



Years | Tau 11-13 Curriculum

The new Years | Tau 11–13 curriculum is knowledge-rich, nationally consistent, and internationally comparable. It's designed to reflect our bicultural heritage and prepares students for their future pathways and choices.

- The shift to a subject-based approach to curriculum is a significant move and creates a more purposeful and coherent senior secondary experience. It is internationally benchmarked with learning aligned to work, tertiary and career pathways beyond school. Students and ākonga are supported to make informed choices, with subjects that connect clearly to further study, training, and employment.
- Previously, NCEA standards set the curriculum taught in the classroom. Now we have developed a wide range of subjects in detail to provide greater clarity for teachers, and consistent knowledge and practices. Learning is carefully designed, and benchmarked against international curricula, to build knowledge and challenge students at the right level, ensuring depth, progression, and a consistent expectation across each subject.
- The Ministry is consulting on draft curriculum subjects in three main groups between May and August 2026. Group 3 subjects are listed on page three.

Knowledge-rich curriculum design

- A knowledge-rich curriculum with clear, sequenced teaching each year can help reduce educational inequalities. Every student | mokopuna should have access to the full knowledge of a subject, supported by structured progression.
- It provides a clear framework across all learning areas and wāhanga ako, enabling teachers and kaiako to focus on designing engaging programmes that bring learning to life in responsive environments.
- Bringing knowledge and skills together in a coherent, well-sequenced way supports how students | mokopuna learn and progress across the curriculum.
- Knowledge and practices should be taught together, with practices understood as the application of knowledge.
- Through engagement with coherent disciplinary knowledge, students | mokopuna develop the capability to understand the world, contribute confidently, and shape sustainable futures.
- Explicit teaching involves clearly identifying, explaining, and revisiting essential knowledge and vocabulary so all students can build secure understanding and apply

learning confidently.

- The Phase 5 (Years |Tau 11–13) curriculum clarifies what students are expected to know and do across learning areas, supporting mastery through carefully selected, sequenced, and coherent content that builds deep, transferable understanding.
- Video explainers about the knowledge-rich curriculum are here - [NZC - A knowledge-rich curriculum](#) and [TMoA - A knowledge-rich curriculum](#).

How was the curriculum designed?

- Over 300 subject advisors (teachers, subject association members, learning area specialists) across both New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa are contributing to the development and refinement of the National Curriculum.
- The draft curriculum was designed using a knowledge-rich approach, deliberately selecting and sequencing essential disciplinary knowledge, concepts, practices, and capabilities rather than starting from existing NCEA standards or pedagogy.
- A clear, coherent progression is being mapped from Phases 1–4 into Phase 5, with explicit sequencing of knowledge and practices across Year | Tau 11 and alignment through to Years | Tau 12–13 pathways.
- Appropriate subjects are being co-designed for English-medium and Māori-medium contexts, with collaboration across before final version are written in both English and Te Reo Māori.
- Design principles acted as quality-assurance criteria, ensuring coherence, conceptual development, subject-specific capabilities, and benchmarking against international curricula.
- Content choices were contextualised for Aotearoa New Zealand, integrating Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, bicultural heritage, and global, national and local examples while remaining benchmarked internationally.
- Design documents developed prior to the draft curriculum documents explicitly defined what was in scope and out of scope, clarifying disciplinary boundaries and avoiding overlap with subjects.
- The draft curriculum was designed to ensure equity of access to subject knowledge and practice for all students across schools and kura, supporting system-wide coherence regardless of delivery context.

Capabilities

- Draft subject specific capabilities are articulated alongside content, making explicit how critical thinking develops through engagement with disciplinary knowledge and practices.
- Students | mokopuna develop subject specific capabilities through the gradual mastery of disciplinary knowledge and practices, enabling them to move towards deeper critical analysis, evaluation and thinking in a more expert way.
- Subject specific capabilities enable students | mokopuna to pursue varied pathways and to successfully participate in their personal, professional, civic, and educational environments.

Draft Group 3 subjects for public consultation

The following subjects represent the third group released for public consultation. We welcome feedback on these draft subjects between 6 July and 3 August 2026.

