

Candidate Information Sheet 2026

End of Year External assessment rules and instructions for candidates



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New Zealand Qualifications Authority

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NZQA rules and instructions for candidates ensure fair assessment conditions for everyone. By entering, you agree to follow these and acknowledge your work may be used for educational purposes, including as anonymous exemplars of candidate responses. They are outlined below and are also on the back of your admission slip.

External assessments

There are two types of external assessments: **Exams** and **Portfolios/Kete Manarua**.

- Exams are done in an exam room.
- Portfolios and Kete Manarua are completed over time and sent to NZQA for marking.
All work you submit must be your own.

Portfolios and Kete Manarua assessments

For portfolios and Kete Manarua, you must follow NZQA requirements and deadlines. All work submitted must be your own and any sources used must be referenced.

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

Rules for Exams (paper and digital)

- You must follow all instructions from the exam supervisor.
- All work you hand in must be your own.
- You can bring up to **two approved calculators** (for approved subjects) that have been checked and cleared of any stored information.

Do not bring:

- Any electronic device that is not needed for a digital exam, unless it is turned off and sealed in the emergency evacuation pack. This includes cell phones, smart watches and smart glasses.
- Any paper (except your **Exam Admission Slip**), notes or study materials in any form.
- Any watches (digital or analogue), unless it is turned off and sealed in the evacuation pack.

During the exam, you must not:

- Talk to, communicate with, or distract other candidates, or copy other candidates work. Write or draw anything offensive or try to send messages to the person marking your exam.
- Leave the exam room during the **first 45 minutes** or the **last 15 minutes** of the exam.
- Open or touch an emergency evacuation pack, unless a supervisor gives you permission.

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

What to take to the exams (including emergency evacuation pack)

1. Admission slip - bring it to every exam and place it face up on your desk.

Your Admission Slip shows the exams you are entered to sit. It does **not** include portfolio or Kete Manarua assessments. Keep it safe and **do not write on it**.

Check that all your exam details are correct. If something is wrong, tell your school straight away.

Important:

- Your **NSN (National Student Number)** is the nine-digit number on the slip.
- Your **Exam Code** (the letter and number) helps you find the correct exam room and desk. You must sit at the desk assigned to you.

If you lose your Admission Slip or did not receive one:

- Get a replacement before your exam.
- You can either print a new copy from your MyNZQA Learner Portal on the NZQA website or ask your school's Principal's Nominee for one.
- Any replacement copy must be signed by the Principal's Nominee before you can use it for your exam.

2. Photo ID - You must bring **photo ID** to:

Any NZ Scholarship exam, **or** any exam held at a school where you do not normally study at.

Acceptable forms of photo ID include:

- Your school ID **or** your driver's license.

If your school uses a digital ID card on a mobile phone app, you may use this as identification. After showing your digital ID to the exam supervisor, you must:

Turn off your mobile phone, place it in your emergency evacuation pack, and seal the pack as instructed.

3. Materials to bring for your exam - You must bring all your own equipment you need for the exam in a clear pencil case or clear plastic bag, including:

- Black or blue pens, pencils.
- An approved calculator if needed.
- Headphones (for some approved subjects only). You can find a list of these subjects at: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/device-check.
- Any device your school has asked you to bring for the digital exams.

Important:

- You cannot borrow equipment from another candidate during the exam.
- Only write in pencil if you are told to do so. If you write your answers in pencil when you should not, your work may not scan properly for marking.

4. Calculators - You can bring up to two NZQA-approved calculators for an approved subject.

Teachers will check that the memory has been cleared before the exam. If it is not cleared, you cannot use it. A list of the approved calculators and subjects is published on the NZQA website:

www2.nzqa.govt.nz/calculator-list.

5. Emergency evacuation pack - You can bring items such as:

- mobile phone (switched off)
- keys
- money
- bus/train pass
- medicine

Keep the bag under your chair and do not open it during the exams without the supervisor's permission.

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

What to do in the exams:

On the day of your exam, you must:

- Arrive at your school or exam centre at least 20-minutes before the exam starts.
- Bring your Admission Slip with you.
- Find your exam room.

In the exam room, you must:

- Listen carefully and follow the instructions from the supervisors.
- Make sure you are sitting at the right desk.

For Paper exams:

- Check that the pack of answer booklets on your desk are yours by matching the NSN and Exam Code on your Admission Slip.
- When told, open the pack and check you have all the booklets and all pages are printed correctly.
- Put up your hand if anything is missing or if there is a problem, like having the wrong answer booklet.
- You cannot come back into the exam if you leave early, unless you have official permission to go to the toilet.
- Don't take any answer booklets or exam papers out of the room. If you do, these will not be marked. You can take out separate question or resource booklets.
- Leave the plastic wrapping on your desk so it can be collected and recycled.

During the exam, you must:

- Read the instructions carefully.
- Write clearly and neatly in black or blue pen.
- Clearly cross out any work you do not want marked.
- Do not write in the margins of the answer booklet as it is cut off for scanning so won't be marked.
- Only ask for extra paper when your answer booklet is full.

At the end of the exam, you must:

- Stop writing when told by the supervisor and follow all their instructions.
- Make sure your details (NSN and Exam Code) are on all booklets and extra paper.
- Draw a cross through the box on the front cover of any unused booklets to show you have not written in them, or you don't want the standard marked.
- Hand in all answer booklets before leaving the exam room.
- Take your belongings with you when you leave.

