

FACT SHEET 2

Some important frequently asked questions about the 2015 Physical Education Scholarship:



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These questions have been answered by Jennifer Mackrell, Team Leader, Secondary Examinations, Assessment Division, NZQA. Jennifer has said that she would be happy to receive queries at jennifer.mackrell@nzqa.govt.nz or to examinations@nzqa.govt.nz

Q: As a result of ongoing discussion between PE teachers in the region, we are wondering if students could work on a report for Scholarship PE over a two year period (eg: Y12 - 13)?

A: Yes, they certainly could. The submission date and the relevant assessment specifications would be the only determining factor - the year when the work was begun is not important.

Q: I seek your ideas and thoughts re Scholarship PE for this year, the first in its new format. I feel a little unsure as to how to present it to my students when they have come to Level 3 PE expecting an exam as in the past. I have over the last 3 years presented a Scholarship PE workshop, organised by the local Principals Association, to all prospective candidates. This workshop has been valuable and very helpful I feel and I have been able to use some very experienced and passionate teachers from the area for assistance. In the past, for the exam, I have dealt with critical evaluation and what this really looks like for Scholarship, examination techniques and essay writing and then also with the Issues topic that has been included each year. Do you have any broad/general ideas or suggestions as to how I might structure this workshop this year as I have been asked to do it again, and what aspects would you consider most important about this new format that I need to reinforce and encourage students to adapt to?

Can I also ask, how much guidance by teachers, once students have begun on their reports, is "too much guidance" and is this going to be able to be managed by NZQA? Teacher input could have an extremely significant influence on a student's likelihood of gaining Scholarship?

A: The format of your workshop should be similar to what you have done before as the key areas of application of knowledge, critical thinking and communication which arise from the Scholarship Performance Standard remain the same. See page 2 of the information linked to the Assessment Specifications <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/scholarship/phised-report-information.pdf>. The exemplars from the past few years examinations will continue to be useful to show the level of critical evaluation required but there is additional time to research, reference, develop and evaluate ideas. There will no longer need to be a focus in a workshop on a specific Issues topic. This was not

particularly appropriate for scholarship anyway and you will find other scholarship subjects avoid this kind of approach which leads to recall rather than high level independent critical thinking. Selection of the topic for the report will be important. Candidates should not be too narrow in their initial approach or even the most lateral thinkers will soon run out of ideas. Most of the topics suggested online are very broad with the expectation that candidates will narrow their focus as they start to make judgments and critically analyse the topic in more detail. It is likely to be at this stage that candidates will diverge into their areas of personal interest and even candidates who begin from the same base will end up with very different reports. The change is, at least in part, motivated by the desire to actively engage candidates in the assessment process and early reports to me suggest candidates are feeling very positive and inspired.

Scholarship is awarded to the top 3% of students in the country and those students are highly confident in their own ability. The Assessment Specifications have details about the format of the report that candidates will need to follow. It is important to note a report is required and not a portfolio collection of Level 3 NCEA work. Although some students are working at a high level in their Level 3 work the expectations of Scholarship and NCEA are quite different.

Returning to the topic of your workshop, a close study of the Performance Standard, the Assessment Specifications, and the Information documents embedded in the specifications would be a good place to start. I frequently find with NZ Scholarship that teachers have not had the time to do this and it really is essential. Discussion around what a report will look like could follow, focussing on the exemplars and ideas they contain.

Teacher guidance should be restricted to questions to help the candidate think in depth about their topic. Direction, for example supplying resources for a particular topic and directly suggesting ways to approach the topic, would be unacceptable and would be likely to raise concerns about authenticity. Candidates will sign a declaration stating the report is their own work.

A: In reply to a query to our team mailbox about Scholarship PE topics:

Either of these topics (identified by the teacher as possible options) could be the basis of a good report for Scholarship. The comparative evaluation seems to me at first glance to lend itself more to the higher level critical response required for scholarship. Nevertheless a comprehensive development of the second topic could also lead to scholarship. The detail of planning etc, regardless of the topic, is only important in so far as the candidate will use it in the report eg to critically analyse aspects of the plan by way of introduction. Too much detail about programme planning, which is not directly assessed for scholarship, will detract from the report.

