

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Mount Aspiring College**

### **April 2025**

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Mount Aspiring College

8 April 2025

### 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 2022.

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. These are:

Action	Timeframe
<b>External and internal review</b>	
Document the completion and evaluation of actions carried out in response to external moderation feedback	Within 6 months of receiving feedback
<b>Credible assessment practice to meet student needs</b>	
Monitor that all derived grades have been subject to quality assurance	Before they are reported to NZQA and prior to the start of external examinations
Ensure entries for internals either have a result or are withdrawn	Before the end of year data file submission to NZQA
<b>Moderation to ensure assessment quality</b>	
Review the effectiveness of the monitoring of internal moderation	Within 2025

### **For consideration**

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

- adding a self-review component to the school's biannual checks of assessment and moderation systems in learning areas.



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12 May 2025

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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 27 March 2019 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has encouraged teachers to withdraw students' entries for internal standards if they do not have a corresponding result or if students have not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This has been partially successful, with next steps for the school outlined below to assist with tracking student progress towards their qualifications.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** The school needs to monitor that actions taken to address external moderation feedback are adequately documented and evaluated. This will enable more effective review of internal moderation processes. Currently, the Heads of Learning Area discuss moderation feedback with their teams and may document this in the minutes of their meetings. The Heads of Learning Area take ownership of this process and make recommended changes to assessment programmes or tasks as needed. The Principal's Nominee needs oversight of these external moderation responses to ensure that issues are addressed effectively and that all systems are working to support credible assessment. A clearer school-wide view of moderation responses will assist in determining if there are further areas that could be supported through staff professional development. This could include suggesting further standards to be included in external moderation plans, and school-wide professional learning if required, to address issues identified across learning areas.

Challenges of implementing Level 1 pilot and final standards have contributed to the mixed consistency rating from external moderation feedback over the last two years, and there are no ongoing patterns of inconsistency in outcomes. Heads of Learning Area largely value the external moderation process for the assistance it provides in understanding the requirements of the standard and associated resources. The school is working on further encouraging teacher engagement with assessor support provided by NZQA, including courses and the Assessor Practice Tool available in NZQA's learning management system, Pūtake. Some teachers have begun to access these resources to ensure that their understanding is up-to-date.

### 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)*

**Effective internal review capability** Mount Aspiring College has systems that promote internal review at whole-school, learning area and individual levels. There is significant leadership and ownership of assessment processes within the Heads of Learning Area team and subject areas. Fortnightly Heads of Learning Area meetings are a forum for discussion, updates, sharing good assessment practices, and improving consistency across learning areas. The Principal's Nominee leads discussions about assessment reviews and systems, which are then followed up in Learning Area meetings and in fortnightly meetings between Heads of Learning Area and their senior leader line managers. Recent focuses have included implementing course changes as a result of feedback from an external provider reviews of learning areas by an external provider, tracking the progress of target groups of students

towards their qualification goals, and ensuring that supporting the attainment of the literacy and numeracy NCEA co-requisite is a whole-staff enterprise.

The school's Principal's Nominee has particular strengths in reviewing assessment systems for effectiveness and currency, and in supporting professional learning. She recently surveyed teachers about assessment practices at Mount Aspiring College, specifically to identify areas that require improvement or further review. The survey findings have been shared with Heads of Learning Areas. She has used the findings, to prioritise actions to build teachers' understanding and assessment capability. Ensuring that teacher confidence and documentation align with actual practice will be an initial focus. The Principal's Nominee has also thoroughly reviewed the school's assessment communications, ensuring that handbooks for staff and students are up-to-date and comprehensive. Additionally, the accessibility of information has been improved through the use of slideshows in assemblies and whānau time, and by making forms for student and teacher use available digitally. The Principal's Nominee has, in her first year, established strong foundations for a culture of professional learning around assessment.

The school could consider strengthening the links between learning area and whole-school review by incorporating a self-review component into the biannual department checks conducted by the Principal's Nominee. Currently, these visits are focussed on procedures and compliance and are effective in supporting the completion of school processes. There is an opportunity to also use the visits to assist with completing the actions that are identified in this report and to feed into Heads of Learning Area meetings with senior leaders.

## **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 NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)*

**Localised pathways and assessment programmes** Mount Aspiring College is effective in supporting students in a wide range of academic, training, and employment pathways. Making the most of the school's location, there is a large outdoor pursuits department, with many students pursuing learning and assessment opportunities in this field. The school also has an outdoor pursuits academy that hosts Year 13 students from around the country, supporting them to gain the skills and credentials needed for both individual outdoor pursuits and future employment, without compromising their classroom-based programmes.

