

15 November 2024

Edwin Bruce
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Tēnā koe Mr Bruce

Thank you for your email of 5 November, requesting the following information:

*Can you please confirm/explain the policy purpose of this requirement e.g. to ensure students are English literate when they go to University.
I am interested as I have been advised that non-English speakers at secondary schools may use translation tools to both read the assessment and write the answers. This is for assessments that carry reading and writing credits.*

The purpose of the literacy requirement to gain University Entrance is, as you have stated in your letter, to ensure secondary school students can exhibit a certain level of reading and writing ability to be sufficiently prepared to enter university-level courses. The reading and writing skills required to gain university entrance are generic as once a student has commenced university study the level of literacy required will be more advanced and discipline specific.

The University Entrance definition of academic literacy requires that:

Students should be able to exhibit the following generic reading and writing skills:

- read with understanding – ‘reading between the lines’ to grasp the nuances of the type of text^[1]
- critically analyse what has been read
- synthesise various opinions/insights/points of view
- present an opinion/insight/point of view backed by acknowledged evidence from a reading(s)
- write an opinion/insight/point of view coherently and cohesively

As you are aware, the UE literacy requirement is 10 credits at Level 2 or above, made up of 5 credits in reading and 5 credits in writing.

NZQA periodically reviews the list of standards that meet University Entrance literacy requirements (the List) to ensure that the standards on the List provide appropriate evidence of the reading and writing skills required for university-level study. Each standard is reviewed against a definition of academic literacy agreed with Universities New Zealand, and tagged as contributing to reading or writing, or both.

The last review occurred in 2019, with a two-year transition period from 2020 and full implementation of the updated list in 2022. During that review, there was a net tightening of the List to assist in strengthening extended writing skills.

Regarding the point you raised about the use of translation tools to complete assessments for standards that contribute to the Literacy requirements for University Entrance; while translation tools may be a useful tool to assist, or augment learning in the classroom, NZQA encourages teachers to emphasise the importance of students completing work that they have written

themselves. Teachers must closely supervise the process of evidence collection to ensure that candidates do not receive guidance, scaffolding, instruction, assistance, or assessment conditions beyond what is specified as permissible in the Assessment Specifications. The use of chatbots, generative AI, paraphrasing tools, or other tools that can automatically generate content is not permitted for external assessment, and material generated by these tools should not be submitted as part of the candidate's work.

The key point is that the UE literacy requirements require students to be able to meet the literacy requirements in English or Te Reo, as determined by the University sector, and described on the previous page.

I hope that this has provided an answer to your questions. If you require more information, please contact me on email kerianne.stephens@nzqa.govt.nz

Nāku nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keri-Anne Stephens." The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Keri-Anne Stephens
Manager, Ngā Poutoko Aromatawai Māori
Assessment Division
New Zealand Qualifications Authority