

Myth # 6: Profiles of Expected Performance (PEPs)

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Myths

- **"PEPs are scaling".**
- **"PEPs are norm-referenced".**
- **"PEPs determine the results that must be obtained by students".**
- **"PEPs are not fair to students".**

Facts

- PEPs are monitoring tools used throughout the external assessment marking process to ensure fair and consistent assessment from year to year.
- PEPs are ranges which indicate the expected distributions of results. They are indicators, not targets. Results can, and do, fall outside PEP ranges when there is a legitimate reason (e.g. teacher professional development or new or revised standards).
- PEPs are developed annually for each standard on the basis of the professional judgement of NZQA National Assessment Facilitators and statistical staff, and subject experts from the sector (Examiners, Panel Leaders and Senior Markers).
- PEPs are set to take account of changes in standards (e.g. curriculum alignment), changes in examinations (e.g. fewer standards in a three hour examination session), knowledge of cohorts, and previous results distributions.
- PEPs are not norm-referenced. The expected performance is interpreted relative to the standard, not relative to other students.
- PEPs are not used to scale results. Scaling is a mathematical process that is used to adjust students' results. The amount by which results are scaled depends upon

Some things to think about

PEPs were initially developed in response to a recommendation of the State Services Commission Report (2005) to produce a tool that establishes bands of acceptable tolerances for external assessments.

PEPs are designed specifically to ensure consistency in assessment from year to year. Would it be fair for a student to achieve better results than their siblings for the same standard because they sit the examination in different years?

In a national examination the characteristics of the cohort does not usually change significantly from year to year. Therefore, the performance of students should not change significantly. Their performance may change as a result of the alignment of standards to the curriculum and other changes in standards; this is considered when setting and interpreting the PEPs.

group performance. An individual's result for an achievement standard depends on the performance of the individual, not the group.

- PEPs were introduced to increase fairness to students. They identify possible unacceptable variability in results from year to year, and allow this to be addressed during marking.

More Information

The PEPs for each standard are shown on the NZQA website from early November each year as graphs www.nzqa.govt.nz/subjects/

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