**Assessment authenticity and the use of Artificial Intelligence** Students and staff are well prepared to navigate the challenges that generative artificial intelligence poses to traditional learning and assessment. The Principal's Nominee and Heads of Learning Area have, in 2025, continued their discussions and policy development to support credible, authentic assessment during rapid technological change. School policies now include clear guidance for teachers and students on how authentic assessment can be assured. Students are provided with task instructions that outline the options and requirements for the applicable standard, and in turn, students complete a form declaring any external sources used to complete the task. The declaration is holistic, including assistance from peers, teachers, parents, the internet and published sources, as well as artificial intelligence. Students interviewed during the review acknowledged that their teachers' knowledge of their work remains the greatest tool in detecting inauthentic work. Teachers remain appropriately vigilant on matters of authenticity, which will stand the school in good stead as technology and methods of assessment continue to change.

**Quality assurance of results for derived grades** The school must monitor that quality assured results are published to NZQA for potential use as derived grades. To ensure the accuracy of reported grades, teachers must document a quality assurance process that is monitored to assure senior leaders that all grades reported to NZQA are credible. Currently, grades are generated from school practice exams that are marked within departments. These exams have variable quality assurance practices and are not monitored by the Principal's Nominee. Quality assurance must include checking the exam against the current standard and assessment specifications, the verification or justification of grades and seeking support outside the school as needed. The practice exam must be critiqued within the school to ensure its suitability, even if it has been provided by a trusted source. When grades generated as described are submitted to NZQA it ensures that students who are unexpectedly prevented from attending an examination are not disadvantaged.

**Accuracy of internal entries** The school needs to ensure that entries for internally assessed standards either have a result or are withdrawn. This will assist with tracking student participation and progress towards a qualification. The school has processes for students and teachers to check entries and results regularly throughout the year, but this has not been sufficiently effective in removing non-assessed entries. The Principal's Nominee will use the tools available in the school's student management system to improve monitoring. All internal entries should be as accurate as possible throughout the year, and any entries without results should be removed before the December data file is submitted. This enables students to more easily check that their results are complete, and allows students, whānau, and Deans to monitor student progress and ensure eligibility for qualifications and awards.

## **Moderation to ensure assessment quality**

*Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)*

**Ownership and leadership of moderation processes within learning areas** Heads of Learning Area have established leadership of, and processes for, the completion of internal moderation and record-keeping within their learning areas. These include a range of effective practices, including assigning lead moderators and check moderators for particular standards, whole-team moderation meetings, and attending external moderation meetings for trades standards. Experienced teachers adapt processes to support new staff members in developing their assessment capability. There are various documentation processes used, with some variability in the depth of verification comments and internal reviews recorded. These records are maintained in both physical and digital formats.

The school should review the effectiveness of the current system of monitoring moderation systems across the school. The current process involves the Principal's Nominee meeting with each Head of Learning Area in terms one and three. The purpose of these meetings is largely administrative, with discussions focussing on assessment programmes and department systems early in the year, and external assessment plans later in the year. A review could include whether these checks are sufficient to ensure that school processes are being followed consistently, whether to adopt a standardised system of documentation, and where further support may be required. The monitoring of moderation processes must adequately assure senior leaders that only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

## **Appendix 1: Effective Practice**

### **Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students**

**Mount Aspiring College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its 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
- providing credible opportunities for students to complete the NCEA co-requisite
- 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 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.

**Mount Aspiring 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
- ensuring teachers and student are aware of authenticity requirements including the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

## **Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality**

**Mount Aspiring College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes.

**Mount Aspiring College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements.

## **Effective management and use of assessment-related data**

**Mount Aspiring 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.

**Mount Aspiring 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
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.



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

### **Mount Aspiring College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- 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.

### **Mount Aspiring 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
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

## Appendix 2: Overview

### What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mount Aspiring 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 2022* (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 NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*.

### 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:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Student NCEA Handbook 2025*, Mount Aspiring College
- *Authenticity Guidelines for teachers 2025*, Mount Aspiring College
- *MAC NQF Assessment Policies and Procedures*, Mount Aspiring College, 2025
- *Consent to Assess: Quality Management System*, Mount Aspiring College.

### The School Relationship Manager met with:

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

There was a report-back session with the 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.