



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Report: Draft foundation curriculum policy statements for assessment and aromatawai requirements

To:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	27/08/2025	Deadline:	1/09/2025
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Priority:	High
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Alignment with Government priorities

1. This report supports the 'smarter assessment and reporting' and 'greater use of data' priorities which are contributing towards the Government's Achievement Target.

Background

2. In May 2025 [METIS 1345582 refers], you confirmed your intention to introduce assessment and aromatawai requirements in 2026 for:

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- 2.2. the assessment and aromatawai tools to be mandated for twice-yearly assessments;
- 2.3. progress descriptors to be used for overall assessments of student and mokopuna progress and achievement (which will influence consistent reporting to parents).

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Assessment and aromatawai requirements will influence more consistency in reporting and information available for system-level analysis

20. By providing direction on what good assessment and aromatawai practice looks like, including ensuring consistency in how progress is assessed and described, these foundation curriculum policy statements will also support and influence reporting on progress and achievement. Consistency will be further aided by the progress descriptors being applied in the new SMART tool and other assessment tools as well as being used for results reporting for the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study.

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22. As set out in earlier advice, once in effect the requirements will not directly influence whether the data in the checks and SMART is available for system-level analysis. However, many schools and kura currently opt to share their e-asTTle data automatically through the platform. If we are clear about what the data will be used for at a system level, high levels of automated data sharing are likely to continue. We will monitor the proportion of schools and kura sharing data for these purposes.⁵ We will provide you with a separate update on work that is being done to build trust and confidence in the protection and use of assessment and aromatawai data for system-monitoring purposes.

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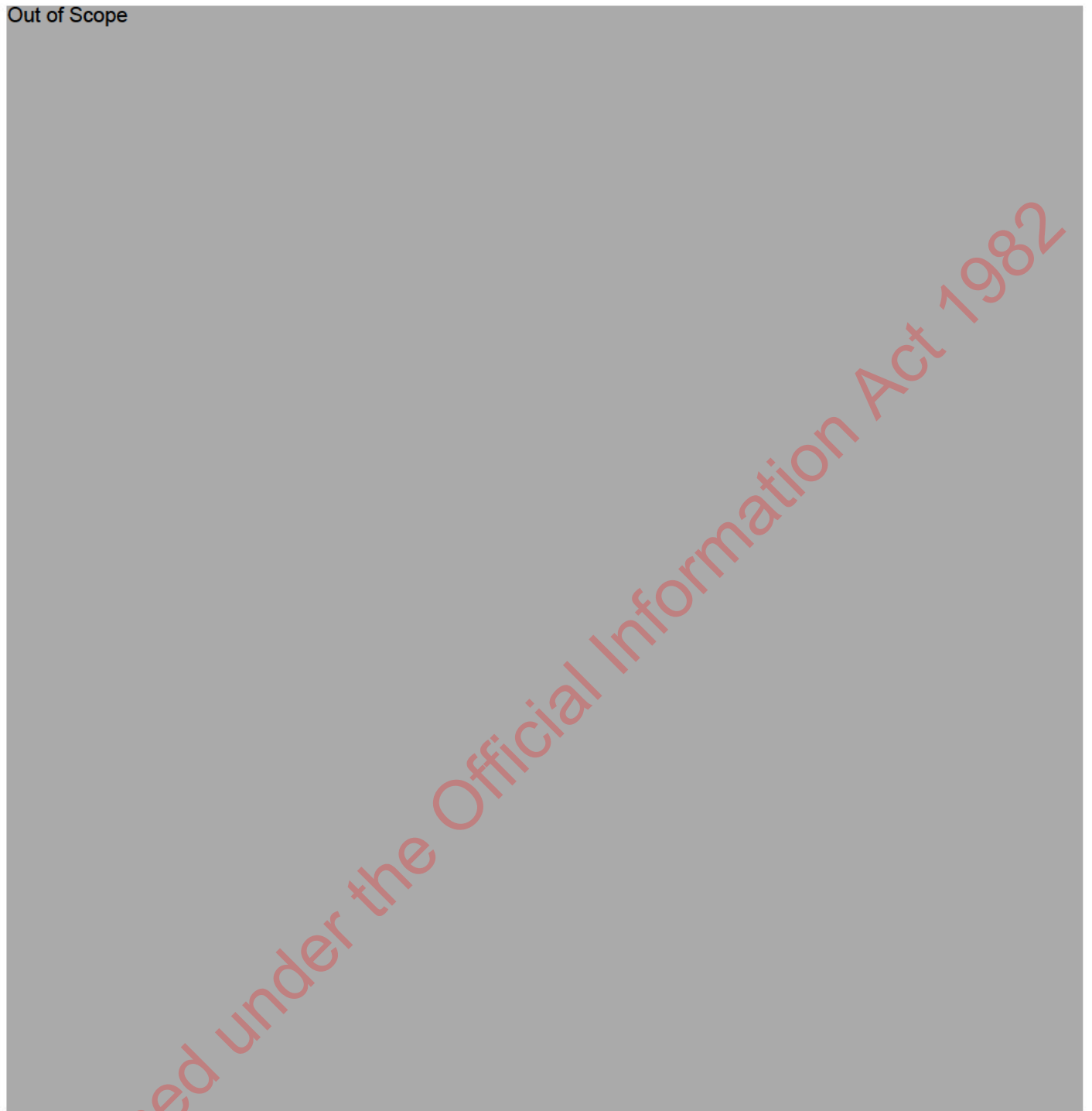


