

# Year 11 Overview (for families)– Questions and Answers

## A) Background:

In 2018 we participated in the national review of NCEA. We gained feedback from our students, parents and teachers. One outcome of the review was that NCEA is a very flexible system but we could be making better use of the flexibility it provides.

It is evident that three years of high stakes NCEA assessments are a contributor to the high stress levels and anxiety experienced by a growing number of students, including at Lincoln High School. It is in the best interests of our students to reduce the amount of assessment and turn the focus to increased engagement in learning. NCEA assessments often have some form of practice assessment, a review and feedback of the practice assessment, and then the actual assessment – this results in many hours being focussed on assessment and fewer on learning.

Prior to NCEA, School Certificate was the minimum exit qualification. Now NCEA Level 2 is the gateway qualification that is the prerequisite for the great majority of tertiary courses and job opportunities. Nationally, the government expectation is that 85% of all school leavers should obtain Level 2 NCEA as a minimum qualification. Approximately 90% of LHS students leave school with Level 2 or higher. Looking forward, our aim is to increase this to 100%.

In order to:

- place more emphasis on learning that is not driven by assessment
- focus on NCEA Level 2 as the minimum qualification that our students achieve
- address over-assessment and improve student wellbeing

we have modified the Year 11 programme from 2020. Students will typically complete Level 1 literacy & numeracy and will consequently not gain NCEA level 1 in Year 11. However, students will achieve Level 1 as a by-product of doing Level 2 standards the following year.

We also want to make the most of NCEA's flexibility by having a semester structure in Year 11 (Year 10 option courses will also have a semester structure).

We recognise that this is a significant change. Our feedback from the national NCEA review, growing concerns about student stress and anxiety relating to the amount of assessment, and the importance of learning that is not driven by assessment have led us to making these changes. The Year 11 program is designed to best suit the needs of our students and provide a greater emphasis on learning programmes while providing flexibility and choice.

## B) Questions and Answers:

### Why are students not completing NCEA Level 1 in Year 11?

There are a number of reasons for why we are doing this. Three of the key ones are:

- We want to place more emphasis on learning. The national NCEA review clearly identified that too much learning time is being spent on assessment. With more time to focus on learning we can provide more flexible and engaging learning experiences.
- NCEA Level 2 is the qualification that helps create a strong pathway for young people in terms of jobs and further education. This should be the focus.
- The amount of assessment negatively impacts student wellbeing and we need to reduce this impact.

### **Does this mean students will not get NCEA Level 1?**

Students will still be able to achieve Level 1. To get Level 1, students need Literacy & Numeracy, and 60 other credits at Level 1 **or higher**. This means that any Level 2 credits gained in Year 12 count towards both Level 1 and Level 2. This has always been the case.

For example, a student gains 40 credits, including numeracy and literacy, in Year 11. In Year 12 as soon as they gain 40 credits they will have NCEA Level 1 (and 40 of the 60 credits needed for Level 2).

### **What will a Year 11 NCEA programme look like?**

The Year 11 programme will consist of:

- Students will still learn the Year 11 content necessary to advance on to Year 12. There will be non-NCEA assessments.
- Students still gaining Level 1 literacy and numeracy as these are needed for Level 2 and 3 NCEA.

The intention is that all students will achieve at least Level 2 NCEA by the time they leave school. For most students this will be by the end of Year 12, as currently happens.

### **Don't schools have to offer NCEA Level 1?**

NCEA Level 1 has always been optional since it was introduced. Our students will all still have the opportunity to gain Level 1. However, for most of them they won't achieve Level 1 until part way through Year 12.

The national NCEA review considered removing Level 1 completely. One of the reasons for keeping it as an option for schools is that for around 10% of students nationally it is their highest level qualification. For Lincoln students this figure was 6% in 2019.

One of the reasons stated in the review, for keeping it as an option, is:

*We want to keep NCEA Level 1 for schools who wish to continue to use this qualification. Others would be free to adopt alternative approaches to Year 11, in a way that best meets the needs of their students.*

We believe the changes we are making will better meet the needs of our students. An increasing number of schools have already taken a similar approach to what we are doing. We have been in communication with a number of them to learn from their experience.

(There are very few countries in the world that have three years of national assessment. New Zealand is possibly the only one.)

### **What will the semester structure look like?**

1. The year will be split into two semesters, each being approximately 18 weeks long.
2. Year 11 students currently do six year-long courses. From 2020, students will select six courses in each semester. Students can choose two semester courses in a single subject area that would equate to a year-long course.

The timeline for selecting courses would remain the same. All courses would be selected in Terms three and Four in preparation for the following year.

3. Students in Year 11 would complete up to one internal NCEA standard in each semester course. There would be no NCEA external exams in November. There will be no need for derived grade exams at the end of Term 3. For the seven days when these have previously happened students will be in normal classes.
4. Year 11 English and Maths would continue as the only compulsory courses. There will be a variety of English and Maths semester courses for students to select from.

### **If a student leaves school at the end of Year 11, won't this mean they don't have NCEA Level 1?**

The number of our students who leave at the end of Year 11 is very small. However, if a student intends to do this we will ensure they have an individualised programme that provides the opportunity to gain the credits needed for Level 1.

### **Can my student still do 'full year' courses as currently happens?**

Yes. Students can do this by choosing two semester courses from the same subject area which will be the equivalent of a 'full year' course. They could do this for all six courses. However, having semesters will give students greater choice and flexibility.

It will still be compulsory for all students to take Maths and English – two semesters of each.

### **Why do any Level 1 NCEA assessments at all?**

This will give students experience of the format of NCEA assessments. By giving students the opportunity to do a few in Year 11 they will be well prepared for Year 12 when all assessments are NCEA based.

### **How will students be assessed in Year 11?**

A range of assessment types will continue to be used. These include tests, assignments, portfolios, recordings, performances, etc. For each semester course up to one of these assessments will be an NCEA internal assessment.

### **Don't we need NCEA assessments to motivate students?**

NCEA assessments do provide some extrinsic motivation. However, we believe that engaging and relevant courses, quality teaching and self-motivation, along with supportive and involved parents/caregivers, are key to students being motivated to learn and succeed.

### **How will entry to Year 12 courses be determined?**

We will still be collecting Year 11 assessment data and this will be used in the same way it is currently.

**What curriculum content will be covered in Year 11?**

It will be the same, or similar, to what is currently covered as it is needed in preparation for Level 2 content. However, there will be opportunity for greater breadth and depth as less time will be spent on assessment.

**What is the situation with NCEA fees if students are only doing a few standards in Year 11?**

From 2019 onwards there are no fees for students to do NCEA at any level. This was an outcome of the national review.