

## STUDYING IN NEW ZEALAND - What is NCEA?

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- NCEA is the qualification you will work towards at William Colenso College. It is the main qualification for secondary school students in New Zealand.
- NCEA stands for 'National Certificate of Educational Achievement'.
- NCEA is used for selection by universities and polytechnics in New Zealand and overseas.
- NCEA will probably be very different from any form of study or achievement you have been used to in your home country. It may be a little difficult to understand at first, but as you begin to work in various subjects, things will become clear. Do not be afraid to ask about anything you are not sure of.



### How it works

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- Each year, students study a number of courses or subjects.
- In each subject, skills and knowledge are assessed against a number of standards. For example, a Mathematics [standard](#) could be: *Apply numeric reasoning in solving problems.*
- Schools use a range of internal and external [assessments](#) to measure how well students meet these standards.
- When a student achieves a standard, they gain a number of credits. Students must achieve a certain number of credits to gain an NCEA certificate.
- There are three [levels of NCEA certificate](#), depending on the difficulty of the standards achieved. In general, students work through levels 1 to 3 in years 11 to 13 at school.

Students are recognised for high achievement at each level by gaining NCEA with Merit or NCEA with Excellence. High achievement in a course is also recognised. For more information, read about [Endorsements](#).

## Earning Credits

- Some systems depend on a single examination at the end of the year to decide whether a student passes or fails for that year. With NCEA there is still an important examination at the end of the year (external assessments), but you can also earn credits during the year (internal assessments).
- The things you need to learn in each subject are divided into blocks of work called 'standards'. Each standard is worth a number of 'credits'. Different standards are worth a different number of credits, but most are worth between 1 and 5 credits. Some standards may be worth more.
- You will be expected to work through a number of standards in each subject during the year. Each subject is a little different, but you will have the opportunity to earn around 20 credits for each subject in a year through internal assessments. You will be able to add to your total number of credits by sitting the end of the year examinations and passing external assessments.
- The following table tells you how many credits you will need to pass each level of NCEA. It might seem like a lot of work, but good students can achieve well over 100 credits in a year.

NCEA level	Requirements
Level 1	80 credits are required at any level (level 1, 2 or 3) including Level 1 <b>literacy and numeracy</b> . Schools can explain the literacy and numeracy standard pathways they are using.
Level 2	60 credits at level 2 or above + 20 credits from any level The Level 1 <b>literacy and numeracy</b> requirements must also be met.
Level 3	60 credits at level 3 or above + 20 credits from level 2 or above The Level 1 <b>literacy and numeracy</b> requirements must also be met.

You will notice that there are certain literacy and numeracy requirements. This means that you will need to be able to achieve a number of credits in certain English and Mathematics standards to pass NCEA at each level.

## Aiming High

When you get your results, you will know how many credits you have achieved – but your results tell you a lot more than just: “NCEA Level 1 – passed.”

Your results will show how well you did in each standard with a letter – **N** (Not Achieved), **A** (Achieved), **M** (Achieved with Merit) or **E** (Achieved with Excellence) – so in NCEA an ‘E’ pass is a lot better than an ‘A’ pass.

## Multi-level study

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William Colenso College allow students to study a mix of standards at different levels, depending on their ability. For example, in year 12, a student may study most subjects at level 2, but add a new subject at level 1 and another advanced subject at level 3.

## Recognising high achievement

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**Certificates** can be 'endorsed' to reflect high achievement in a significant number of standards. **Course endorsements** show that students have performed well in an individual course.

### Certificate endorsement

If a student gains 50 credits at Excellence, their NCEA will be endorsed with Excellence. Likewise, if a student gains 50 credits at Merit (or Merit and Excellence), their NCEA will be endorsed with Merit. [The Record of Achievement](#) shows endorsement awards.

## Scholarship

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Scholarship is a monetary award to recognise top secondary school students. Scholarship exams are externally assessed and are an additional set of exams. They do not attract credits, nor contribute towards a qualification, but the fact that a student has gained a Scholarship appears on their [Record of Achievement](#).



## UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE

If you intend to go on to university after completing your studies at William Colenso College you will need to achieve **University Entrance**. This is usually completed during your studies at Year 13 level. To gain University Entrance you will need to:

- Achieve NCEA Level 3
- Within NCEA Level 3 you must gain at least 14 Credits in each of three or more university 'approved' subjects. Your teachers will be able to tell you which are 'approved' subjects.
- Achieve at least Level 1 Numeracy and Level 2 Literacy.

When you apply for university you will find out that achieving credits with a Merit or Excellence pass is much better than just an Achieved your chances are of entering the university course you want.

*So aim high and work hard.*



If you are planning to apply to attend a university outside New Zealand it is really important that you know what the entry requirements are. While most overseas universities will accept New Zealand's NCEA to enter, the exact requirements may be different. Some German universities, for instance, require 90 Level 3 Credits to enter. The International Director at William Colenso College and the school's Guidance Team will help you find out what is needed.

Full details of the NCEA qualifications system can be found on the Ministry of Education's website:

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/)