32. Out of Scope [redacted] concerned about data protections and usage, particularly the potential for deficit narratives relating to Māori achievement. Ministry access to their students' data will further limit uptake of the Tool Out of Scope [redacted]
33. To address these concerns, we will continue to deliver consistent messaging that the use of assessment tools is primarily to support effective teaching and learning in the classroom and to support clear and consistent reporting to parents. We will also continue to support the sector through Professional Learning and Development to grow pedagogical and best practice assessment capabilities, so that kaiako use a range of evidence (observations, tools and assessment tasks) to form a well-rounded understanding of student progress. We will also include in our communications the commitment to keeping the data safe and work with sector representatives to ensure we have transparent and safe data management and reporting policies in place.

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Pauline Cleaver
Acting Hautū | Deputy Secretary
Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre


Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

8/9/25

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Using assessment to understand student progress and achievement

Assessment is an essential component of quality teaching and learning. Timely, high-quality, assessment information enables informed decision-making by teachers, whānau, and school leaders to improve student outcomes and progress. Its ultimate purpose is to empower students to reach their full potential by making learning visible, measurable, and actionable.

Using robust assessment data allows teachers to tailor their teaching to what works best for their students, including identifying areas where additional support is required. It also enables schools to provide parents, whānau, and caregivers with clear, meaningful information about their child's progress at school.

School leaders are responsible for ensuring systems and strategies are in place to closely monitor student progress and achievement and to prioritise actions that support classroom teaching. This includes the use of specified assessment tools as outlined below.

Teachers actively assess student progress in relation to the year-by-year teaching sequences, using effective assessment practices. As teachers monitor progress and achievement, they pay particular attention to whether students are making sufficient progress to successfully engage in the next year of learning.

Effective assessment practices involve consistently monitoring, responding to, and reporting on student progress and achievement. This includes synthesising information from observations, conversations with students, periodic tasks and data from assessment tools (including those specified below) to build a well-rounded understanding of each student's knowledge and capabilities.

Using formative assessment to inform explicit teaching

Formative assessment is essential to explicit teaching because it helps teachers check what students understand at each step of the learning process. It allows them to adjust their instruction in real time by clarifying, modelling, or reteaching, so that every student can confidently move forward with new learning.

Assessment enables teachers to notice and recognise students' development, consolidation, and proficient use of learning area knowledge within daily lessons, and to provide timely, targeted feedback. Teachers respond to assessment insights by adapting their practice, for example, by adjusting the level of scaffolding or support provided.

