

NZQA rules and instructions for learners ensure fair assessment conditions for everyone. By entering, you agree to follow these. They are outlined below and are also on the back of your admission slip.

External assessment

There are two types of external assessment – the exams in an exam room, and portfolios or kete manarua where you develop your work in class over a period of time before it is submitted to NZQA for marking. All work you hand in for marking must be your own.

Portfolios and Kete Manarua

You must meet NZQA's specifications, timelines and authentication requirements for work being assessed externally by portfolio or kete manarua. Your teacher will explain what this means for their subject. All work you hand in for marking must be your own or, where appropriate, properly referenced and authenticated.

NZQA will investigate any reported possible breach of the rules. There may be a penalty for a breach.

EXAMS (paper and digital)

Rules for learners are:

- Follow all instructions of any exam supervisor.
- All work you submit for marking must be your own.
- You may only have up to two approved calculators in the exam room once they have been checked and cleared of their memory – see further calculator information on page 2.
- You must not bring the following into the exam room:
 - any electronic device not required for a digital exam, unless it is switched off and inside the sealed evacuation pack (*an electronic device is anything that can store, communicate and/or retrieve information and includes all cell phones – see information about emergency evacuation pack on page 2*)
 - any paper – except for your Exams Admission Slip
 - any notes, in any form
 - any watch of any type (digital or analogue), unless switched off in the evacuation pack.

In an exam you must not:

- Talk to, communicate with, or disturb other learners.
- Copy another learner's work.
- Write or draw anything that could be viewed as offensive or attempt to communicate with the marker.
- Leave the exam room within the first 45 minutes or the last 15 minutes of the exam.
- Touch or open any emergency evacuation pack without the permission of a supervisor.

If you are sitting a digital exam, there are extra requirements as detailed on page 3.

WHAT TO TAKE TO EXAMS

Admission slip

Your admission slip lists all the external standards you are sitting as exams. It does not show externally assessed standards for which you submit a portfolio or kete manarua. Do not write on the slip.

Check that the details on your admission slip are correct. If there is a mistake, tell your school immediately so that your exam entries can be corrected.

- You must take your admission slip to every exam. It must be face up on your desk during all exams.
- Do not write on it in any way, at any time.
- Keep it in a safe place and do not give it to someone else to look after.

The nine-digit number in the shaded box is your NSN (national student number). The Exam Code (the letter and number) is to help you find the correct exam room and desk. You must sit at the desk you have been allocated to.

If you have lost or not received your admission slip, you need a replacement copy before you will be allowed to sit the exam. Either reprint a copy by logging in to your MyNZQA Learner portal through www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ on the NZQA website or request a copy from your Principal's Nominee. The replacement copy must be signed by the Principal's Nominee.

Photo ID

You must bring photo ID, such as your school ID card or driver's licence, with you to any NZ Scholarship exam, or if you sit your exams at a school where you do not study. Your school ID can be provided electronically if your school uses an electronic ID card through an app on your mobile phone. After showing the supervisor your digital school ID, you will need to turn off your mobile phone and seal it into your emergency evacuation pack.

Materials to bring for your exam

You must bring your own equipment such as black or blue pens, pencils, approved calculators (in a clear pencil case or clear plastic bag if needed), headphones (for language and Te Reo Rangatira digital exams) and any device the school has asked you to bring to the digital exams. You may not borrow equipment from someone else during the exam. Do not write in pencil unless instructed to do so (answer booklets containing work in pencil will not scan accurately).

Calculators

You may bring up to two NZQA approved calculators into the exam for an approved subject. Teachers will check that you have cleared ALL calculator memories. You can only use a calculator in the exam room if its memory has been cleared. A list of the approved calculators and subjects is published on the NZQA website www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/student-assessment-hub/list-of-approved-calculators/

You are responsible for taking the correct equipment to the exam room and making sure that it is working.

Emergency evacuation pack

You may take items for an emergency evacuation into the exam room in a clear, sealable plastic bag. This pack stays under your chair and must not be touched or opened without the permission of a supervisor. Contents could include; a mobile phone (switched off), or other electronic device (switched off), keys, watch, money, mask or face covering, bus/train pass and medicines.

WHAT TO DO IN EXAMS

On the day of your exam, you must:

- Arrive at your school or exam centre at least 20 minutes before the exam starts.
- Have your admission slip with you.
- Find your exam room.

