

Feedback on the provisional list of subjects for NCEA Level One.

As the National Association of Media Educators, we believe strongly that Media Studies needs to be retained at Level 1 as part of the revised list of subjects for NCEA.

The media is one of the most powerful influences on young people today.

Over the last 6 months, the world has faced one of the worse crises experienced in many generations with the global Covid-19 pandemic. Our understanding of this has been shaped by the media. Our globally lauded response has relied heavily on clear and effective media communication. We have also seen overseas the rise of conspiracies and misinformation, and we have watched with horror the impact this has had on the ability to fight the pandemic. 2020 is an election year which highlights the importance of messaging, social media and fair reporting. Over the last few years, we have witnessed an increase in hate speech, we have seen xenophobic messages communicated through President Trump and Brexit, and the trauma of last year's brutal attack in Christchurch and the issues of sharing hatred via social media.

What these examples all show is the necessity for students to be adequately equipped to safely navigate an increasingly media-saturated world.

The media can also be a powerful tool for students to make social change in the 21st century. The student-led climate strikes showed how using social media can be an empowering tool for students while Taika Waititi highlighted to the world the importance of indigenous youth being able to tell their stories.

This is what Media Studies offers to our students.

Media Studies fits with the policy vision of a broader, foundational NCEA Level 1 with increasing specialization from Level 2 as stated in the Vision for NCEA Levels 1-3 document.

Media Studies Level 1 is a subject which not only offers a clear career pathway and foundation skills for Level 2 and 3 Media Studies, it also develops the critical thinking and media literacy skills beneficial across the curriculum.

As shown in the examples in our introduction, the importance of equipping young people with media literacy cannot be overstated. There is currently no subject, either within the social sciences, the visual arts or other areas of the curriculum, that offer the foundational skills needed to develop media literacy. This means enabling students to be able to make sense of the messages with the media; understanding the way in which media texts are constructed and mediated, and how this impacts of meaning; how people's own experiences and viewpoints will influence the way in which media texts may be read, how all media texts have values and

biases that need to be unpacked, and exploring the societal structures and institutions that shape and influence the media that is produced.

NAME believes that this should be considered foundational knowledge for students, not only as a base from which to develop further studies in Media, but also for the way in which it will enhance and complement other subjects that may be taught at higher levels. It is important that this learning happens as early as possible, and should be considered a foundation subject for students in their first year of NCEA.

It is vitally important however that Media Studies remain its own subject. We do not believe that it can be incorporated into other subjects as there will not be a focus on media literacy. It is too tempting to think of subjects such as Media Studies as an 'output', where other subjects take the practical aspects of Media Studies but do not address the significant learning areas that underpin these. We do not believe that other subjects will be able to adequately meet the needs at Level 1.

Media Studies supports the inclusion of important and rich learning from the National Curriculum.

This is seen through the three strands of the media curriculum. Students are able to experience and analyze texts; explore media's relationship with society, and apply these in the production of their own media products.

Through these strands, Media Studies is also able to meet the requirements of the front end of the curriculum and the graduate profile of a student finishing NCEA Level 1.

Level 1 graduates of Media Studies are able to demonstrate an understanding of language, symbols and texts used to make meaning in a range of subject areas. They demonstrate evidence-based reasoning (critical inquiry), and are able to take responsibility for their own learning (managing self and relating to others), expressing their identity, language and culture.

Through the learning about, and production of, a media text, students will demonstrate all of these key skills.

Media Studies at Level 1 supports coherent and robust pathways into NCEA Level 2 and further study and training.

Having Media Studies at Level 1 helps prepare students for Level 2. Media teachers have recognized the importance of Level 1 in preparing students for the demands of Levels 2 and 3. We believe expecting students to have the adequate level of skill to attempt Levels 2 and 3 without a foundation year at Level 1 is unfair.

The opportunities for students to study Media Studies beyond school are increasing. This includes communication courses; film production; journalism, graphic and art design, visual media; social media and marketing, science communication, policy, teaching and general humanities, arts and social science qualifications. Media Studies prepares students for an ever-changing environment where some of the career paths future students will embark on are not yet created.

Media Studies contributes to supporting schools to create well designed and coherent local curricula, which support pathways for individual learners.

Media Studies is a flexible subject which allows for a wide variety of contexts and pathways for schools and individual learners. Courses can be adapted to reflect the particular needs of a school or community.

There is high demand for Media Studies.

Media Studies is a high-interest subject (as evident in the comparison below with Social Studies) with the ability to engage students in relevant and meaningful contexts.

2018 Student Numbers	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Media Studies	2235	3282	3259
Senior Social Studies	697	976	1635

The subject also has the capacity to grow. It is a popular subject for teacher trainees and also an attractive option for communications and Media Studies tertiary graduates. We have a strong subject association with committed individuals working hard to support teachers. We have regular conferences and PD opportunities; a developing regional network, and have support via the Networks of Expertise initiative. We also have strong links with industry and universities, and are continuing to develop these.

Media Studies supports the Crown’s obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

As Taika Waititi recently spoke about at the Oscars, there is a need for indigenous youth to be able to be heard. Media allows the opportunity to meet the needs of all students according to the Treaty of Waitangi. Media Studies is thinking critically about the world we live in and the way in which people may be represented in the media. It is about allowing students the ability to explore the stories and issues that reflect them. Media Studies allows students and school communities to shape their media courses around the issues and topics relevant to them. It also allows students to be active participants in exploring and examining the issues and stories within their communities.

Media Studies is a subject that allows students to be creative, active, engaged, curious and questioning learners.

Media Studies offers students the chance to participate and react to the world around them. It is a highly enjoyable subject where students can engage with a range of issues, and make connections with other subjects and important issues.

Teachers talk about the reactions of parents when looking at the work their children complete in Media Studies. Often we hear the phrase “I wish we could have had this when I was at school.” The Media Studies community fought incredibly hard to have this subject included in NCEA because of the importance of ensuring students could study the subjects most relevant to the world they live in. It is an understatement to say that the media is one of the most influential aspects of a young person’s life in 2020. It is therefore unthinkable we would not do all we could to ensure they have the skills needed to manage this influence. This is why we believe that Media Studies should be included on the list of NCEA Level 1 subjects.