In addition to ongoing observations, teachers use purposefully designed formative assessment tasks at key points throughout a unit or topic. These tasks highlight the concepts and reasoning students understand and apply, helping teachers identify learning barriers and ensure every student can demonstrate what they know and can do.

When planning next steps in teaching and learning, teachers consider students' strengths and responses along with opportunities for consolidation. These next steps may include:

- Designing scaffolds to support and enrich students learning
- Providing opportunities for students to apply new learning
- Planning lessons that revise, reteach, or consolidate learning.

Timely feedback and immediate attention to misconceptions helps students grasp new ideas efficiently and accurately, while also promoting deeper learning. Teachers use this feedback to prompt recall of prior knowledge, encourage connection between concepts and ideas, and expand students' understanding.

Specific assessment requirements – assessment tools

The assessment tools outlined here must be used in conjunction with other assessment approaches, such as observation, conversations, self-assessment, and learning activities. The results from these tools are shared with parents and whānau to keep them well informed about their child's progress.

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Assessment tools for twice yearly assessment of reading, writing and maths for Year 3-8 students

The use of reliable assessment tools alongside teacher's day-to-day observations, helps teachers notice each student's next learning steps, track their progress, and ensure timely support for those who need it.

School boards and principals must make sure that staff administer twice-yearly assessments for each student in Years 3 – 8 to monitor their progress in reading, writing, maths, using one of the following tools:

- SMART (Student, Monitoring, Assessment and Report Tool), provided by the Ministry of Education.
- PATs (Progressive Achievement Tests), provided by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- e-asTTle (during 2026 only), provided by the Ministry of Education.

For some students, teachers may need to address barriers associated with the environment, equipment or engagement to enable them to successfully participate in and demonstrate their knowledge during assessments.

For a small number of students with additional learning needs it may not be appropriate to use the specified tools. In these cases, alternative assessment methods should be used to assess progress in literacy, communication, and maths learning progress for the twice-yearly assessments, as agreed in the student's support plan.

Overall assessments of how students are progressing against curricula expectations

Monitoring each student's progress and achievement across all learning areas is essential. This requires the use of high-quality information informed by effective assessment practices, including robust and reliable assessment tools. It is important to monitor how each student is progressing and achieving across each learning area, using good quality information that is informed by effective assessment practices, including the use of robust and reliable assessment tools. It is critical that teachers have confidence in the evidence they use to support their instructional decisions.

To ensure consistency in how teachers make and communicate informed decisions about students' progress in English and Mathematics & Statistics, school boards and principals must ensure that staff use the common progress descriptors, **Emerging, Developing, Consolidating, Proficient, and Exceeding**—for each student, as outlined below.

[updated descriptors to be inserted here]

When making an informed decision, teachers need to consider progress and achievement across each strand of the learning area and select the progress descriptor that best describes how the student's progress is tracking towards the end of year expectation. Teachers should then use these strand level informed decisions to make an overall assessment of progress across the learning area. To do this, teachers should refer to the learning area sequence for each year level.

If assessments conducted during the school year show that a student is at the *Consolidating, Proficient* or *Exceeding level*, then their progress is considered to be on track. For students identified at *Proficient* and *Exceeding*, teachers should provide extended learning opportunities and enrichment activities that reflect the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

If a student is at the *Emerging* or *Developing level*, their progress is considered to not be on track to meet curriculum expectations for their year level. For these students, teachers will need to adjust classroom practice, develop individualised responses, or trigger additional learning support. When appropriate, teachers should report against the goals outlined in the student's support plan.

If end-of-year assessments indicate that a student is at the *Proficient* or *Exceeding level*, their progress is considered to have met curriculum expectations. Students assess at the *Emerging*, *Developing*, or *Consolidating levels*, are considered to have not yet met curriculum expectations for their year level.

