

Tertiary Education
Commission

Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



Guidelines for using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool 2023 Published by the Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua
National Office
44 The Terrace
PO Box 27048
Wellington, New Zealand

Updated in February 2023

ISBN 978-0-478-32056-5 (electronic)

Authors

The Tertiary Education Commission

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Contents

Contents	3
Purpose of Guidelines	4
Introduction	4
The LNAAT assesses learners' skills	4
Good assessment benefits everyone	4
The LNAAT is part of good practice	5
Literacy and numeracy needs can present at all levels	5
The LNAAT is just one option in your toolkit	5
The Learning Progressions guide your response to literacy and numeracy needs	5
Identifying needs is just the first step	5
Staff need the right skills to support learners	5
Foundation skills are important across your organisation	6
We expect you to assess learners early	6
Support your learners around assessment	6
Measure progress in the most appropriate way	7
Our expectations of LNAAT use by fund	8
We expect that the LNAAT will continue to be used as a diagnostic tool	8
An alternative tool may be more appropriate	8
Frequently asked questions	10
Appendix 1 – Choosing the right assessment	13
Assessment Tool options and types	13
Online adaptive assessments	14
Snapshot assessments	14
Non-adaptive paper-based assessments	14
The vocabulary assessments	15
General assessment guidance	15
Appendix 2 – LNAAT usage requirements in 2023 Funding Conditions	16
Specialised literacy and numeracy funds	16
Foundation and youth transition funds	17
Vocational and degree funds	18

Purpose of Guidelines

These Guidelines provide information on:

- the benefits and context of the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT);
- assessment options and types in the LNAAT; and
- > our expectations for the LNAAT usage by fund.

Introduction

The LNAAT assesses learners' skills

The LNAAT supports educators to identify their learners' literacy and numeracy skills and challenges.

This mostly online adaptive tool can assess adult reading, writing, numeracy, vocabulary skills, and proficiency of beginning learners of English (Starting Points). The LNAAT is based on a nationwide framework of skills called the Adult Learning Progressions. It consists of six steps of literacy and numeracy where Step 1 is "low", and Step 6 is "high".

The online assessments are adaptive. This means the assessment adjusts to the learner's responses, getting harder or easier as learners get questions correct or incorrect. Online adaptive assessments are more robust and give immediate results to educators, learners and tertiary education organisations (TEOs). Paper-based assessments are available if internet access is limited.

The LNAAT and the Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions for Adults are key components of the national literacy and numeracy resources available to all providers.

Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy

Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy

Good assessment benefits everyone

Knowing what knowledge and skills a learner has, and those they need to develop, is vital to educational success. The results can help:

Ākonga/ learners understand their own literacy and numeracy skills and what is required for

their study and employment

Kaiako/ educators plan courses and programmes to address the specific literacy and numeracy

skills of learners

Providers evaluate their effectiveness in addressing literacy and numeracy

Employers understand employees' literacy and numeracy strengths and weaknesses

TEC identify where progress is being made due to the nationally consistent

measures of learner skill level and gain

The LNAAT is part of good practice

The LNAAT is primarily an effective diagnostic tool. It provides a way for you to identify your learners' literacy and numeracy capability, and areas for improvement so you can support each learner appropriately.

Literacy and numeracy needs can present at all levels

We have specific expectations around use of the LNAAT for our foundation funds.¹ However, we strongly encourage all providers to consider how the LNAAT can support your learners at many levels. We know that many learners at levels above foundation still have gaps in their literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills that may present barriers to participating and succeeding in education and work.

The LNAAT is just one option in your toolkit

Diagnostic and formative assessment are important elements of all education. We want you to consider a range of approaches to ensure you fully understand your learners' needs and set them up for success.

The Learning Progressions guide your response to literacy and numeracy needs

The Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions for Adults help educators identify learners' skill needs and develop learning opportunities to move them to the next step. We expect all educators supporting adult literacy and numeracy learning to be familiar with the Progressions. There are a series of resources that are available to download from <u>Ako Aotearoa</u>. Ako Aotearoa also offers professional development for educators which supports use of the progressions.

