

**The New Zealand Curriculum National Standards:
Variation in school entry dates - Implications for timing of overall teacher judgments (OTJs) and reporting.**

INTRODUCTION

It is generally expected that at age five, most students will commence school in Year 1 and move through to Year 8, one year at a time. This is consistent with the *social promotion* model practised in many New Zealand schools.

There are however, circumstances where this may not happen:

Reason	Rationale	Implication
<i>School entry can occur at any time during the year</i>	Children are eligible to attend school from their 5 th birthday onwards	Schools make a decision (based on entry date and progress) whether late entry students should go into Year 2 in the following year or continue in Year 1

These variations will have impacts on the timing of overall teacher judgments (OTJs) and the identification of the expected National Standard. Progress and achievement in relation to the identified standard is used to report to parents and for board reporting purposes.

When deciding the appropriate timing of OTJs and the standard to be considered and reported against, it is the prerogative of schools and teachers to make a reasonable judgment as to what is appropriate based on individual student context and the reporting requirements in the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs).

The guidance offered here is provided to support that decision-making.

OVERALL TEACHER JUDGMENTS (OTJs)

All OTJs have a formative purpose.

Any interim judgments are concerned with identifying ‘*progress towards*’ the relevant standard. Some schools choose to make a number of interim judgments. For example, some schools determine judgments towards the end of each term. Other schools choose to make one interim judgment approximately half way during the student’s year – that is for Years 1 – 3, between school entry/ anniversary of school entry and completion of one/two/three years at school, as applicable or, for years 4-8, approximately mid-way through the school year. Interim judgments are used as the basis for reporting to parents¹.

Final OTJs are concerned with ‘*summing up*’ achievement in relation to the relevant standard. These are used both as the basis for reporting to parents and for formal reporting to boards to enable Boards of Trustees to fulfil their obligations under the NAGs.

THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM NATIONAL STANDARDS RESPOND TO INITIAL STUDENT LEARNING

Time at school is particularly significant during the first three years of schooling. It can make a considerable difference to what students are able to do.

¹ Schools choose when to report to parents, to fit with what works best for the community, and the school’s reporting cycle. For years 1-3 some schools choose to stagger written reports throughout the school year based on when the student entered school to align with the timing of the OTJs. Alternatively, OTJs may be conveyed as part of regular communication with parents, families and whānau.

Standards for Years 1-3 require an “*after (one, two, or three) year(s) at school*” OTJ to be made at, or close to, the anniversary of the student’s school entry. Rather than being a specific anniversary date, *after one year* can be thought of as after the completion of approximately four terms at school, *after two years* can be thought of as after approximately eight terms and *after three years* equivalent to twelve terms at school.

It follows that, in circumstances where schools choose to make one *interim* judgment approximately half way through, that this interim judgment would be made after the student has completed approximately two terms , six terms and ten terms at school, as illustrated in *Table 1* below:

Standards for Years 4-8 require an end of school academic year OTJ, (for example, *by the end of Year 4*) regardless of the initial school entry timing. Where schools choose to make one *interim* judgment approximately half way through, this would be made around the middle of the year, as illustrated in *Table 1* below.

Table 1:

Standard of reference	Interim Judgment (for reporting to parents)	Final OTJ (for reporting to parents & for reporting to Boards)
after one year at school	2 terms at school since entry	4 terms at school since entry
after two years at school	6 terms at school since entry	8 terms at school since entry
after three years at school	10 terms at school since entry	12 terms at school since entry
end of Year 4	mid year - Year 4	end of year – Year 4
end of Year 5	mid year - Year 5	end of year – Year 5
end of Year 6	mid year - Year 6	end of year – Year 6
end of Year 7	mid year - Year 7	end of year – Year 7
end of Year 8	mid year - Year 8	end of year – Year 8

IMPLICATIONS OF VARIATION IN YEAR 1 ENTRY DATES

Because students become eligible for school entry on their fifth birthday, it is not unusual for some students to spend more than a full school year in Year 1. This is because they commence their first year of schooling during the year rather than at the beginning of the school year. School entry can happen at any time between the first day and the last day of the school year.

Schools vary in the way they deal with differing school entries. However, generally speaking, schools decide whether a student should move on to Year 2 at the beginning of the following school year or remain in Year 1 on the basis of time at school, progress being made, and social factors.

POTENTIAL OVERLAP BETWEEN STANDARDS

For students who spend less than four terms in Year 1 and then proceed through Years 2, 3, and 4 in the usual manner, it is likely that there will be an overlap in final reporting requirements with both an “*after three years at school*” final OTJ and an “*end of Year 4*” final OTJ occurring in the same year.

For example, *Scenario 1* below is based on a situation where a student:

- turns 5 and commences school in term two (May to July) 2011
- continues on into Year 2 in 2012, Year 3 in 2013, Year 4 in 2014, and so on
- is in a school which chooses to undertake one interim judgment each year.

Scenario 1

	Year	School Term	Interim Judgment	Final OTJ	Standard
2011	1	Term 4	two terms at school since entry		Progress towards "after one year at school"
<i>Teacher/school decides it is in the best interests of the student to move on to Year 2 in the following year (professional decision based on time since school entry, progress being made, and social factors)</i>					
2012	2	Term 2		four terms at school since entry	In relation to "after one year at school"
		Term 4	six terms at school since entry		Progress towards "after two years at school"
2013	3	Term 2		eight terms at school since entry	In relation to "after two years at school"
		Term 4	10 terms at school since entry		Progress towards "after three year at school"
2014	4	Term 2		12 terms at school since entry	In relation to "after three years at school"
			Mid year - Year 4		
		Term 4		End of year – Year 4	In relation to "end of Year 4"

In Scenario 1 above, there is a concertina effect because *the student has spent approximately only 6 months in Year 1.*

This means that, in the student's Year 4 year (in this case, 2014) there will be:

- one "end of Year 4" interim judgment; and
- two final OTJs - an "after three years at school" final OTJ and an "end of Year 4" final OTJ

Furthermore, the "after three years at school" final OTJ falls at around the same time that the school would, under normal circumstances be undertaking an "end of Year 4" interim judgment for the student.