For students with additional learning needs, who have individualised progress goals and assessments outlined in their support plans, the common descriptors should generally still be used. However, in these cases, the descriptors reflect the student's overall progress against their individual goals rather than the year level curriculum expectations. School leaders must ensure that monitoring systems clearly indicate when descriptors are being applied to individualised goals, while also maintaining visibility of progress toward year-level curriculum expectations.

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Annex 2: Draft foundation curriculum policy statement outlining aromatawai requirements for *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*

This foundation curriculum policy statement will be made under section 90 of the Education and Training Act 2020 by the Minister of Education.

This foundation curriculum policy statement will come into force on **1 January 2026**.

Kura and school boards must ensure, along with principals and staff, give full effect to these statements. High-quality assessment information should be used to inform the development and implementation of teaching and learning programmes, communicate mokopuna progress and achievement to parents, and monitoring and evaluation of how well the kura or school is supporting every mokopuna to progress and achieve across the curriculum.

Using aromatawai to understand mokopuna progress and achievement

Aromatawai is an essential component of quality teaching and learning – *ko te ako te tūāpapa o aromatawai*, recognising that ako (learning) and aromatawai (assessment for and of learning) emphasise holistic, strengths-based evaluation that focuses on the whole mokopuna and guides monitoring of mokopuna progress and achievement.

The primary purpose of aromatawai is to provide reliable, and valid mokopuna progress and achievement information to:

- Make learning visible, measurable, and actionable.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in facilitating mokopuna learning.
- Describe the progress, achievement, and success of mokopuna.
- Identify the next steps in learning for mokopuna.

Using robust aromatawai data allows kaiako to tailor their teaching to what works best for their mokopuna, including identifying areas where additional support is required. It also enables kura or schools to provide Parents and whānau with clear, meaningful information about their mokopuna progress at school.

Tumuaki and school leaders are responsible for ensuring systems and strategies are in place to closely monitor mokopuna progress and achievement and to prioritise actions that support classroom teaching. This includes the use of specified aromatawai tools as outlined below.

Kaiako actively assess mokopuna progress in relation to the year-by-year teaching sequences, using effective assessment practices. As kaiako monitor progress and achievement, they pay particular attention to whether mokopuna are making sufficient progress to successfully engage in the next year of learning.

Effective aromatawai practices involve consistently monitoring, responding to, and reporting on student progress and achievement. This includes synthesising information from observations, conversations with mokopuna, periodic tasks and data from aromatawai tools (including those specified below) to build a well-rounded understanding of each mokopuna knowledge and capabilities.

Using formative aromatawai to inform explicit teaching

Formative aromatawai is essential to explicit teaching because it helps kaiako check what mokopuna understand at each step of the learning process. It allows them to adjust their instruction in real time by clarifying, modelling, or reteaching, so that every mokopuna can confidently move forward with new learning.

Aromatawai provides information and data to support the curriculum system to remain responsive to the diverse learning needs of mokopuna. Achievement information gathered through quality aromatawai practices will inform kura, kaiako, and whānau about the effectiveness of their teaching and learning programmes. It helps kaiako to be effective teaching practitioners. Through the delivery of their classroom learning and teaching programmes, kaiako can notice, recognise, and manage mokopuna learning development, consolidation, and proficiency in the use of the knowledge and skills they gain in each wāhanga ako. Kaiako can also respond effectively to mokopuna learning needs through purposely designed aromatawai tasks that respond to the learning taking place. This enables them to monitor progress and achievement in an efficient, timely, and meaningful way, giving mokopuna and kaiako a clear understanding of what has been achieved and the progress made which should be shared with parents and whānau through reporting.

Both kaiako and mokopuna use aromatawai information to understand mokopuna strengths and learning challenges, facilitating the setting of new goals and next learning steps – *he tika, he pono te mahi aromatawai*.

When planning next steps in teaching and learning, kaiako consider mokopuna strengths and responses along with opportunities for consolidation. These next steps may include:

- Designing scaffolds to support and enrich mokopuna learning
- Providing opportunities for mokopuna to apply new learning
- Planning lessons that revise, reteach, or consolidate learning.