In the exam room, you must:

- Listen to and follow the instructions of the supervisors.
- Check you are sitting at the correct desk.

For Written exams

- Check the pack of answer booklets on the desk is yours by matching the NSN and the Exam Code from your admission slip.
- Check that you have all the booklets and that all the pages in each booklet are printed correctly (when you are told to open the pack).
- Put up your hand if you are missing an exam booklet or have any problems.
- Understand you are not allowed to return if you leave the exam early, unless it is an official request for a toilet break.
- Answer booklets or any paper provided by the supervisor must not be taken out of the exam room (except for resource and separate question booklets).
- Leave the plastic wrap on your desk so it can be collected for recycling.

If you arrive after the official start of the exam, you do not get the time added on at the end of the exam. If you arrive more than 30 minutes after the official start of the exam you will NOT be allowed entry into the room without direct approval of NZQA.

During the exam, you must:

- Read and follow the instructions on the front cover of the exam booklets.
- Use only black or blue pen.
- Write neatly, so the marker can read your answers.
- Not write in pencil unless instructed to do so (answer booklets containing work in pencil will not scan accurately).
- Clearly cross out all work that is not to be marked.
- Not write any text in the clearly defined margins on the NZQA answer booklet as this area will be cut off when the booklet is scanned for marking.
- Not request extra paper until you have completely filled the answer booklet.

At the end of the exam, you must:

- Follow the instructions of the supervisor.
- Stop writing your answers when the supervisor tells you the exam has ended.
- Make sure every booklet has your NSN and Exam Code on it, especially if you were given a replacement or extra one.
- Check any extra paper used is labelled with the standard number and your NSN. Place them with the answer booklet for the correct standard, into the plastic bag provided and seal the bag closed.
- Draw a cross through the box on the front cover of any unused answer booklets to indicate you have not written anything inside or you don't want that standard marked. Ensure you have drawn a line through any answers you may have started, if you do not want them to be marked. Place them separately on your desk to be collected by the supervisor at the end of the exam (these booklets will be marked as Standard Not Attempted).
- Hand in all your answer booklets.
- Take from the exam room all the equipment you brought in.

YOU must make sure that all material you want marked is handed to the supervisor before you leave. Only exam answers written in the NZQA answer booklets, or on the extra paper provided by a supervisor, will be marked. Any answers or work given to a supervisor after you have left the exam room will not be marked.

For Digital exams 

In addition to the digital exam instructions below, read and follow the above instructions for written exams.

Before the day of the exam, you must:

- Login or create an account (if you are new to NCEA) www2.nzqa.govt.nz/login/ and memorise your username and password to use when accessing the digital exam.
- Prepare your own device by completing the digital exams device check (www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-exams-and-portfolios/external/device-readiness-check) on the NZQA website.
- If you are doing a language or Te Reo Rangatira digital exam, check your headphones are compatible with your device.
- Install the target language keyboard on your device (for responses in te reo Māori or the target language for language exams). At the start of the exam, there is a language keyboard check page to test your keyboard has been set up correctly.
www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-exams-and-portfolios/external/device-readiness-check

On the day of your exam, you must:

- Bring your fully charged device.
- Bring your headphones (if you are sitting a language or Te Reo Rangatira digital exam).
- Bring your fully charged power bank, stored in your emergency pack (optional).
- Arrive early (at the time your school has instructed, at least 20 minutes before the exam starts).

In the exam room, you must:

- Remain in the digital platform once you have logged in, and not access any other internet site or browser extensions.
- Check you have paper copies of any resource booklets.
- Follow the supervisor's instructions to prepare your device/computer for use and log in.
- Set up headphones (for language or Te Reo Rangatira digital exam).
- Log in using the 'Complete your online assessment' tile on the NZQA homepage and your MyNZQA Learner login details.
- Follow all instructions given in the exam.
- Enter the access code provided by the supervisor to start the exam.
- Put your hand up if you decide you do not want to answer the exam digitally. The supervisor will provide you a pack of exam booklets. Check that your NSN and Exam Code in the top left corner of the cover is written clearly and is correct. Once you have moved to paper, you cannot switch back to the digital exam.