English | Te Reo Rangatira

Te Reo Rangatira	Y11-13
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Science | Pūtaiao

Pūtaiao	Y11
Tātai Arorangi	Y12-13

Social Sciences | Te Pūmanawa Tangata

Pūmanawa Tangata	Y11-13
Pacific Studies	Y12-13

The Arts | Toi Ihiihi

Dance	Y11-13
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Te Reo Pākehā

Te Reo Pākehā	Y11-13
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Learning Languages | Ngā Reo

English as an Additional Language	Stages 1-5
Chinese (Mandarin)	Y11-13
Japanese	Y11-13
Korean	Y11-13
French	Y11-13
German	Y11-13
Spanish	Y11-13
Gagana Sāmoa (Samoan)	Y11-13
Gagana Tokelau (Tokelauan)	Y11-13
Lea Faka-Tonga (Tongan)	Y11-13
Te Reo Māori Kūki 'Āirani (Cook Islands Māori)	Y11-13
Vagahau Niue (Niuean)	Y11-13

Questions and answers

What are the benefits of the new curriculum:

- Equity of access for all students to the knowledge and practices that will set them up for their future choices and pathways.
- Sequenced learning is organised within subjects and disciplines.
- Knowledge builds year by year, giving students strong foundations.
- There is clear progression for students, so teachers know what has been taught and what comes next.
- Teachers can focus on how to teach, not what to teach.

How much autonomy do schools still have?

The new curriculum gives teachers clear guidance on what to teach, so teachers can focus on how to teach it. This reduces uncertainty and workload – and gives more time for quality teaching.

Between now and 2028, the Ministry will be designing the support for Principals, leaders and teachers to confidently implement the changes. Professional learning and resources will support classroom practices.

What does the new curriculum mean for assessment?

The new qualification system creates a simplified, more coherent structure across Years | Tau 11–13, with clearer expectations and more consistent standards. It strengthens the connection between curriculum learning, assessment criteria and tasks, and qualification standards, ensuring students' and ākonga knowledge and practices are more clearly recognised and valued.

A key feature of the new system is its stronger emphasis on both knowledge and practices, including better recognition of practical skills and real-world practices alongside academic achievement. This ensures young people are well prepared for a range of future pathways.

The system will be introduced progressively, allowing schools and kura time to prepare and support students and ākonga through the transition.

NCEA Levels 2 and 3 will be replaced with two new national qualifications:

- New Zealand Certificate of Education (NZCE) for Year 12, from 2029
- New Zealand Advanced Certificate of Education (NZACE) for Year 13, from 2030
- From 2028, there will no longer be an NCEA Level 1.

This phased rollout ensures stability for school, kura, students, and ākonga, while supporting a smooth transition into a more modern and future focused senior secondary qualification system.

Alongside the qualifications, a new Foundational Award focused on literacy and numeracy and benchmarked at Year 11, will be introduced in 2028. While students will not need to achieve the Foundational Award to move into Years 12 and 13, they will need it to be awarded NZCE or NZACE. Students can also achieve the Foundational Award through English or Te Reo Rangatira, and Mathematics or Pāngarau achievement in Year 12 and 13 subjects.

When will we see the new industry-led subjects?

As well as the Ministry-led subjects in schools, students will also be able to take new industry-led subjects within the same qualifications system. The Ministry is working in collaboration with Industry Skills Boards to align these subjects with real career opportunities in the workforce.

These industry-led subjects will set students up to pursue vocational pathways in a range of industries such as construction, engineering, and health and community.

Once confirmed, the subjects will be developed during 2026 and 2027. The work will be done in partnership with industry, schools and the tertiary sector, to make sure the subjects are practical, high-quality and useful for students planning their next steps after school.

There will also be an opportunity for people to provide their feedback on these subjects through consultation.

When will the new curriculum be ready?

The final Years | Tau 11–13 curriculum will be published later this year and be implemented progressively from 2028 to 2030, giving schools time to prepare and plan for change.

How can I give my feedback on the new curriculum?

You can give your feedback by completing an online survey on Tāhūrangi:

[Phase 5 Subjects – Consultation Survey \(Group 3\)](#)

This is also where you will find the curriculum subject documents outlining the draft content for each subject, including knowledge, capabilities, practices, pathways, subject structure, teaching sequence and assessment guidance.