Timely feedback helps mokopuna grasp new ideas efficiently and accurately, while also promoting deeper learning. Kaiako use this feedback to prompt recall of prior knowledge, encourage connection between concepts and ideas, and expand mokopuna understanding.

Specific assessment requirements – aromatawai tools

The assessment tools outlined here must be used in conjunction with other assessment approaches, such as observation, conversations, self-assessment, and learning activities. The results from these tools are shared with parents and whānau so they can be informed about how their mokopuna is progressing.

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Twice yearly aromatawai of pānui, tuhituhi and pāngarau for year 3-8 mokopuna

The use of reliable aromatawai tools alongside kaiako day-to-day observations, helps kaiako notice each student's next learning steps, track their progress, and ensure timely support for those who need it.

Kura and school boards, tumuaki, and principals must make sure that staff administer twice-yearly aromatawai for each mokopuna in Years 3 – 8 to monitor their progress in pānui, tuhituhi, and pāngarau using one of the following tools:

- SMART (Student, Monitoring, Assessment, and Report Tool), provided by the Ministry of Education.
- e-asTTle (during 2026 only), provided by the Ministry of Education.

For some mokopuna, kaiako need to address the barriers associated with the environment, equipment and engagement to enable them to successfully participate in and demonstrate their knowledge during the aromatawai tasks.

For a small number of mokopuna with additional learning needs, it may not be appropriate to use the specified tools. In these cases, alternative assessment methods should be used to assess progress in pānui, tuhituhi, and pāngarau learning progress for the twice-yearly aromatawai tasks, as agreed in the mokopuna support plan.

Overall aromatawai information for how mokopuna are progressing against curricula expectations

Monitoring progress and achievement for all mokopuna across all wāhanga ako is essential. This requires the use of high-quality information informed by effective aromatawai practices, including robust and reliable assessment tools. It is important to monitor how each mokopuna is progressing and achieving across each wāhanga ako, using good quality information that is informed by effective aromatawai practices, including the use of robust and reliable assessment tools. It is critical that kaiako have confidence in the evidence they use to support their instructional decisions.

To ensure consistency in how kaiako make and communicate informed decisions about mokopuna progress in Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau, school boards and principals must ensure that staff use *tohu aromatawai* (common progress descriptors)—for each mokopuna, as outlined below.

[updated tohu aromatawai to be inserted]

When making an informed decision, kaiako need to consider progress and achievement across each whenu of the wāhanga ako and select the descriptor that best describes how mokopuna progress is tracking. Kaiako should then use these whenu level informed decisions to make an

overall judgement of progress across the wāhanga ako. To do this, kaiako should refer to the wāhanga ako sequence for each year level.

If assessments conducted during the school year show that a mokopuna is at the *Whakatōpū*, *Kua tutuki* or *Kua hipa rawa level*, then their progress is considered to be on track. For mokopuna identified at *Kua tutuki* and *Kua hipa rawa*, kaiako should provide extended learning opportunities and enrichment activities that reflect the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

If a student is at the *Me hāpai i te ako* or *Kua koke whakamua level*, their progress is considered to not be on track to meet curriculum expectations for their year level. For these mokopuna, kaiako will need to adjust classroom practice, develop individualised responses, or trigger additional learning support. When appropriate, kaiako should report against the goals outlined in the mokopuna support plan.