Identifying needs is just the first step

We want a tertiary education system where all learners have an opportunity to succeed. When your assessment activity identifies a literacy and/or numeracy need for a learner, we want to know you have a plan to respond. Your response may include:

- > embedding literacy and numeracy in vocational programmes and courses in all foundation education;
- mapping the literacy and numeracy demands of programmes and courses;
- the explicit teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy within the context and tasks of another, usually vocational, subject or skill (for example, panel beating);
- vise of LNAAT data and the Learning Progressions to inform effective teaching and monitoring of learner progress; and
- > supporting learners using Pathways Awarua.

Staff need the right skills to support learners

While your foundation education teaching workforce may be skilled in supporting learners with literacy and numeracy challenges, sometimes vocational or higher-level educators may be less

5 Guidelines for using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool 2023

¹ Refer to Table 1: Our expectations of use the LNAAT by Fund

familiar with this area. We want you to consider how you can develop and maintain capability of your teaching workforce. This means:

- ongoing professional development and having a qualified workforce;
- having a whole-of-organisation approach to literacy and numeracy, including an overall strategy outlining vision, aims and outcomes; and
- > accessing external expertise when your organisation does not have the appropriate skills internally.

Foundation skills are important across your organisation

We expect that you have an organisation-wide plan for assessing learners' literacy and numeracy. The plan should ensure that:

- assessments timing is planned based on each individual learner's enrolment date and reassessment considers their length of study;
- \rangle literacy and numeracy assessments are delivered consistently across the organisation;
- educators understand the functionality of the LNAAT including how to set the appropriate assessment and how to interpret results;
- you give consistent and positive messages to learners, particularly about the purpose of assessments; and
- you use the assessment information, including from the LNAAT, to evaluate and improve the skill levels of your learners and how your delivery can best support their education.

We expect you to assess learners early

From 2023 we will be focusing on use of the LNAAT as a diagnostic assessment. Because of this we want to see providers assessing their learners early in their programme, when educators feel learners are ready for assessment.

Support your learners around assessment

With the initial assessment we expect you to consider how to minimise the anxiety learners may feel when they are asked to complete the LNAAT. We suggest letting learners know:

- that this is a way of identifying skills, it is not a test they pass or fail;
- how much time they have available and when they can use tools (e.g., a calculator or pen and paper) to help;
- that everyone will get questions wrong this is especially true for adaptive assessments, as the tool will present more difficult questions to learners who perform well;
- that their result will be private between you and them;
- what impact the result will or will not have on their programme enrolment and study; and
- what support will be available for those who need it.

Before learners take their assessment, you could encourage them to watch the <u>Youth Assessment introductory video on the LNAAT site</u>. This is available in English, te reo Māori, Samoan and Tongan.

If you are not sure of a learner's digital skills, explore these before setting an online assessment as limited digital skills can make the results less accurate. A paper-based assessment may be more appropriate.

Suggestions for supporting neurodivergent learners and learners with learning challenges are included in the FAQs section on page 10.

Measure progress in the most appropriate way

The use of LNAAT for progress assessments is no longer mandatory, but we expect you to find a way to measure your learners' increased skills and knowledge, as part of best practice to support learner success.

For many learners, completing another LNAAT assessment will be appropriate. This is most useful when learners have had deliberate targeted tuition on reading or numeracy. Where content has been embedded in other learning, or where the focus has been on writing or speaking and listening, the LNAAT may not be the best tool to measure progress.

If you do not have another way to measure progress, you can continue to use the LNAAT.

Consider how to make the most of the insights offered by the LNAAT to meet the varying needs of learners. This may mean using it differently than you have in the past.

If you are currently using the LNAAT for your progress assessments and this works well, there is no need to change anything.

Our expectations of LNAAT use by fund

We expect that the LNAAT will continue to be used as a diagnostic tool

The LNAAT will still be the primary method of diagnosing literacy and numeracy needs for our foundation funds and funds that specifically support learners with high literacy and numeracy needs. We have removed the specific condition to use the LNAAT from our funding conditions, but this does not signal a move away from the LNAAT; our expectations are in these Guidelines instead. If you decide to not use the LNAAT, we still require you to use an effective assessment process.

An alternative tool may be more appropriate

We recognise that, especially in work-based learning settings, the LNAAT may be difficult to deploy as the first or primary diagnostic. We expect that responsible providers will identify literacy and numeracy needs appropriately in all learning modes and at all levels and are respond to them accordingly.

Table 1 below outlines our expectations for use of the LNAAT and assessment areas.

