, and annotation in a visual diary, focusing on the key visual art elements associated with their ahurea tuakiri or chosen cultural context.

Connecting to self — exploring Māori foundational knowledge and your own or another cultural context

Ākonga should:

- discuss examples of visual elements across Māori and non-Māori cultures using photographs, diagrams, and annotations
- develop ideas about how to visually represent elements through own artwork using visual language and symbolism
- explore personal links to their own and others' art and cultures in historical and contemporary contexts by using templates, question and answer sheets, or visual mind mapping to illustrate and clarify ideas
- explore visual language and composition
- explore Māori contexts and another context using collages, drawings, paintings, and other visual arts techniques, with annotations.

Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91912 (1.1) Use practice-based visual inquiry to explore an Aotearoa New Zealand Māori context and another cultural context.

Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91913 (1.2) Produce a significant resolved artwork appropriate to established art making conventions.

 Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas

Engaging with established practice

Duration — 2 weeks

Throughout the year, provide ākonga with established Visual Arts practice by looking at a range of artist models and conventions. Explore artworks that are created in relation to specific sites, places, art and artefacts, and cultural concepts.

Kaiako can support ākonga to:

- explore techniques related to the field of practice they are investigating including still life, landscape, and portraiture
- engage with Visual Art processes, materials, and techniques to develop their imagery and text and clarify their ideas





Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities Significant Learning identify and analyse key conventions of the appropriate established practice and how these can be used to add meaning share ideas and develop iterative decision-making skills. Kaiako may want to support this through use of templates, question and answer activities, digital links, further field trips, artist talks. Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91912 (1.1) Use practice-based visual inquiry to explore an Aotearoa New Zealand Māori context and another cultural context AND AS 91913 (1.2) Produce a significant resolved artwork appropriate to established art making conventions AND AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own art making. Creativity through curiosity, risk taking, and critical thinking Duration — 7 weeks Value the process, embracing both expected and unexpected outcomes To develop their artmaking skills and ideas, ākonga will: experiment with a range of artmaking processes, materials, and techniques to produce work that reflects and builds upon Use creative thinking processes and demonstrate understanding of creative intent through purposeful art making and exploration their learning so far work in a visual diary or in a suited format to draw, experiment with medium, processes, and techniques, sample colours, Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas edit, make models Use mātauranga Māori contexts as expressed in toi tūturu, and/or toi whakawhiti, test and develop ideas to form an intended artistic outcome and/or toi rerekē to explore aesthetics and symbolism spend time reflecting and deciding on a direction for their work and clarifying their artistic intention. This learning values the process of making artwork, developing both expected and unexpected outcomes. Kaiako should encourage ākonga to keep all work completed over time and work with them to collate this exploration. Annotations may be included to explain ideas and clarify their intention. Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own art making. Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91915 (1.4) Create a sustained body of related artworks in response to an art making proposition. Developing artmaking knowledge towards an outcome Duration — 7 weeks Using material and ideas from their visual inquiry and cultural connections, ākonga can hone their practical art making Value the process, embracing both expected and unexpected outcomes knowledge towards producing resolved artworks. Use creative thinking processes and demonstrate understanding of creative intent through purposeful art making and exploration Ākonga should divide their time to ensure they: Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas acquire and practise key skills related to the production of their resolved artwork trial their ideas through practical experimentation, ensuring that they document and reflect as they go, valuing the process





Significant Learning	Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities
	 are reflective and use an iterative decision-making process to resolve ideas and processes through feedback sessions or critiques
	seek further expertise in and outside the classroom to refine their artwork.
	Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own artmaking. Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91913 (1.2) Produce a significant resolved artwork appropriate to established artmaking conventions.
	Honing the craft: using key conventions to resolve ideas
	Duration — 6 weeks
 Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas 	Ākonga will build upon their visual ideas and refine technical and/or pictorial conventions, and work towards completing a cohesive and sustained body of related artworks.
	This could be the summation of ideas and exploration ākonga have demonstrated earlier in the year.
	Hone skills and ideas towards the resolution of final works that have come as a process of exploration, experimentation, and refinement of ideas, processes, materials, and techniques.
	Focus learning on pictorial conventions and technologies from established practice to create artwork and communicate ideas.
	Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91915 (1.4) Create a sustained body of related artworks in response to an art making proposition.
	Showcasing and celebration
	Duration — 1 week
Celebrate diversity, create understanding, and foster well-being through active participation in The Arts	Give ākonga the opportunity to showcase a resolved work to an intended audience in celebration of their year's visual exploration and skill building. This learning values the resolved artwork, the reciprocal role of the artist and audience in art and celebrates success. This may occur at an end of the year exhibition, prize-giving, awards night, parent evening, or as a virtual showcase.
	Ākonga will produce a resolved artwork. The artwork chosen to be displayed should be resolved and of significant size, scale, or production. It may be a separate piece of work from the folio.
	Kaiako can support ākonga to:
	work together to plan their displays
	 consider the place/space that their artwork will be viewed at and technical constraints (physical, virtual, plinths, lighting, framing)
	consider their audience and invite guests, community, whānau to the viewing





