

Further Assessment Opportunities

2010 Assessment & Examination Rules & Procedures

Introduction

A key feature of school-based internal assessment is that further opportunities to be assessed can be provided for students who initially fail to achieve their potential at any level, where this is appropriate.

The diversity of practice between schools and sometimes between departments within a school regarding the provision of further assessment opportunities for internally assessed standards (sometimes called “reassessment”) has led to credibility issues and perceptions of unfairness. Furthermore, further assessment can contribute to over-assessment of students.

The aim of these rules and procedures is to reduce the current diversity of practice, while at the same time allowing teachers to exercise professional judgment in their assessment practice.

It is important that teachers and students understand that further assessment opportunities are not mandatory and may not always be practical or feasible to provide.

From mid-2009 schools will be asked to begin implementation of these rules and procedures into their school wide policies and procedures.

These requirements will become a part of the **2010 Assessment and Examination Rules and Procedures**.

In 2010, NZQA will report on the implementation of these rules and procedures as part of its Managing National Assessment system reviews and as required.

Note: a glossary of terms used has been provided in this document.

Further Assessment Opportunities Rules and Procedures for schools

(Refer to the glossary for a definition of key terms)

1. A maximum of one further opportunity for assessment of a standard can be provided within a year.

Students' learning is not increased by repeated summative assessment, but by extensive feed forward and feedback. Students should not be assessed for a standard until the teacher is confident that achievement of the standard is within their reach, or until the final deadline for assessment, if there is one.

A maximum of one further opportunity for assessment means none or one. It does not mean one must be offered.

The need for further assessment can be minimised when teachers:

- ensure students understand the standard and the test, brief or assignment (the performance criteria or achievement criteria, the range statement and link with the curriculum)
- discuss exemplars of successful work in different contexts with students
- give students adequate practice opportunities, including whole-class brainstorming
- assess students when they are ready and
- provide templates to guide students.

Eligibility for a further opportunity

If a further opportunity for assessment is offered to any student, it must be made **available** to all students entered for that standard. This is regardless of their performance on the first opportunity. Therefore, further assessment opportunities need to be carefully planned.

All students must be able to:

- use the further opportunity to improve their original grade
- access the further opportunity, if they wish, including those who did not complete the original assessment for an acceptable reason, as determined by the school's policy on missed and late assessment.

It is not the intention to allow students a further assessment opportunity where they have chosen for unacceptable reasons not to take the first opportunity.

Results of a further opportunity

Students must be awarded the highest grade they have achieved over both opportunities:

- If a student does not achieve the standard on the first attempt, they must have access to any grade from Not Achieved to Excellence on their second attempt.
- If a student achieves a lower grade on the second attempt, the higher grade achieved on the first attempt is the result that must be reported to NZQA.

Manageability of a further opportunity

It is the school's decision whether a further opportunity will be offered for any standard. If it is not manageable to offer a further opportunity, then students should be advised from the outset that there is only one opportunity to be assessed against that standard. It should occur after further learning has taken place.

Conditions of assessment during further opportunities

It is essential that conditions of assessment during a further opportunity be consistent with those for the first opportunity. For example, students cannot be allowed to work at home for the second opportunity when this was not allowed for the first opportunity. Inability to provide the same conditions for the second opportunity would be a reason to make only one opportunity available in the year.

2. A resubmission should be limited to specific aspects of the assessment and no more than one resubmission should be provided (refer to the glossary for definition of resubmission).