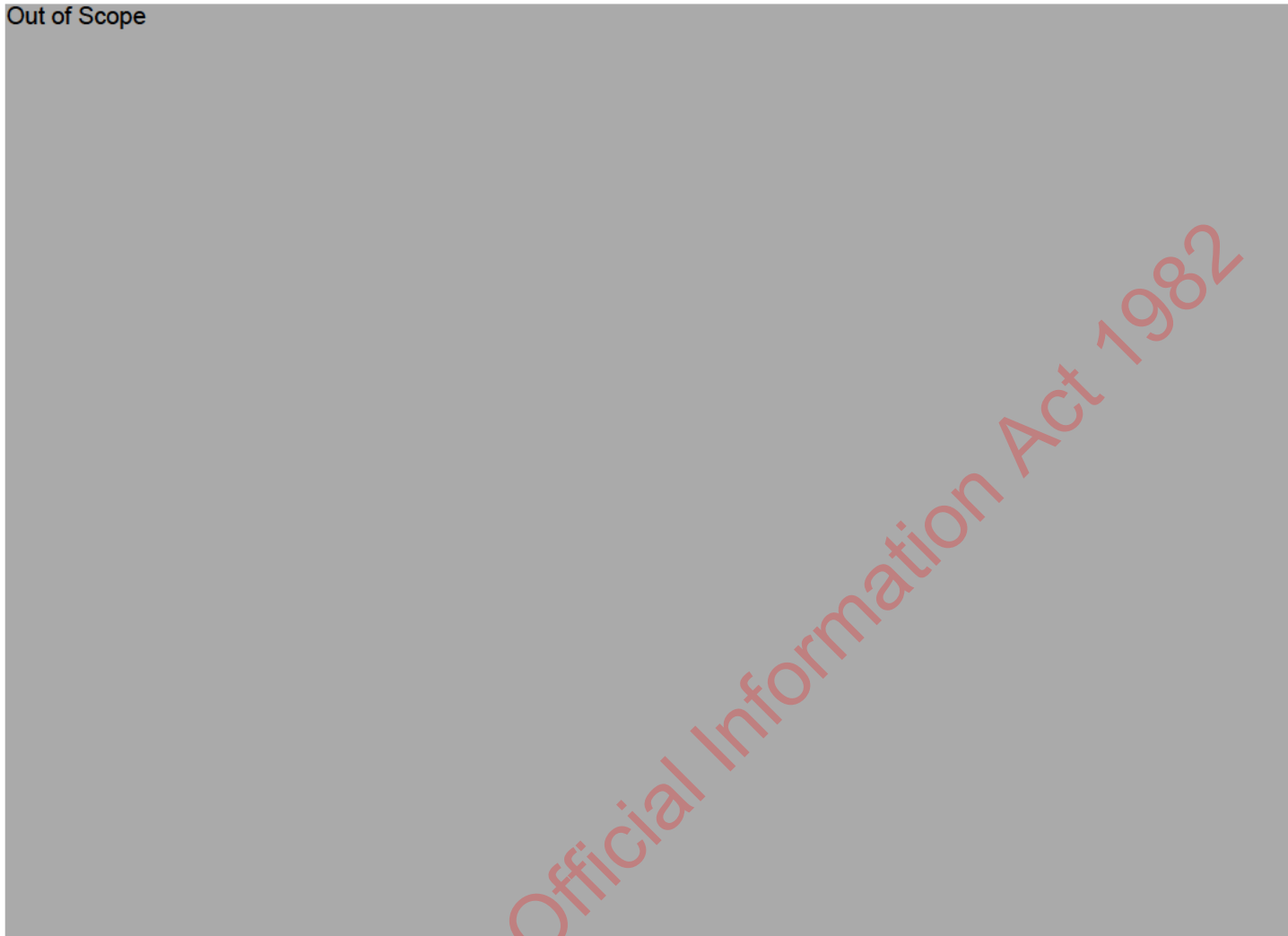
If end-of-year assessments indicate that a mokopuna is at the *Kua tutuki* or *Kua hipa rawa level*, their progress is considered to have met curriculum expectations. Mokopuna assessed at the *Me hāpai i te ako*, *Kua koke whakamua*, or *Whakatōpū levels*, are considered to have not yet met curriculum expectations for their year level.

For mokopuna with additional learning needs, who have individualised progress goals and assessments outlined in their support plans, the common descriptors should generally still be used. However, in these cases, the descriptors reflect the overall progress of mokopuna against their individual goals rather than the year level curriculum expectations. Tumuaki and school leaders must ensure that monitoring systems clearly indicate when descriptors are being applied to individualised goals, while also maintaining visibility of progress toward year-level curriculum expectations.

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