Significant Learning	Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities
	 consider whether they need to support their artwork with blurb, explanation, or presentation
	 document the artwork once it is displayed in context or in situ, for example on a community wall near the school or in a magazine.
	Ākonga may wish to document their final display and submit a reflection, that could appear in a school magazine or local newspaper.
	Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91913 (1.2) Produce a significant resolved artwork appropriate to established art making conventions.





Visual Arts NCEA NZC Level 1 Course Outline 2

Purpose: This example Course Outline (CO) has been provided to support teachers to understand how the new subject Learning Matrix and NCEA Achievement Standards might be used to create a year-long programme of learning.

Context: Kura around the motu have their own unique identity, including the diverse cultures, perspectives, and abilities of each ākonga. This Course Outline is centred on creating visual responses and artworks that draw on the connections ākonga have to their kura as a place of belonging. Ākonga will explore their environment including the buildings, landscape, taonga, students, community, and cultural narrative, linking this exploration to their own sense of self. Shared visual narratives will diversify as ākonga explore their own identity and develop their visual literacy and artmaking practices.

Significant Learning

- Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas
- Engage in learning that connects own and other's artwork to te ao Māori, and other cultures, in local, historical, contemporary, and authentic contexts
- Understand the role and value of taonga within a mātauranga Māori context through research, authentic experience, and art making
- Understand, use, and value both mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori in making art that reflects on and responds to Aotearoa New Zealand's unique history
- Understand Visual Arts within Aotearoa New Zealand as part of a wider context of Pacific artmaking histories and practices, rooted within diverse knowledges, cultures, and contexts of Pacific peoples
- Understand the intergenerational connections that can exist between people, places, and objects
- Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political viewpoints, and personal perspectives, and create artwork as a representation, response, or means of self-expression

Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities

Our kura

Duration — 10 weeks

Ākonga should explore their kura looking for key visual elements that identify the place and its culture. Visual language is wide-ranging, and ākonga should take note of the environment as well as the objects within it. How do the objects stand within their environment? What is the relationship between space and object? How does the placement of an object relate to the way it is viewed?

Ākonga should:

- explore their kura to gather visual information such as details of buildings, landscapes, patterns of foliage, artworks, and installations
- use a range of drawing techniques such as sketching, tone, cross hatching, using wet and dry media, and colour theory
- research and gather a wide range of information through recording, photography, and annotation in a visual diary
- focus on the key Visual Arts elements that could be used to identify their kura.

What is the visual language of our kura?

Ākonga should collect examples of the visual culture of their kura including its logo, letterhead, uniform (present and historical), sports groups, trophies, and prizegiving cups.

Ākonga should:

- reflect upon and identify key visual and cultural information related to the culture of their kura, using mind maps, quick sketches, annotations, and diagrams
- gather and record images through photographs, sketches, and diagrams.

What are the taonga of our kura?

Gather or record various Māori taonga housed in and around your kura. These may be housed on walls, in cabinets, on







Significant Learning

Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities

display, in halls, libraries, or culturally specific spaces such as a school marae. These may include hue, waka huia, whakairo, hei tiki, korowai, artworks, artefacts, kapa haka uniforms, trophies, or raranga.

Kaiako may invite visitors from galleries, museums, councils, whānau, the community, or local marae to bring, or discuss, taonga that are historically, culturally, or contextually linked to your kura.