During the exam, you must:

- Put your hand up and speak to the supervisor if you have an issue with your device.
- Request the NZQA supplied note-making paper from the supervisor, if required. This must be returned to the supervisor before you leave the exam. It will not be marked.
- Complete the standard you started digitally before requesting to switch to paper (you cannot write some of your answers digitally and the rest in an answer booklet) but put your hand up and speak to the supervisor if you have had an issue with your device.

At the end of the exam, you must:

- Submit your answers as instructed.
- Hand in note-making paper and ALL answer booklets, where provided.
- Follow the supervisor's instructions to log off and pack up your equipment.

Digital exam data collection

By sitting a digital exam, you are agreeing that NZQA can collect and keep digital data about your exam activity.

This activity data may include, but is not limited to:

- Your mouse movements and clicks.
- Any screen information.
- Any times you are locked out.
- All saved versions of your answers.

NZQA will keep this data safe and not share it in any way externally that could identify you. NZQA may use it to identify possible breaches of the rules or improve future exam design.

You may request a copy of your screen information, the times you were locked out, and your final answers by using the contact form on the NZQA website. For security reasons relating to identifying breaches and unlawful activity, NZQA does not provide copies of your mouse movements and clicks, or progressively saved versions of your answers prior to the final answer you submit.

If you do not agree to NZQA collecting and keeping this data, you need to tell your Principal's Nominee. You should not sit an exam digitally if you do not agree to collection of your digital data.

Exam clashes

If you have two or more exams on at the same time, you have an exam clash. Check your timetable for an exam clash immediately. If you have a clash you must talk to your Principal's Nominee.

Derived grades

You may apply for a derived grade if:

- You were not able to sit the exam because at the time of the exam you were sick, injured or there was some special situation beyond your control, or
- You think that you did not do as well as you could have in the exam because you were sick, you were injured or there was some special situation beyond your control.

Complete an application form (available on the [NZQA website](#)) and give it to your school's Principal's Nominee. If you need help with this, **talk to your Principal's Nominee**.

For all exams and portfolios where derived grades are available, hand the completed application form and documented supporting evidence to your school as soon as possible, but no more than two weeks after the last assessment for which you are applying.

Derived grades are not available for NZ Scholarship.

If you do not meet the deadlines, your application may not be accepted by NZQA. Applications for a derived grade will not be accepted after results have been released in January 2026.

Additional information available

- Rules for Learners: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/external-assessment/rules-for-students/
- Breaches of exam rules: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-rules-and-procedures/breaches-of-exam-rules/
- Grade Score Marking: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/external-assessment/grade-score-marking/
- NCEA Results: <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/student-assessment-hub/ncea-results/>
- University Entrance: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/understanding-secondary-quals/university-entrance/
- Scholarship Results: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/understanding-secondary-quals/nz-scholarship/nz-scholarship-results/
- Scholarship Awards: <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/rules-fees-policies/nzqa-rules/nzqa-assessment-rules-for-schools-teos/>
- Derived Grade: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/ncea-for-teachers-and-schools/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/derived-grades/

Return of your marked NCEA and NZ Scholarship exams

If you sat an NCEA and/or NZ Scholarship exam, your assessed exam can be accessed through your MyNZQA Learner portal in late January (NCEA) and February (NZ Scholarship). It is important you create a learner account if you do not have one.

NCEA and NZ Scholarship exam booklets will not be returned in the mail.

Assessed exams with additional pages (and any single sided printed pages) will have '+No. of pages' indicated on the front of the booklet (e.g. +4) and a 'number/number' on the additional pages (e.g. 1/4).

Return of portfolios

Design and Visual Communication portfolios will be returned to **your school** in February 2026.

Level 3 and NZ Scholarship Visual Arts portfolios will be returned to **you** before Christmas at the address provided to NZQA from you school as at 1 September 2025. Address changes after this date will be too late for your portfolios to be sent to the new address. The result summary sheets can be accessed through your MyNZQA Learner portal.

Unclaimed portfolios and workbooks returned to NZQA because of an incorrect address will be destroyed at the end of June 2026.

Overseas addresses

NZQA does not return Visual Arts portfolios to overseas addresses. You can request an international delivery by completing the form and paying a fee by 1 May 2026. The request form is available on the NZQA website: www.nzqa.govt.nz/audience-pages/secondary-schools-and-teachers/forms/