The teacher may, therefore, choose to make only one OTJ mid year but formulate this in a way that will provide information required in relation to both:

- formal board reporting of "after three years at school" final OTJ, and
- reporting to parents in relation to a student "after three years at school" while also in Year 4 and progressing towards the "end of Year 4" standard.

Implications – Scenario 1 - Reporting to Parents

This is not significant for reporting to parents because there is considerable flexibility in how a student's achievement and progress is described. While the four point scale ('above', 'at', 'below' or 'well below') can be used, there is *not* a requirement that it be used when reporting to parents, either in relation to the interim judgment or the final OTJ. Reporting to parents should be as appropriate given the context of the student – see

<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Reporting-to-parents-families-and-whanau> and

<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/FAQ/Section-C-Reporting-to-parents-families-and-whanau>

Implications – Scenario 1 – Formal Reporting to Boards

There are implications for the formal reporting of final OTJs to the Board as outlined below.

Under this scenario, it is not possible to report the “*after three years at school*” final OTJ until the student is in Year 4 (2014). This raises the issue of what should be reported to the board in 2014 in relation to this student. There are three alternatives:

- the “*after three years of school*” final OTJ, or
- the “*end of Year 4*” final OTJ, or
- both of the above.

Teachers will need to report to boards as follows:

Board reporting of final OTJ – Scenario 1	
2011	No final OTJ - student has not completed one year (4 terms) at school but going on to Year 2
2012	Final OTJ “ <i>after one year at school</i> ” standard (as made in term 2)
2013	Final OTJ “ <i>after two years at school</i> ” standard (as made in term 2)
2014	Final OTJ “ <i>after three years at school</i> ” standard (as made in term 2) and/or Final OTJ “ <i>end of Year 4</i> ” standard (as made in term 4)

POTENTIAL GAP BETWEEN STANDARDS

For those students who spend more than four terms in Year 1, there is likely to be a ‘gap’ effect in reporting requirements. In this situation, there may be a larger than usual gap between the “*after three years at school*” final OTJ and the “*end of Year 4*” final OTJ.

For example, *Scenario 2* below is based on a situation where a student:

- turns 5 and commences school in June (term 2) 2011
- remains in Year 1 for 2012
- continues on into Year 2 in 2013, Year 3 in 2014, Year 5 in 2015, and so on
- is in a school which chooses to undertake one interim judgment each year

Scenario 2

	Year	School Term	Interim Judgment	Final OTJ	Standard
2011	1	Term 4	2 terms at school since entry		Progress towards "after one year at school"
<i>Teacher/school decides it is in the best interests of the student to remain in Year 1 in the following year (professional decision based on time since school entry, progress being made, and social factors)</i>					
2012	1	Term 2		4 terms at school since entry	In relation to "after one year at school"
		Term 4	6 terms at school since entry		Progress towards "after two years at school"
2013	2	Term 2		8 terms at school since entry	In relation to "after two years at school"
		Term 4	10 terms at school since entry		Progress towards "after three years at school"
2014	3	Term 2		12 terms at school since entry	In relation to "after three years at school"
		Term 4	14 terms at school but not yet Year 4		Progress towards "end of Year 4"
2015	4	Term 2	mid year - Year 4		Progress towards "end of Year 4"
		Term 2		end of year - Year 4	In relation to "end of Year 4"

In Scenario 2 above, there is a 'gap' effect because the student has spent *approximately 18 months in Year 1*. The final "after three years at school" OTJ will fall due during term two, 2014 while the "end of Year 4" interim judgment will not be due until approximately mid year the following year.

Implications - Scenario 2 - Reporting to Parents

It is important that there be at least two judgments each year to enable teachers to fulfil the requirements of the NAGs in relation to reporting to parents. Under scenario 2, it would be appropriate for a teacher to make at least one additional interim judgment– for example, during term four, 2014.

As this student has already completed more than three years of schooling, although still in Year 3, it would be appropriate for any additional interim judgments to be appropriate to a student who is working towards the "end of Year 4" standard. It should consider progress towards the "end of Year 4" standard. However, as indicated above, there is considerable flexibility in how a student's achievement and progress is described when reporting to parents. There is no requirement that this be done in terms of the four point scale. See: <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Reporting-to-parents-families-and-whanau> and <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/FAQ/Section-C-Reporting-to-parents-families-and-whanau>

Implications – Scenario 2 – Formal Reporting to Boards

To enable Boards of trustees to fulfil the requirements of the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), teachers would need to report as follows:

	Board reporting of final OTJ – Scenario 2
2011	No final OTJ - student has not completed one year (4 terms) at school
2012	Final OTJ “ <i>after one year at school</i> ” standard (as made in term 2)
2013	Final OTJ “ <i>after two year at school</i> ” standard (as made in term 2)
2014	Final OTJ “ <i>after three year at school</i> ” standard (as made in term 2)
2015	Final OTJ “ <i>end of Year 4</i> ” standard (as made in term 4)