

Possible Breaches in External Assessment

The purpose of the breaches process for external assessment is to ensure that student results are credible. NZQA investigates all possible breaches in these assessments to maintain the integrity of the NCEA qualification.

The school must inform students that by saving a response or handing in their work at the end of an assessment session, they verify the work is their own.

NZQA may sample any student work to test its authenticity, including that digitally submitted.

Who can report a breach?

A teacher, supervisor, another candidate, NZQA Marker or digital team can identify and report a possible breach to the NZQA Breaches Team.

The team will decide if the incident is a potential breach and investigate.

How to report a breach?

1. Complete the [Possible breach form](#), providing factual, clear and detailed information.
2. Email the form to breaches@nzqa.govt.nz

How do we investigate?

When the NZQA Breaches Team investigates they:

- contact the student for an explanation
- may contact the Principal's Nominee or any other person who can provide relevant information to clarify the reported conduct
- then evaluate the evidence and decide the outcome. The candidate can appeal the outcome.

Our investigation process and possible outcomes are available online:

[Breaches of external assessment rules](#)

What should be reported as a possible breach?

A possible breach reports on incidents that could impact on the credibility of a student's result and include:

- submitting inauthentic material or work
- failing to follow instructions
- demonstrating dishonest or inappropriate practice
- disrupting the assessment.

They might be on purpose or accidental.

As examples, the following incidents may impact the credibility of a student's result.

- A student has a cell phone/smart watch or other electronic device on their desk or accessible while working on a limited time, closed book task.
- A teacher notes that most of a submission may have been generated using an AI tool or copied from the internet/exemplar/another source or another student.
- A teacher considers that there may have been inappropriate assistance from another person (parent, student, private tutor etc.).
- A school identifies that a teacher may have provided excessive feedback during the assessment activity.
- A teacher notes that there may have been inappropriate collaboration between students that may affect the credibility of the result.
- A student has notes in an assessment activity (where these are not permitted).
- A student navigates away from the digital platform (where this is not permitted).

The list does not cover every situation so if you are unsure, report the possible breach to NZQA.

What not to report

While the conduct described in these examples may warrant a school response, they do not affect the credibility of qualifications so are not possible breaches.

- A student's phone rings from the back of the room during a limited time, closed book task.
- A student has a cell phone in their pocket but has not been observed to use it or had an opportunity to access it.
- A teacher notes that some work has minor similarities to material available online.
- Minor communication between students in a closed-book assessment that is not pertinent to the assessment task.
- Minor disturbance.
- Inappropriate/offensive drawings or language.

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[Breaches of external assessment rules](#)

More information is available in the

[NZQA Assessment Rules](#)