

Managing National Assessment Report

Flaxmere College

March 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Flaxmere College

30 March 2023

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2021.

No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications.

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Ensure there is an appropriate, annually updated Memorandum of Understanding with each consented external provider with whom the school engages.	Immediate and ongoing
Provide adequate and appropriate information for students and whānau on the procedures that must be followed in the assessment of standards by the school.	Immediate
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
Strengthen systems for monitoring internal moderation to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">standards have been adequately critiqued, andexternal grade verifiers are used where a pattern of inconsistency develops, andreplace external grade verifiers where their assessor judgements repeatedly lack consistency.	Immediate and ongoing
Further clarify <i>verification sufficiency</i> and <i>purposeful selection</i> so that all staff have a common understanding of NZQA's requirements.	Immediate and ongoing

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider within the next year:

- refining storage protocols and file naming conventions so that evidence of internal moderation is available upon request
- supporting all students engaged in NCEA to use their Learner Login to access all the functions it provides.



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30 May 2023

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External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 20 June 2019 Managing National Assessment Report The school has effectively resolved the agreed action to ensure all staff are aware of and follow the assessment rules on the reporting of Not Achieved grades.

The other agreed action to update staff and student handbooks so they provide current and accurate information on the length of time available for an Appeal has been partially addressed. Outdated and incomplete information remains in some course outlines and in the staff Assessment Policy 2023 documentation.

Although the school communicates assessment policy and procedures verbally to students and whānau, the students interviewed did not have a working knowledge of many of the processes associated with the award of the NCEA qualification. A dedicated student handbook (hardcopy or digital) would provide a readily accessible, consolidated and complete source of information on NCEA practices and procedures to support credible assessment practice. This needs to be reviewed annually to ensure it is consistent with NZQA's terminology and current requirements, and consistent with information in the school's course outlines.

Collaboration with external agencies The school has a high number of neuro diverse learners on its roll. In addition and in conjunction with the Education Review Office, the school is currently reviewing differentiation strategies for its 'at risk' group of learners to better meet their individual assessment needs.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school's external moderation results indicate assessor judgements are mostly consistent with the standard. However, there are three subject areas with a longitudinal lack of consistency. The school is advised to use external grade verifiers where this pattern emerges to avoid insularity, or where an external verifier has been used, to consider a change of verifier where a lack of consistency develops and is not resolved.

A further two subject areas received *Materials Not Received* reports contributing adversely to the school's measure of overall effectiveness. Although staff turnover in these subjects was a contributing factor, the Principal's Nominee does need to ensure electronic files are stored as required following the internal moderation round and can be accessed by NZQA moderators. Teachers do need to be mindful that evidence for a specific standard must be attributable to individual learners when evidence is sent for external moderation.

This review identified a standard with an unexpectedly high number of Excellence grades reported in 2021 and 2022. External moderation of the standard revealed the school's assessment schedule and checklists did not meet NZQA's requirements. The senior leadership identified they need a lens over potentially irregular grade spreads as part of their internal review process. This good practice will strengthen the school's quality assurance process and ensure credible results are reported to NZQA.

A number of other reports where assessor grades were not consistent with NZQA moderators' judgements, mentioned checking NZQA exemplars and other pertinent information on the NZQA subject page, particularly the clarifications and National Moderators' reports. These preliminary steps should always be part of the critiquing process prior to any assessment.

The school sends all evidence for external moderation digitally and staff are guided on expectations regarding the selection and storage of samples of student work centrally for external moderation. Improved file naming conventions will help ensure evidence of internal moderation is always available on request following the internal moderation round.

The Principal's Nominee's monitoring of internal moderation needs to include a check on these steps and a reminder to all staff of NZQA's requirements at the start of every year. In addition, the Principal's Nominee needs to ensure all staff are aware of and have access to the *Request clarification of an internally assessed standard* form on the NZQA website and hyperlink this into the Assessment Policy documentation for staff. This will help ensure teachers' understanding of the standard and their task design meets NZQA's expectations.

Internal review

Evidence of the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

The Flaxmere College rebuild has made the school's vision of a whānau-focused, community-style learning environment a reality. The design enables project-based learning in its collaborative learning spaces and fosters tuakana/teina learning relationships, which have long been a feature of the school culture. The school is using its own processes of self-review based on effective use of data analysis and staff/student voice to review programmes and implement changes designed to reduce barriers to success for all students.