Table 1: Our expectations of use of the LNAAT by fund

Foundation funds (including youth transition and specialised literacy and numeracy funds)

We expect use of the LNAAT. These funds have the highest expectations of use of the LNAAT as most learners on these programmes will have specific language, literacy or numeracy needs.

Fund	Expected assessment approach
DQ 1-2 ² except te reo Māori ³	We expect you to complete an LNAAT reading AND/OR numeracy assessment using the LNAAT
Youth Guarantee Levels 1 to 3	(any adaptive, snapshot or paper-based non-adaptive assessment).
Trades Academies	
Workplace Literacy Fund (WLN) (TEO-led and Employer-led strands)	We encourage an additional writing assessment when relevant and appropriate.
Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) Fund	

² Delivery on the **New** Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework at Levels 1 and 2 Fund. This replaces Student Achievement Component – Qualifications at Levels 1 & 2 on the NZQF Fund (SAC 1&2).

³ Providers are expected to assess all eligible learners at Levels 1 and 2 except in qualifications taught predominately in te reo Māori. These will be identified by qualification NZSCED 91502.

We expect you to complete an LNAAT Starting
Points listening AND/OR reading assessment
using the LNAAT (online Starting Points options, or online or paper-based snapshot).

Vocational and degree funds

Literacy and numeracy needs can limit learning at any level. We expect providers to ensure that when an issue is identified there is a robust investigation to identify the learner's needs and appropriate supports.

These funds have lower expectations of using the LNAAT than the foundation funds, as not all learners will have language, literacy or numeracy needs.

We recognise that for some programmes, especially those delivered in the workplace, the LNAAT may be impractical to use.

We expect appropriate assessment with a diagnostic tool that identifies literacy and/or numeracy needs so educators can support learners. This may be the LNAAT or an alternative diagnostic tool.

Fund	Expected assessment approach
DQ 3-7 (non-degree) ⁴ Levels 2 and 3	We expect you to complete an appropriate diagnostic assessment for all learners on Level 2 and 3 programmes. This assessment may use the LNAAT. If you have no other diagnostic assessment tool we recommend that you use the LNAAT.
DQ 3-7 (non-degree) Levels 4 to 7	For Levels 4 to 7, consider completing an appropriate assessment when a need is identified by an educator.
Māori and Pasifika Trades Training Fund (Fees Top-ups Fund Funding and Brokerage Services Fund Funding) (MPTT)	We expect you to complete an appropriate diagnostic assessment for all learners funded through the MPTT fund. This assessment may use the LNAAT. If you have no other diagnostic assessment tool we recommend that you use the LNAAT.

⁴ Non-degree Delivery at Levels 3-7 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework and all Industry Training Fund. This replaces Student Achievement Component – Qualifications at Level 3 and above on the NZQF Fund (SAC 3+) for Levels 3-7 and the Industry Training Fund.

DQ 7+ (degree) ⁵	Consider completing an appropriate assessment
	when a need is identified by an educator.

- For some of our foundation funds, results from the LNAAT are one condition of eligibility. Please ensure that when you use the tool to identify learner eligibility you do so in line with your funding conditions.
- Learners who have been assessed by using the LNAAT within the last 24 months and who have achieved a result at or above Step 4 Reading or Step 5 Numeracy do not need to be reassessed.

Frequently asked questions

When should learners have their initial assessment?

We no longer require an initial assessment to take place in the first half of a programme. However, as the LNAAT is a diagnostic tool that will identify a learner's skill and knowledge level, it should be used by educators early in a learner's programme, at the point when educators feel the learners is ready for assessment.

What is the difference between Adult, Youth and Te Ata Hāpara assessment options?

The assessment questions and texts for these options have different contexts and settings, which may be better suited to particular learners. All three assessment options are based on the Adult Progressions and can be used interchangeably. You can choose the assessment option that will best engage your learners, regardless of their age or ethnicity.

Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy

Learning Progressions for Adult Numeracy

Do we need to use an assessment process with learners funded via certain funds?

Yes, your funding conditions require you to have in place an effective assessment process, such as the LNAAT, and provide support to ensure that those learners progress in line with our guidelines. Please refer to:

- Table 1 for our expectation of use of the LNAAT by fund; and
- > Tables 4 to 6 for a summary of relevant parts of the funding conditions related to the LNAAT.

What is meant by an effective assessment process?

