



Cabinet

CAB Min (05) 11/2

Minute of Decision

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Minister of Education
Associate Minister of Education (Hon David Benson Pope)

Report of the Scholarship Reference Group

On 29 March 2005, Cabinet:

Background

- 1 **noted** that the proposed approach to the 2005 Scholarship examinations and beyond set out in the paper under CAB (05) 109 responds to Cabinet's invitation to the Associate Minister of Education (Hon David Benson-Pope) to report to Cabinet by 31 March 2005 [CAB Min (05) 4/6 and CBC Min (05) 3/5];
- 2 **noted** that a Scholarship Reference Group (SRG), made up of a diverse set of noted education leaders, was tasked to provide advice and recommendations on the proposed approach to the 2005 Scholarship examination by 31 March 2005;
- 3 **noted** that the SRG made 26 recommendations concerning future awards of scholarship and the conduct of assessments for such awards;
- 4 **noted** that Scholarship students are expected to demonstrate high level critical thinking, abstraction and generalisation and to integrate, synthesise and apply knowledge, skills, understanding and ideas to complex situations;
- 5 **noted** the *Report of the Scholarship Reference Group* attached to the paper under CAB (05) 109, and acknowledged the work of the SRG;

Purpose of Scholarship

- 6 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 1 that the New Zealand Scholarship descriptor be:

Title: New Zealand Scholarship¹

Outcome Statement:

Learners who have been awarded Scholarship in a subject will have demonstrated:

- High level critical thinking, abstraction and generalisation; and
- The ability to integrate, synthesise and apply knowledge, skills, understanding and ideas to complex situations.

Depending on the learning area, a range of the following will have also been displayed:

- comprehensive content knowledge (breadth & depth)
- effective communication
- original or sophisticated solutions, performances or approaches
- critical evaluation
- flexible thinking in unfamiliar/unexpected contexts.

Assessment is restricted to the content of the Level 3 achievement standards for that subject, derived from level 8 of New Zealand Curriculum or their equivalent, but the skills and understanding required will meet the Scholarship criteria.

Entry requirements:
Students must be enrolled at a New Zealand secondary school or wharekura in the year of entry for an external assessment of a scholarship standard.

- 7 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 2 that Scholarship assesses knowledge and skills and their application, building on, and in advance of National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 3;

Requisites

- 8 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 3 that requisites for the awarding of Scholarship be introduced for the 2006 academic year that link to a student's course of study and a minimum standard of performance in that subject;
- 9 **noted** SRG recommendation 4 that further work be undertaken to determine the nature and form of such requisites;
- 10 **agreed** that the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) undertake further work to determine the nature and form of such requisites with a view to having these in place for the 2007 school year;

¹ This retains the current description of scholarship.

Qualification recognition

- 11 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 6 that Scholarship awards do not attract credits or contribute towards a qualification;
- 12 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 7 that Scholarships awarded be placed on a student's Record of Learning;

Award criteria

- 13 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 12 that inter-subject moderation or scaling not be used;
- 14 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 13 that Scholarships should be awarded to an agreed percentage of students in each Scholarship subject;
- 15 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 14 that the percentage should be set within a range of 2 to 3 per cent of the cohort in each subject;
- 16 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 15 that the subject cohort is defined as closely as possible to the number of students studying in at least 14 credits in the subject at NCEA level 3 or university entrance equivalent;
- 17 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 16 that to allow for variability in subjects with small cohorts the mechanism of 2 to 3 per cent +/- 5 candidates is applied from 2005;
- 18 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 17 that to protect the integrity of Scholarship, where there is clear and justifiable evidence about the performance of students, some variation from the target performance set may be warranted;
- 19 **agreed** that NZQA report to the Cabinet Policy Committee (POL) on the 2005 transitional year by June 2006, and on full implementation by June 2007;
- 20 **noted** that while variability has been addressed, potential new problems may arise, particularly in the transition period such as variations in entry patterns and assessment procedures;
- 21 **agreed** that, in addition to paragraphs 13 to 20, within an overall agreed percentage across all subjects, the number of scholarships in each subject may vary within strict parameters, for example +/-1 percent of the level 3 cohort, to account for possible variation in student ability or the numbers of entrants in each subject, particularly in the 2005 transitional year;

Monetary recognition

- 22 **noted** SRG recommendation 5 that all students awarded Scholarships receive monetary recognition;
- 23 **noted** that decisions about monetary recognition for Scholarship are dependent on a report back to POL by 30 May 2005, regarding fiscal implications arising from the SRG's recommendations;