Improving attendance and student outcomes School evidence shows that full attendance is directly aligned with engagement in assessment opportunities and subsequent positive, achievement outcomes. A strategic goal for the school is to continue to target students whose attendance rate is sitting between 70 and 85% percent and shift them into the 86 to 90 percent range. The school employs a full time liaison officer to target those with attendance at, or lower than 70 percent and House Leaders follow up on absentees above this level. The school celebrates those with high rates of attendance through special awards at assemblies and every student is given a clean slate in the second half of the year to qualify for an attendance award. The implementation of more robust processes to track and improve attendance is producing improved rates of attendance.

New modern learning environment facilitates greater collaboration Teachers from different levels work side by side in the newly-built, modern learning environment. During the review teachers indicated how they are planning to collaborate on projects to assess students against their respective standards. The timetable is constructed to allow longer periods for field work and cross curricular assessment to be carried out. The collaborative way that teachers in the college already work indicates they are well-prepared for the changes required to assess the new Level One standards in 2024.

Needs-based assessment In response to the COVID -19 pandemic and its extended impact on the rate of attendance, the school leadership has focused on meeting the needs of its rangatahi by offering Enrichment Days, which include the school's bi-annual noho Marae experience and standards included in the Primary Industry programme. An additional constraint for the school, is maximising outcomes for its high proportion of transient students. Enrichment Days provide greater certainty and manageability for this group of students.

Students readily engage in learning through real world contexts. The noho Marae experience gives students hands on experience of catering for manuhiri, as well as creating authentic experiences in a range of activities, including Raranga (flax weaving), Mau Rākau, Mahi Whai, Poi Making and Drill. Students engage in activities to support their qualification's goals, as well as improving knowledge of marae tikanga, fostering tuakana/teina relationships, and giving back to the wider community. As part of its annual internal review process, the school leadership reviews staff and student voice to evaluate how well its programmes are meeting the needs of its whole school community.

At year end, some students take up full time employment in the study leave period, while others remain at school to complete their qualifications. The school anticipates that in the future, the number of students engaging in external assessment will return to pre-2020 levels and is well-positioned to support students on university pathways to engage in future external assessment.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023.

Flaxmere College has the student firmly at the centre and individual learning plans support student success. Face-to-face communications with students and their whānau are a strength, providing a better understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures. Twice a year whānau are invited to participate in a learner led Whānau Learning Conference. Each student's individual Action Plan underpins the direction of the three-way conversation.

Improved tracking of student progress through individual Action Plans A strong sense of whakawhanaungatanga underpins the relational trust that is built between student and mentor teacher leading to improved engagement and attendance levels. Each student is assigned to a vertical mentor group that meets weekly to provide checks on each student's academic progress. Senior students are supported to co-construct their qualification's goals on an individual Action Plan. Pathway milestones are recorded including data tracking of their academic progress and outcomes across all subjects and a running record of credit totals along with progress toward literacy and numeracy goals. Other documentation is added, such as the student's bank account, IRD number, driver's licence, birth certificate and their CV, which can be used in a real world context to apply for roles on the student executive.

The Action Plan is linked to the college *Flaxmere College Graduate Profile Framework*. An easy-to-follow rubric allows students to self-evaluate their stage of development within the profile. The criteria for success are linked to the school's seven values including: Whakapapa Kairangi, Rangatiratanga, Mana Motuhake, Ako,

Manaakitanga and Hauora. The self-evaluation requires students to take ownership of their outcomes and create strategies for how they can improve.

The Deputy Principals and House Leaders hold A.R.E.A meetings (Attendance, Retention, Engagement and Holistic Achievement) twice a term to discuss all students in a cohort, evaluate their progress, identify those 'at risk' and implement strategies for improvement as required. Every senior student is supported to ensure potential barriers to success are minimised.

Ngā Tikanga courses provide structured learning time All level two and level three students have a Ngā Tikanga course in their study line. A range of Tikanga themed standards are offered reflecting students' interests and capabilities. If a student is on a University Entrance pathway they have the flexibility to use this time to complete work for that award. This ensures another layer of support to ensure students meet their goals and are engaged in purposeful, meaningful learning opportunities.