Ākonga should:

- research key historical and cultural contexts and information related to the taonga and mātauranga Māori and annotate in a visual diary
- identify any connections they have to the taonga being viewed
- explore using a range of still life art-making techniques, tone, colour, light and use of dry media such as pencil, pen, ink, wash to record the taonga
- use established conventions such as mathematical transposition, grids, and techniques related to viewing, transferring, and enlarging of images to record the taonga
- make small maquette responses to the taonga viewed to understand the form and function of the taonga using material such as clay, card, building blocks, and paper.

What does my kura look like as a cultural context?

Ākonga should consider the visual elements of taonga and the visual language of their kura, and how this relates to their own identity as ākonga of this kura. What concepts exist in both these contexts? These ideas can be recorded using mind maps, quick sketches, annotations, or diagrams in their visual diaries.

Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91912 (1.1) Use practice-based visual inquiry to explore an Aotearoa New Zealand Māori context and another cultural context.

Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own artmaking.

Me and my kura

Duration — 8 weeks

Develop an intention

Ākonga will decide on an art making practice to produce their own significant resolved artwork in response to the taonga and significant objects they have studied. Practices may include any established three-dimensional art making process such as clay, weaving, whakairo, sculpture, or paper craft.

The resolved artwork should draw upon the research and inquiry completed prior and communicate ideas about connections with their kura as a place of belonging.

This learning values the process of making artwork and developing both expected and unexpected outcomes. Ākonga are encouraged to keep all work completed over time to collate this as a body of work, or enquiry. Annotations could be included to explain ideas and clarify their intention.

Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas

- Use mātauranga Māori contexts as expressed in toi tūturu, and/or toi whakawhiti, and/or toi rerekē to explore aesthetics and symbolism
- Understand Visual Arts within Aotearoa New Zealand as part of a wider context of Pacific artmaking histories and practices, rooted within diverse knowledges, cultures, and contexts of Pacific peoples
- Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political viewpoints, and personal perspectives, and create artwork as a representation, response, or means of self-expression
- Use creative thinking processes and demonstrate understanding of creative intent through purposeful art making and exploration







Significant Learning

- Understand the intergenerational connections that can exist between people, places, and objects
- Value the process, embracing both expected and unexpected outcomes
- Celebrate diversity, create understanding, and foster well-being through active participation in The Arts

Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities

Explore established artmaking practice

Kaiako should support ākonga to explore an established artmaking practice related to the taonga and visual information that they have recorded in prior learning. For example, if ākonga have recorded weaving, they could look at artists who work in this discipline. If ākonga have looked at pākē as a discipline, they could:

- explore understanding of weaving and tikanga around making raranga pākē
- use a range of drawing techniques to record harakeke outside and harvested
- learn karakia and techniques around harvesting including when to harvest, cutting techniques (on angle at base, leaving te rito and awhi rito/mātua, and harvest further out on an angle at the base)
- explore established practice for example, engaging with the works of Maureen Lander, the Waharoa series, or Toi Tū Toi Ora (Borell, 2022)¹.

Ākonga should:

- spend time reflecting and deciding on a direction for their work and clarifying their artistic intention
- decide how established practice can be reflected or explored in their final artwork
- select and unpack concepts related to their intended artwork, for example, tēnei au, poho kererū, toi tūturu, toi whakawhiti, ahurea tuakiri, he kai kei āku ringa, whakataukī or whakatauākī
- explore and develop skills associated with sketching, modelling, and sculpture connected to their response
- record processes and decisions in their visual diary
- make decisions based on process, material practice (clay coil, mural painting, and/or raranga textiles), and established practice
- plan significant artwork through drawings, diagrams, maquettes, developments and iterations, and discussion with their kaiako and peers
- refine technical and/or pictorial conventions, and work towards completing a significant resolved artwork
- produce their significant artwork.

Celebration of work — our kura as a place of belonging

Kaiako should organise a showcase, exhibition, or opportunity for ākonga to display their significant artwork.

This builds on the big idea "whanaungatanga builds sustainable communities". It values the final outcome and the reciprocal role of the artist and audience in art.

Ākonga should:

 choose how to present or display their significant resolved artwork to an audience of their choice. This may include entering it into a competition such as Ringa Toi, displayed in the school library or school hall, or as part of a virtual showcase

¹ Borell, N. (2022). Toi Tū Toi Ora Contemporary Māori Art. Penguin.