Arriving late

- 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. Approval can only happen in exceptional circumstances.

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:

- Create an account and know your NZQA login and password - www2.nzqa.govt.nz/login/
- Make sure your device is ready for the exam - www2.nzqa.govt.nz/student-digital-prep
- Check your headphones work with your device (for approved subjects). The full list of approved subjects can be found - www2.nzqa.govt.nz/device-check
- Set up the correct language keyboard if needed - www2.nzqa.govt.nz/device-check

On the day of your exam, you must:

- Bring a fully charged device.
- Bring headphones if your exam requires them.
- Bring a power bank if you have one and put it in your emergency pack.
- Arrive at the time your school has instructed, at least 20 minutes early before the exam starts.

In the exam room, you must:

- Follow the supervisor's and any written instructions.
- Stay in the digital platform only and do not access any other resources with your device.
- Make sure you have been given any resource booklets you need.
- Set up your headphones if required.
- Log in and enter the exam access code.

During the exam,

- If you have a problem with your device, **put your hand up and tell the supervisor**
- If you need note-making paper, ask the **supervisor for NZQA note-making paper**.
- You must give the note-making paper back before you leave the exam. It will not be marked.
- If you need to switch from digital to paper, you must **finish the standard you started on the device first**. You **cannot do part of your answers digitally and the rest in an answer booklet**. If your device is causing problems, **put up your hand and speak to the supervisor**.
- If you are provided with a pack of answer booklets, hand write your NSN, Exam Code, School Code, and name on the front of the booklet.

At the end of the exam,

- **Submit your answers** when instructed.
- **Hand in any note-making paper and all answer booklets** you were given.
- **Follow the supervisor's instructions** to log out and pack up your device and equipment.

Digital exam data collection

By sitting a digital exam, you agree that NZQA can collect information about your exam activity, including:

- Mouse movements and clicks.
- Screen activity.
- Times you are locked out.
- Saved versions of your answers.

NZQA keeps this information safe and uses it to help make sure exam rules are followed and to improve digital exams.

You can ask NZQA for a copy of your screen activity, lockout times, and final answers. However, NZQA cannot provide mouse-click data or earlier saved versions of your work.

If you do not agree to this information being collected, tell your **Principal's Nominee** and do not sit the exam digitally.

Exam clashes

If two or more of your exams are scheduled at the same time, this is called an **exam clash**.

- **Check your exam timetable carefully.**
- If you have an exam clash, **talk to your Principal's Nominee as soon as possible**.

Derived grades

You can apply for a **derived grade** if:

- You could not sit an exam because you were sick, injured, or something outside your control happened.
- You sat the exam, but your performance was affected by illness, injury or a serious event outside your control.
- Your school has reported a derived grade (A, M or E) for the standard(s) you are applying for.

What to do:

- Complete a derived grade application form (available on the NZQA website - www2.nzqa.govt.nz/derived-grade)
- Give the form and any supporting evidence to your school's **Principal's Nominee**.
- Submit everything as soon as possible, and no later than **two weeks after the assessment**.

Important:

- Derived grades are **not available for NZ Scholarship**.
- Late applications may not be accepted.
- **Applications for a derived grade will not be accepted after results have been released in January 2027.**

Additional information available

- Rules for students taking assessments: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/candidate-rules
- Breaches of external assessment rules: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/breaches
- Grade score marking: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/grade-score-marking
- NCEA results: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea-results
- University Entrance: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/university-entrance
- NZ Scholarship results: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/scholarship-results
- Schedule 1 of the Assessment Rules for NZ Scholarship Awards: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assessment-rules/
- Derived grades: www2.nzqa.govt.nz/derived-grade

Accessing your marked exams

If you sit an **NCEA or NZ Scholarship exam**, you can view your marked exam online through your **MyNZQA Learner portal until late June 2027**:

- **NCEA exams**: Available in late January
- **NZ Scholarship exams**: Available in February
- Make sure you have a **MyNZQA Learner account**.

Important: Answer booklets will **not be mailed to you**.

If you hand in extra pages, the front cover will show how many there are (for example, +4 means 4 extra pages). Each extra page will also be numbered, such as 1/4, which means page 1 out of 4 extra pages.

Returning Portfolios (including to overseas addresses)

- **Design and Visual Communication portfolios** will be returned to your school in **February 2027**.
- **Level 3 and NZ Scholarship Visual Arts portfolios** will be sent to your home address before the end of **January 2027**.
- Make sure your school has your **correct address**. If your address changes after you submit your portfolio, contact NZQA on externalvisart@nzqa.govt.nz **by 9 November 2026**.
- If your address has changed. Email externalvisart@nzqa.govt.nz with:
 - Your **NSN**
 - Your **name**
 - Your **school number**
 - Your **art field** (e.g Painting)
 - Whether it is **Level 3 or NZ Scholarship**
 - Your **new address** (including your suburb if you live in a city)
- You can view your **result summary sheet** through your **MyNZQA Learner portal**
- Portfolios that cannot be delivered and are **not claimed by 30 June 2027 are destroyed**.

NZQA only returns Visual Arts portfolios to overseas addresses by request. You must:

- Complete an **international delivery request form** - www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/NCEA/NCEA-for-teachers-and-schools/Forms-and-documents-for-schools/return-to-overseas-address.pdf.
- Pay the **delivery fee**
- Submit your request by **1 May 2027**.