An effective assessment process identifies literacy or numeracy need accurately and is appropriate to the learner. Experienced practitioners will have a range of ways they can do this. We expect that educators will continue to use the LNAAT. However, if an organisation wanted to check or authenticate the appropriateness and effectiveness of an alternative assessment they could run it

⁵ Delivery on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework at Levels 7 (degree) and above Fund. This replaces Student Achievement Component – Qualifications at Level 3 and above on the NZQF Fund (SAC 3+) for Levels 7 and above.

in parallel with or cross-check it against the LNAAT, before using it fully.

How do I support neurodivergent learners and learners with learning challenges like dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia/developmental coordination disorder and visual and hearing impairment to use the LNAAT?

It is important that educators support all learners to use the LNAAT in the way that is most appropriate for their needs. We provide resources and advice to support you to build capability and support neurodivergent learners: Neurodiversity resources.

Below are some suggested approaches for supporting neurodivergent learners and learners with learning challenges.

Ensure the assessment environment is right – the learner has the right tools and any specific accommodations that are needed:

- ensure a safe and mana-enhancing environment you could make alternative arrangements for learners who need to read text out loud or who require silent environments;
- be aware of negative prior learning experiences;
- ensure learners have access to appropriate resources;
- for Numeracy assessments, ensure learners have access to calculators and know where to check whether the question allows calculators;
- use coloured paper or coloured overlays for learners with Irlen's Syndrome;
- make screen adjustments to enhance visual quality for learners with visual impairment colour, brightness/darkness, large font; and
- where appropriate, a reader-writer may be part of the learner's support package.

Explain what the LNAAT is and what the results are used for, and answer any questions:

- explain why the assessments are important for learner support and learner success;
- explain how the LNAAT, results and feedback are used by teaching staff;
- give clear instructions on where to find the LNAAT and how to use it; and
- give clear instructions on what to expect during the assessments, a suggested time for completion and the number of questions likely to be included.

Provide appropriate support during the assessment:

- reassure learners;
- suggest moving to the next question if a learner has spent a long time on one question;
- find out why a learner has spent a long time on a question there may be a spelling mistake, a mark on the computer screen, text out of alignment, an emotional trigger, an environmental issue (eg, noise) etc; and
- if reading or understanding the text is difficult, suggest learners read the text by mouthing the words silently (this adds a kinaesthetic layer to the text and saying text out loud may help them to identify the words).

Provide assurance and information at the end of the assessment:

- reassure the learner and answer any questions they have;
- confirm what happens with the results; and
- supply feedback, if required, at a suitable time.

Are providers using the LNAAT still required to report on Statistically Significant Gain (SSG)?

No. There are no reporting requirements or targets for learner progress as calculated by the Gain Report in the LNAAT. However, providers are strongly encouraged to track learner progress throughout their studies.

Can I use the LNAAT for enrolment and job screening purposes?

No, the LNAAT has not been designed for this purpose. It has been designed to find out where a learner sits on the progressions in reading, writing, numeracy, and vocabulary. Information about strengths and weaknesses can provide starting points to identify specific learning needs. The LNAAT will give information about responses to individual items that represent different progressions as well as an aggregated score. The information will be most useful when learners and educators together discuss a learner's results and plan next learning steps.

TEC guidelines around the use of the LNAAT are clear that assessment results should not be used to inform access to study and/or work opportunities.

What are the TEC reassessment thresholds for reading and numeracy?

Learners who have presented at or above the nominated thresholds for reading and numeracy do not need to sit further assessments in those areas (unless the assessment record is more than 24 months old). The thresholds are Step 4 or above for reading, and Step 5 or above for numeracy. It is important that the thresholds are not presented as a pass point. They do not represent a minimum or maximum level of achievement.

What is the lifespan of assessment results below the thresholds?

When learners have existing data indicating that they are below the reading and numeracy thresholds, we recommend that providers reassess them if that data is more than 24 months old. This gives both the learner and provider the opportunity to update the data and see if the learner has met or progressed beyond the nominated thresholds for reading and numeracy.

If the learner has reached or exceeded the thresholds in previous assessments, they do not need to be reassessed.

What does a discontinued result mean for Starting Points Listening and Starting Points Reading assessments?

