

MARAURAU O TE PAE API'I | MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

INFORMATION PIECE

3 September 2021

The continued impact of community cases of COVID-19's Delta variant have caused much disruption to thousands of secondary school students across New Zealand. As a result, changes to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) have been considered.

While our Cook Islands schools remain open under our Alert Level 2 and learning continues for our students, some of the NCEA changes announced by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority recently will impact our Cook Islands senior students participating in Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the qualification.

A summary of the key changes is as follows:

- The end of year exam period has been pushed out by two weeks. A new timetable has been published and sent to schools. The timetable can be downloaded from visiting www.education.gov.ck, but is also annexed to this information piece.
- The submission dates for most portfolio subjects have been pushed out by two weeks, to run from 9th November 2021.
- The dates for the Mathematics Common Assessment Task (MCAT) have also been pushed out by two weeks to 27 or 29 September.

These changes will give our students and schools more time to prepare for the end of year assessments. Schools will also not have to provide a sample of Level 1 and Level 2 Visual Arts portfolios for NZQA verification, allowing more time for students to finish their work, and for teachers to mark.

Further changes have been announced this week, but these will only come into effect if a school has been in lockdown due to COVID-19 for at least 20 school days, after which time, their students will be eligible to be awarded Learning Recognition Credits. Many will remember that Learning Recognition Credits were made available to all schools, including Cook Islands schools, delivering NCEA in 2020 to address the disruption and impact of COVID-19. At present only Auckland schools have reached the 20 days threshold needed for Learning Recognition Credits.

This additional change does not apply to our Cook Islands schools delivering NCEA, however, our NCEA schools have been asked to maintain their attendance records for any Cook Islands students

who may currently be stranded in New Zealand during lockdown and their education is being disrupted as a result.

If the disruption for these students extends to 20 or more days, then consideration will be given by NZQA on each student's circumstances and the more recent changes (Learning Recognition Credits) may apply.

There are seven schools across the Cook Islands that deliver the NCEA qualification. These include our three colleges on Rarotonga - Nukutere College, Tereora College and Titikaveka College, and joined with our Pa Enea schools – Araura College, Apii Enuamanu, Apii Mangaia and Apii Mauke. There are currently 651 senior secondary students across these schools enrolled in NCEA, making up 34% of secondary learners, and 15% nation-wide.

Our schools and Ministry HQ remain in close contact with NZQA through our dedicated School Relationship Manager. NCEA's flexibility is its strength, and this means we can adapt how we deliver and use NCEA to reflect our current context. The changes announced by NZQA for 2021 will ensure that any disruption to teaching, learning and assessment can be addressed consistently and equitably for all students.

If families require more details concerning the NCEA announcements and change of dates, and how these may be impacting your child's learning please connect with your child's school or call through the Ministry HQ on +682 29357, to talk with our NZQA Coordinator.

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