- A resubmission can be offered when students have made mistakes which they should be capable of discovering and correcting on their own. By definition, the problem should be capable of rapid resolution. In other cases, a further assessment opportunity may be more appropriate.
- If a resubmission is offered, it must take place before the teacher gives any feedback to the whole class (or any student) on the work done. If more teaching has occurred after the first assessment opportunity, resubmission is not possible.
- Feedback to students prior to a resubmission must be general and not compromise the authenticity of the student's work and responses. Teachers should give only general advice. A student may be told, for example, "you need to fix your referencing up" or "there are grammar issues here".
- A resubmission must not compromise the assessment. For example, if the original assessment was completed in a supervised classroom, the resubmission must be completed under the same conditions. It is not appropriate to allow a student to complete their resubmission at home when the original assessment was done in class. The teacher should also ensure the resubmission takes place in a timely fashion.
- A resubmission does not constitute a further opportunity for assessment because it does not involve a new assessment being set after further learning.
- A resubmission can be offered after either the first or the second assessment opportunity or after both.

3. Approaches to assessment that involve collection of evidence must be documented (refer to the glossary for definition of collecting evidence over time).

- Care must be taken to ensure that teachers do not assist students to complete an assessment. The work must be the work of the student.
- Evidence used to make a grade decision must be recorded and verifiable. For example if no video of a performance is practicable or the evidence has come from conferencing with students, teachers need to provide a checklist or an annotated file note with a standard-specific description of the evidence which the teacher viewed to justify the judgements made. This annotated file note could be added to the mark sheet/results notice which is returned to the students. A copy must be retained by the teacher for moderation purposes and for future reference.

4. When assessing aspects of a standard separately, teachers must be confident that students can demonstrate competency for the standard as a whole.

- In the case of a standard that has separate elements, if it is acceptable to assess each element through a different task and submit an overall result, the assessor must be satisfied that the student can demonstrate an understanding of or competency against the standard as a whole.

Glossary of terms used

There has been considerable debate about assessment terms used in schools by teachers, students, and parents. These rules and procedures use terms defined as follows:

Further assessment opportunity

A further assessment opportunity occurs when a new, quality-assured assessment is provided for students after their first opportunity, **and after additional teaching and learning has taken place**. This could be a new test, a new writing topic or a new research topic. For some tasks offering a further assessment opportunity will not be possible for manageability and practical reasons.

Resubmission

A resubmission opportunity should only be offered where a teacher judges that a mistake has been made by the student, **which the student should be capable of discovering and correcting themselves**. For example, the student may have handed in the assessment, but may not have made a particular calculation correctly. In such cases, the teacher may consider it appropriate to allow a student to resubmit a specific part of the assessment. The amount of information a teacher provides to a student in identifying the error is important in this context. In the case above, the teacher might say “your method is fine but there is a problem with your calculations....” The teacher would not however say “there is a problem with your use of brackets in this calculation.”

Collecting evidence over time

It may be appropriate, in some standards, for the teacher to gather achievement evidence over time. In this case there is no specific “assessment event.”

This would apply when the standard assesses a skill or piece of knowledge that students could demonstrate over the course of their normal class work or outside the classroom in controlled contexts for example, safe practice in a workshop, public speaking, performing arts, or appropriate use of technical equipment.

Feed forward and feedback

Some assessments build over a period of time up to a final submission. For example, a teacher will provide feedback over a period of time in the case of a performance task, a writing assessment or a portfolio of a year’s work. In general feedback (comment on progress) and feed forward (suggestions for next steps) should become less specific the closer the student is to the submission date, in order to avoid the teacher effectively doing the assessment for the student.

Frequently asked questions

1. Does this mean that I must give all students two assessment opportunities?

No, a further assessment opportunity is not a requirement. However, if a reassessment is provided for some it must be planned for and provided for all students to improve their grades at any level.

2. I give my students lots of formative/practice assessment before the summative assessment. Can’t I do this any more?

Yes. This is good practice and is encouraged. However, the formative or practice assessment should not be the same as the summative assessment.

3. I don’t have any assessment event at all. I assess my students by observation or conferencing and award the standard when the student has demonstrated competence. Does any of this apply to me?

Yes. Guideline 3 applies. You also need to ensure that the feedback and feed forward you provide meet the requirements set out in the glossary section under “Feed forward and Feedback”.