Starting Points Listening and Starting Points Reading assessments have a "Discontinued" feature that will end the assessment after seven incorrect or skipped answers. A discontinued result is a valid result for both funding and educational purposes. A learner may have multiple discontinued assessment results, where each time they have engaged with more questions. If you have any questions about interpreting reports, please contact the LNAAT Service Desk at assessforadults@nzcer.org.nz.

For further information please refer to the LNAAT Support pages:

- Educational FAQs
- > Technical FAQs

Appendix 1 – Choosing the right assessment

Assessment Tool options and types

The Assessment Tool has a range of assessment options which educators can use to assess diverse learners.

Use the option most appropriate to your learners.

Figure 1: Assessment Tool options as of February 2023

Assessment Tool options for learners			
Adult	Youth	Te Ata Hāpara	Starting Points
The "default" option of the Assessment Tool. Recommended for most learners.	Items designed to be appropriate and engaging for learners aged between 15 and 25.	Reading option in English, items designed for Māori learners.	Listening option for ESOL learners, reading option for ESOL and foundation-level literacy learners.
Adult option login	Youth option login	Te Ata Hāpara login	Starting Points login

The LNAAT has a number of different types of assessments, which are summarised in the following two tables.

Table 2: Availability of assessment area by assessment type

	Online adaptive	Snapshot	Non-adaptive (paper-based)
Numeracy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reading	Yes	Yes	Yes
Writing			Yes
Vocabulary	Yes		
Starting Points*	Yes		

^{*} The Starting Points options are designed to be done on tablets in a supported one-on-one situation, although they can be done on a PC or laptop. Confident learners may be able to complete the Starting Points assessment independently or with limited educator support.

Two Starting Points options are:

- > Starting Points Listening assesses listening vocabulary and is designed for beginning English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) learners, particularly those new to New Zealand.
- > Starting Points Reading assesses foundation-level reading skills and is designed for both ESOL and non-ESOL learners. This option is **not suitable** for ESOL learners who are at very early stages of learning English.

Table 3: Availability of assessment area by assessment option

	Adult option	Youth option	Te Ata Hāpara	Starting Points
Numeracy	Yes	Yes		
Reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Writing	Yes			
Vocabulary	Yes			Yes

- > The Youth option reading and numeracy assessments can be done as full-length online adaptive or snapshot.
- > The Te Ata Hāpara option covers reading.
- The Starting Points options cover listening, vocabulary and reading.

Online adaptive assessments

We expect educators to use the online adaptive assessments for reading and numeracy wherever possible because the assessments are individualised and the results are more robust and reliable. Administrative work is reduced because these are marked by the computer.

Snapshot assessments

The Snapshot assessment is a shorter version of the adaptive assessment. Educators can nominate a step threshold within the Snapshot assessment. This feature enables a specific step to be targeted and to see whether learners are below threshold, above threshold or somewhere in the middle (undecided). Note that learners still receive a scale score and a step level result. The "No Threshold" option should be used unless you have mapped the demands of your course content to inform the choice of a particular step threshold.⁶

Non-adaptive paper-based assessments

The non-adaptive assessments are appropriate **only** when access to the online LNAAT is limited or highly impractical. We recommend using online adaptive assessments unless this is not possible or

⁶ The Step 2 Threshold for Reading option (known as STA reading assessment) previously used for learners with very low reading skills has been replaced by Starting Points reading.

suitable for your learners. Online assessment is more accurate, because the questions adapt to the learner's responses, and give immediate results to educators and learners.

The vocabulary assessments

The vocabulary assessment provides further diagnostic information for learners with very low reading skills. It provides one way to identify if a learner's vocabulary is the limiting factor in their reading.

General assessment guidance

We recommend that educators:

- become familiar with the assessments type (snapshot or adaptive) that will best give them and their learners the information they need; and
- \rightarrow use the assessment option most likely to engage their learners.

We do not recommend that learners are asked to sit an assessment within a certain time limit. The length of time that a learner takes to complete the assessment does not affect their final score but learners need to be allowed as much time as they need.

It is important that learners give each assessment their best effort so that every assessment report is an accurate record of their skills.

Educators should not provide/coach learners with the answers (teach to the test) as this will result in an inaccurate assessment.

As a general guide, a snapshot assessment may take around 40 minutes to complete, and an adaptive assessment may take 80 minutes, but these are only estimates. Some learners may require more time and others may require less. If time is a constraint, remember that a learner can complete the rest of an unfinished online assessment at another time using the same assessment code.