Participation in digital online assessment encouraged In preparation for using NZQA's digital online platform, "Assessment Master," the school is encouraged to enter students in the new Literacy/Numeracy Co-Requisite standards in 2023. This will ensure both staff and students are familiar with the digital online platform and better prepared for engaging with digital first assessment from 2024 onwards.

Additional assessor support is available for teachers in NZQA's Learning Management System, *Pūtake*. All teachers require access to *Pūtake* to be added by the Principal's Nominee via their ESL login. Additional online or face to face support is available by contacting the school's School Relationship Manager. The MOE's *NCEA Change Programme* site also offers guidance and support with planning and preparation for the delivery of assessment for the new standards.

Clarify NZQA's requirements for Memoranda of Understanding and Subcontracting arrangements Prior to this review, an analysis of school assessment data revealed a high rate of Excellence outcomes in one particular standard delivered and assessed off site. The school created a Memorandum of Understanding with the owner of the site where the assessment took place. However, that party did not have Consent to Assess, so a Memorandum of Understanding is not required.

Any Memorandum of Understanding, with a consented provider, must clearly state where the responsibilities and obligations for assessment, moderation and reporting results lie for either party. As the aforementioned standard was assessed under Flaxmere College's Consent to Assess, the school alone was responsible for the assessment and moderation of the standard in this case.

Where another party is engaged for its specialist expertise, and it is not a consented provider, the school must apply to NZQA for a sub-contract with that party; where the intention is for the unconsented party to take any part in the formation of grade judgements towards a standard.

Encourage all students to use their *Students and Learners Login* As a result of its low level of engagement in digital online exams, the school's learner login rate has been low. However, students need support to register for their learner login, so that they can access the functions it provides and be ready to login to the digital online assessment platform in the near future. Additionally, it is through their Learner Login that students can:

- check the accuracy of their entries and the results reported to NZQA
- order copies of their qualification certificates
- request reviews or reconsiderations of external examination papers, and
- print an official copy of their Record of Achievement.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023.

Strengthen internal moderation The school is using the Kamar moderation tool for managing internal moderation. This gives the school leadership confidence that each internally assessed standard has been moderated before its results are reported to NZQA. However, conversations with Heads of Learning and an analysis of external moderation reports reveal that a more robust check of each standard's Internal Moderation Cover Sheet is needed to

- ensure assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose, and
- ensure suitable subject specialists have been used to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of student work, and
- ensure over-verification is monitored to reduce unnecessary workload for grade verifiers.

Assessors are expected to use clarification documents, NZQA exemplars, school benchmark samples collected from earlier external moderation rounds and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements.

Clarify verification sufficiency and purposeful selection Staff require further clarification on NZQA's guidelines for sufficiency as some departments interviewed verified grades awarded on more samples of student work than NZQA requires to assure assessment is credible. The Principal's Nominee needs to monitor over-verification to reduce any unnecessary workload for verifiers.

There is no predetermined number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size is best determined using a strategic selection process, where the number of pieces selected will vary according to the depth of assessor experience, feedback from previous external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and the number of students assessed. Where over-verification does occur, it should be done knowingly and purposefully for its professional learning component.

Assessors should purposefully select work for grade verification from around grade boundaries, as well as any grades that need to be reviewed to ensure that their decisions are consistent with the standard.

Storage of student work for external moderation At the time of this review, the Principal's Nominee was in the process of reviewing storage protocols and naming conventions for the storage of student work for external moderation. There has already been good progress in this area, but the enhancements suggested in the External Review section of this report will ensure that evidence of internal moderation is always available to NZQA following the internal moderation round.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Flaxmere College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Flaxmere College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Flaxmere College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes.

Flaxmere College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Flaxmere College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Flaxmere College reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their whānau about assessment

Flaxmere College has effective processes and procedures for:

- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success, such as the holding of parent gatherings and special assemblies.

Flaxmere College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA’s review of how effectively Flaxmere College:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA’s Managing National Assessment review and through the school’s own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and whānau.

Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2021* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school’s review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school’s consideration to enhance good assessment practice.

What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school’s internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school’s assessment systems at least once every five years.

How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- a range of 2022 learning area reports to the Board of Trustees
- a range of curriculum policy documents
- Flaxmere College *Assessment Policy 2023* (staff handbook)
- *Flaxmere College Strategic Plan 2023*
- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- samples of course outlines.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Leaders of Learning for:
 - English
 - Health and Physical Education
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps, and to agree on any action required.