- 24 **deferred** a decision on whether all students awarded Scholarships receive monetary recognition, for further consideration as part of the 30 May 2005 report to POL (see paragraph 39.3);
- 25 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 8 that top subject scholars continue to be recognised;
- 26 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 9 that a new premier academic award be established that recognises the achievement of top scholars based on at least 3 Scholarship subjects, along with their full record of academic performance at school;
- 27 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 10 that such a premier award should be limited to 5 to 10 recipients;
- 28 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 11 that details for such an award be further developed;
- 29 **agreed** that the Ministry of Education and NZQA report to POL by 30 May 2005 on appropriate structure of awards, an appropriate distribution of money to ensure recognition of the very top scholars and associated operational details, including fiscal implications;

Assessment

- 30 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 18 that student performance be assessed against an assessment schedule that ensures a ranking of candidates is produced by marks or grades;
- 31 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 19 that assessment practices improve to ensure:
- 31.1 assessments (examinations or portfolios) are designed for each subject that ensure a spread of achievement by candidates that allows the candidates' performance to be ranked;
- 31.2 for each subject an assessment schedule is developed that reflects the nature and requirements of the Scholarship subject;
- 31.3 the level of discrimination established by the subject's assessment schedule enables the different abilities of candidates' work to be discriminated in that subject in transparent and objective ways;
- 31.4 the assessment schedule approach be informed through input from an external technical advisory group;

Implementation

- 32 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 20 that consideration be given to timing the release of Scholarship results by early February to provide more time for marking and monitoring;
- 33 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 21 that detailed advice and guidance be given to teachers and students including:
- 33.1 NZQA required to produce a timeline by term 2 that identifies critical dates in the year;

- 33.2 urgent attention given to identify the effective ways of building understanding about the impact of Scholarship in respective subjects;
 - 33.3 the nature and purpose of Scholarship;
 - 33.4 guidance to schools on factors that should determine students' suitability for entry;
 - 33.5 information relating to the nature of assessment, including the kinds of questions and assessment schedules;
 - 33.6 the development of exemplars with explanations to clarify assessment methods;
 - 33.7 professional development opportunities for teachers in relation to Scholarship;
 - 33.8 examination scripts being returned with information to provide students with useful feedback;
 - 33.9 providing schools with information on their Scholarship cohort's performance in line with the assessment schedule used for each subject;
 - 33.10 acknowledging that some form of collective commitment to the relevant expertise is required;
- 34 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 22 that NZQA establish a Scholarship Monitoring and Implementation Group (SMIG) that oversees and advises on the assessment process;
 - 35 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 23 that NZQA establish an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to provide advice and assurance around the quality of the processes put in place to ensure the integrity of Scholarship and acceptability of the outcomes;
 - 36 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 26 that communications be developed to inform the general public;

Other issues

- 37 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 24 that a review of issues specific to Maori is undertaken in relation to Scholarship;
- 38 **agreed** to SRG recommendation 25 that there needs to be further exploration of the languages issue, including better distinction between first and second language speakers in 2006 and beyond;

Further work

- 39 **directed** the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with NZQA, to report to POL on:
 - 39.1 a new statement of requisites for implementation in 2007, as referred to in paragraph 10, by December 2005;
 - 39.2 on the awards criteria for the transition year 2005 by June 2006, and on full implementation by June 2007, as referred to in paragraph 19;

- 39.3 the appropriate structure of awards, an appropriate distribution of money to ensure recognition of the very top scholars and associated operational details, including the fiscal implications, as referred to in paragraph 29, and including the fiscal implications of monetary recognition for all scholarships, as referred to in paragraph 24, by 30 May 2005;
- 39.4 the membership and the terms of reference for two independent external groups (SMIG and IAG), as referred to in paragraphs 34 and 35, by 30 May 2005;
- 39.5 issues specific to Maori in relation to Scholarship, as referred to in paragraph 37, by December 2006;
- 39.6 issues relating to the assessment of languages in Scholarship, as referred to in paragraph 38, by December 2006;
- 39.7 a communications plan, as referred to in paragraph 36, by 30 May 2005;

Financial implications

- 40 **noted** that any consequential changes to appropriations will be a charge against the Education Contingency of the 2005 Budget;

Consultation

- 41 **noted** that the Minister of Education indicates that consultation is not required with the government caucuses or other parliamentary parties.

Secretary of the Cabinet

Reference: CBC Min (05) 3/5; CAB (05) 109