Significant Learning Use established conventions to learn about techniques, technologies, and processes to create effects and communicate ideas Use creative thinking processes and demonstrate understanding of creative intent through purposeful art making and exploration Value the process, embracing both expected and unexpected outcomes Understand the intergenerational connections that can exist between people, places, and objects Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political viewpoints, and personal perspectives, and create artwork as a representation, response, or means of self-expression

Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities

- work together to plan their display
- consider the place/space that their artwork will be viewed and identify any technical constraints (physical, virtual, plinths, lighting, framing, etc)
- consider their audience and invite guests, community, and whanau to the viewing
- consider whether they need to support their artwork with blurb, explanation, or presentation
- take part in the exhibition opening.

Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91913 (1.2) Produce a significant resolved artwork appropriate to established art making conventions.

Learning covered supports development of skills and knowledge towards AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own artmaking.

Expressing myself

Exploring my identity through art

Duration — 6 weeks

Ākonga build on their explorations of identity and visual language, extending their focus beyond their kura to look at influences on their personal identity. Ākonga could choose artefacts, buildings, or landscapes from their own lives to explore further using different artmaking processes, materials, and technologies — for example using painting processes to explore positioning of artefacts in a space, working towards an intention that communicates cultural identity in the home or community.

Ākonga should:

- consider different aspects of ahurea tuakiri in their lives, for example, heritage, whakapapa, sports, music, dance, food, family relationships, community involvement
- explore different artmaking traditions from te ao Māori, Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific, and the wider world relating to their own cultural identity
- explore art making processes, materials and techniques from te ao Māori such as creating and using natural pigments like kōkōwai, paru, tānekaha
- explore artmaking techniques, for example, painting techniques like wet and dry brush, tinting, tonal gradation, broken brush technique, overlay, layering, and cutting in
- explore ways of communicating ideas through visual language including use of motifs, images, composition, and different artmaking techniques
- experiment with ideas and develop both expected and unexpected outcomes
- revisit earlier inquiries and build on concepts to develop an intention for their work, extending the connections they have made between themselves and their kura
- introduce elements such as text, pattern, and texture to extend their visual ideas and communicate cultural and historical information related to their intention
- keep all work completed over time in a workbook, adding annotations and reflections to explain ideas and clarify intentions.

Kaiako should ensure that ākonga have an understanding of the tikanga and cultural context associated with the established





Significant Learning	Learning Activities and Assessment Opportunities
	processes and conventions being explored, to ensure cultural safety.
	Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91912 (1.1) Use practice-based visual inquiry to explore an Aotearoa New Zealand Māori context and another cultural context AND AS 91914 (1.3) Explore Visual Arts processes and conventions to inform own artmaking.
	Ahurea tuakiri
	Expressing my identity through art
	Duration — 8 weeks
 Understand the role and value of taonga within a mātauranga Māori context through research, authentic experience, and art making 	Ākonga will continue to build upon their visual ideas and refine technical and/or pictorial conventions, and work towards completing a cohesive and sustained body of related works that communicate ideas about their own ahurea tuakiri. Ākonga should revisit any work started earlier in the year and build on this to finalise ideas and complete their work to a high technical finish.
 Use creative thinking processes and demonstrate understanding of creative intent through purposeful art making and exploration 	
 Value the process, embracing both expected and unexpected outcomes 	Ākonga should:
Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political Apply understanding of ahurea tuakiri, ethnicity, ideas, feelings, beliefs, political	review established practice and investigate new practice
viewpoints, and personal perspectives, and create artwork as a representation, response, or means of self-expression	explore various artmaking processes in their visual diary
Celebrate diversity, create understanding, and foster well-being through active	 explore processes, materials, and techniques associated with the artmaking processes they are using
participation in The Arts	 reflect on the various processes they have engaged with in their diary
	 refine technical and/or pictorial conventions
	 develop at least six compositions or maquettes based on earlier visual inquiry and research, exploring different combinations of their chosen objects and visual and cultural information
	 plan and complete a cohesive and sustained body of approximately 6 related artworks that express their own cultural identity. Sizes may vary.
	Kaiako should allow a generous amount of time to complete each work. Ākonga may present their completed works on an A1 folio board to be viewed as a developed series.
	Learning covered will provide opportunities to collect evidence towards AS 91915 (1.4) Create a sustained body of related artworks in response to an art making proposition.