4. With unit standards, in particular, I have been used to providing multiple resubmission opportunities, element by element. Is this now no longer acceptable?

In general it is not acceptable. Only one resubmission should be provided for a particular piece of work. This implies that teachers need to be confident that the students can, in fact, demonstrate competence in a standard across all its elements at the same time.

- 5. Only some of my students want another assessment opportunity. Does this mean that all students must do another assessment regardless of whether they want to or not?**

No. All students must be “offered” another opportunity but may choose not to take it.

- 6. Is it a good idea to schedule second assessment opportunities for some standards from the beginning of the year or topic?**

You may want to do this because of the requirements of the standard and for practical reasons, particularly for larger cohorts. You will need to carefully consider your students’ assessment load and the manageability of the process for teachers.

- 7. Some of my students have asked for a second assessment opportunity, but there is no time to do any more teaching. What can I do?**

A second assessment opportunity should follow the first only if there has been more teaching and learning. In some exceptional cases, students may be provided with additional independent learning opportunities, and this may warrant another assessment opportunity.

- 8. One of my students wants to resubmit. I have told him to check his calculations, but he has asked me for more help. What can I do?**

It is not appropriate to provide any more specific information if the calculation error is one that the student cannot identify, even after being advised that an error exists.

- 9. I have been used to allowing only *some* of my students a further assessment opportunity, mainly those that have received a Not Achieved grade. Am I required now to offer it to all of them? Surely this is going to create major workload and logistical challenges, especially in big schools.**

If a further assessment opportunity is offered, it must be offered to all students. Offering only some students another assessment opportunity is not fair. Further assessment opportunities must be carefully managed and preferably planned in advance to ensure that the process is manageable. It is also worth remembering that not all students will necessarily accept the offer of a second assessment opportunity.

- 10. Some students have improved their grade from Not Achieved to Excellence on the second assessment opportunity; others either elected not to take another opportunity or did not change their grade on the second opportunity. Is this fair?**

Yes it is. Those students who have advanced from Not Achieved to Excellence have demonstrated that they can achieve at that level of the criteria.

- 11. I have worked hard to ensure my students can demonstrate competency in all the elements of a unit standard. They have worked really hard to get to this point. However, when I look at the standard holistically, I don’t think that some students can demonstrate competence across the whole standard and all the elements at a given point in time. What can I do?**

The students who cannot demonstrate competence across the whole standard should not be awarded the standard.

12. If a student is away on the date of a further assessment opportunity does this mean they have missed their one chance for reassessment?

No. Schools have their own policies on absences from assessment. This happens now with initial assessments and the situation is no different.

13. If offering a further assessment opportunity for this standard is too difficult to manage do I have to offer it?

No. This is a school decision and the school needs to establish their own policy on what is and isn't manageable. As long as students are advised before, or at the start, of the course then this is fair.

14. What exactly is the status of these rules and procedures?

2009 is intended to a year for consultation and planning. Schools are strongly advised to review their assessment practices and policies to align with these new rules and procedures. In 2010, these rules and procedures are to be implemented and will be reported on by NZQA.

15. What about the Standards Review? Wasn't this meant to provide guidelines about Further Assessment Opportunities for all standards?

Yes, the information provided as part of the standards review will be based on the new rules and procedures, but will be more specific to each standard.

16. If we assess the elements of a unit standard at different times of the year do we have to wait until all assessment is complete before we offer a resubmission or a reassessment?

No. If it is appropriate, in exceptional circumstances for some standards, for the assessment to take place at element level then a resubmission or a reassessment can take place at element level as well.

17. Guideline 4 seems to imply that standards must be assessed as a whole and at the same time. Does this mean we can no longer assess standards over a longer period of time or that all assessment must take place at the same time?

No. The teacher must be confident that students can demonstrate understanding or competency against the standard as a whole, but not necessarily complete the assessment entirely at a particular point in time or at one time. Evidence can still be collected over time or different elements for a standard can be assessed at different times.