Appendix 2 – LNAAT usage requirements in 2023 Funding Conditions

Relevant extracts from the 2023 Funding Conditions are provided here. For full information, please refer to your funding confirmation letter if you are a TEO. See the 2023 <u>Funding Conditions</u>.

Specialised literacy and numeracy funds

Table 4: LNAAT usage requirements for specialised literacy and numeracy funds

Fund	2023 Funding Conditions	
Workplace Literacy and Numeracy – TEO-led (WLN) & Employer-led (EWLN)	1. Organisation eligibility	
	1.2 You must, for the length of the Funding Period:	
	(a) have in place an effective assessment process for determining the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners, such as the LNAAT, and provide support to ensure that those learners progress in line with the guidelines provided by us;	
	2. Learner eligibility	
	2.2 For the purposes of this Condition, a learner is considered to have a low skill level of literacy, numeracy, or literacy and numeracy if a learner:	
	(c) is assessed using the LNAAT and presents at Step 3 or below on the Learning Progressions for reading and/or Step 4 or below on the Learning Progressions for numeracy.	
Intensive Literacy	1. Organisation eligibility	
and Numeracy (ILN)	1.2 You must, for the length of the Funding Period:	
	(a) have in place an effective assessment process for determining the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners, such as the LNAAT, and provide support to ensure that those learners progress in line with the guidelines provided by us;	
	2. Learner eligibility	
	2.2 For the purposes of this Condition, a learner is considered to have a low skill level of literacy, numeracy, or literacy and numeracy if a learner:	
	(c) is assessed using the LNAAT and presents at Step 1 or 2 on the Learning Progressions for reading and/or numeracy.	
Intensive Literacy	2. Learner eligibility	
and Numeracy ESOL	2.2 For the purposes of this Condition, a learner is considered to have a low skill level of literacy, numeracy, or literacy and numeracy:	

	(c) if the learner is assessed using the LNAAT and presents below Step 1 in reading on the Learning Progressions; or
	(d) if the learner is assessed using the Starting Points and presents at the equivalent of below Step 1 in reading on the Learning Progressions.
	6. LNAAT
	You must have in place an effective assessment process for determining the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners, such as the LNAAT, and provide support to ensure that those learners progress in line with the guidelines provided by us.
Refugee English Fund	No specific requirements.

Foundation and youth transition funds

Table 5: LNAAT usage requirements for foundation and youth transition funds

Fund	2023 Funding Conditions
Delivery on the New	5.1 Minimum requirements
Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework at	You must ensure that, throughout the Funding Period, a programme or micro-credential in which an eligible learner is enrolled and that receives DQ1-2 Fund funding:
Levels 1 and 2 (DQ1-2)	(d) includes an effective assessment process for determining the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners, such as the Literacy and Numeracy for adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT), and provides support to ensure that those learners progress in line with the guidelines provided by us;
Youth Guarantee	6. LNAAT
	You must have in place an effective assessment process for determining the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners, such as the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT) and provide support to ensure that those learners progress in line with the guidelines provided by us.

Vocational and degree funds

Table 6: LNAAT usage requirements for vocational and degree funds

Fund	2023 Funding Conditions
UFS – Non-degree Delivery at Levels 3- 7 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework and all industry training (DQ3-7)	 6.3 Delivery Component Funding for Levels 1 to 3 on the NZQCF (a) You must only use DQ3-7 Fund Delivery Component Funding to deliver a programme or credential, or a Component Part, leading to a qualification at Level 1, 2 or 3 on the NZQCF if it includes embedded literacy or numeracy. (b) You must determine the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners and provide support to those learners to meet their literacy and numeracy needs in accordance with the guidelines specified by us.
Māori and Pasifika Trades Training (Fees Top-ups Fund Funding and Brokerage Services Fund Funding) (MPTT Fees Top- ups)	7. LNAAT In the case of learners for whom you receive MPTT Fees Top-ups Fund Funding for DQ-funded programmes or credentials leading to a qualification at Level 3 or 4 on the NZQCF, you must have in place an effective assessment process for determining the literacy and numeracy needs of eligible learners, such as the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT), and provide support to ensure that those learners progress in line with the guidelines provided by us.
Delivery on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework at Levels 7 (degree) and above (DQ7+)	No specific requirements.