Do note that the emphasis for scholarship is not only on the evaluation of a programme. The performance descriptor for scholarship (all subjects) also includes high level analysis, and evidence of understanding of complex situations. Integration, synthesis and application of high level knowledge and skills should be evident, and ideas presented will be clearly, precisely and logically developed. Outstanding scholarship further requires that ideas are presented convincingly, that integration is sophisticated and leads to abstraction, and that there is clear evidence of independent reflection and extrapolation in the report.

The report will be more detailed than in an exam essay because of the time available to the candidate to plan and construct the report when not under examination time constraints - relevant references will also therefore be accurately provided. The topic has to be sufficiently complex to allow all the descriptors to be displayed in a comprehensive report that culminates in an effective justified conclusion.

Q: We have started our Scholarship programme and one of the questions we have struggled to answer for our students is the one around the word limit vs. the page limit for the new Physical Education format. I appreciate that you have addressed this but I was just seeking further clarification. You have said "*The suggested limit on the pages is very loose. The expectation is that candidates produce a report and there is flexibility in this.*" and then it states on the website that the "*The number of words is likely to be 2000–3000 but will vary depending on other material in the report.*"

I suppose the question I have is around what restrictions are NZQA wanting to put on our scholarship candidates. If they produce a report that is 12 pages long with 6000-7000 words will their report be marked? versus keeping them to the 2000-3000 word limit which may be 4-5 pages but they feel they have been restricted in their ability to give a coherent and insightful report due to the word limit.

A: As this will be the first year of this assessment format I do not want to be too rigid and disadvantage students by focussing on the length, at the expense of the ideas. The number of pages in the Assessment Specifications was a maximum and intended to discourage students who might be tempted to put together a collection of all their best Level 3 work under the misconception that that would satisfy the requirements of the NZ Scholarship Performance Standard. In the past we have found that a student's ability to communicate by written word concisely was often a measure of their understanding of the material. Supporting information / evidence that is not written would also be included in the report. "The report may contain images, sketches, diagrams, illustrations, and other forms of graphic representation."

Marking will be initiated for all reports. If a report loses focus and lacks precision it will not satisfy the requirements of the standard for scholarship communication. Marking would continue to assess application of knowledge and critical thinking but these two areas would also be affected by poor communication. Only an obviously long report that was repetitive and clearly failing to meet the standard would be penalised.

Q: I would be grateful for some guidance on the following: Can a student's report straddle or overlap between two themes on the level 8 NZQA curriculum? For example if a student were to critically evaluate a range of qualitative and quantitative data to devise strategies to meet their current and future needs for well-being could their report also explore a theme of challenges and social and cultural factors)?

So to clarify can a student's report cover more than one aspect of the level 8 NZQA curriculum document?

A: Yes, absolutely. Most commonly reports will begin with a broad topic and then it is likely that candidates will narrow their focus as they start to make judgements and critically analyse the topic in more detail. However in some cases candidates may reverse this, starting with a narrow focus and then broadening that as they move into the analysis, independent reflection and extrapolation. Topics can incorporate any aspect(s) of the Level 8 HPE curriculum document and will be assessed holistically against the PE Scholarship Performance Standard.

Note:

There have been queries/emails that provide NZQA with positive reinforcement regarding the changes to Scholarship PE in 2015. See below for an extract from a teacher comment, and the NZQA response:

Comment to NZQA: I like the idea of a report and have grasped it with enthusiasm. Students have already identified self interest topics that range from XXX to XXX (wide ranging).

I have set up parameters along the lines of a scientific report, where students will complete a literature review to get a good understanding of the topic and from this develop their plans for their reports. Then they can use skills and ideas learnt through their other units of work this year in PE to develop their report. Concepts such as hauora, S.P.E.E.C.H, etc can all be applied.

I feel we are well on the way, the students are motivated and we have a clear timeline for them to achieve by the November deadline.

Reply:

Thank you for that useful feedback. There are a number of schools which are seizing the opportunity presented by the report format to try some innovative approaches. Generally, presented with the chance, students are keen to engage with assessment in ways that make more sense to them. They are very imaginative in the topics they are selecting and are keen to explore the possibilities presented.

Marking will be holistically based on the Performance Standard, as shown in the Information accessed from the Assessment Specifications, and candidates should be sure they are aware of what the markers will be looking for so that they satisfy those requirements as far as they are able.