

Assessment Master (AM) Planner Innovation Trial 2020 Summary

NCEA Online Programme



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2020 Innovation Trial Summary: Assessment Master (AM) Planner

Trial overview

The purpose of the Assessment Master (AM) Planner trial was to use the examination platform to test elements of digital assessment provision (design, development, delivery, marking and results publication) including process and innovation (functional and assessment).

Four features of AM functionality that aren't currently available to Exam Centre Managers (ECMs), Supervisors, and the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA) were assessed to determine their suitability without being customised for NZQA users. This basic functionality is:

- **Session Planner** - which allows ECMs to plan and assign individual staff and students to rooms for supervision purposes during an exam session, and manage exceptions such as Special Assessment Conditions and clashes.
- **Online Reports** - which enables NZQA staff to design, publish, and review report templates, and Exam Centre (EC) staff to complete and submit reports.
- **Attendance** - which allows student attendance to be recorded online.
- **Notifications/Messaging** - which allows 'real-time' messaging for NZQA and EC staff to message each other.

Trial preparation started in mid-December 2019, however implementation was delayed due to changes in trial personnel. NZQA staff tested the functionality on 18 March 2020. An objective view of the functionality being trialled was achieved using a survey tool called *Usability Testing and SUS*: <https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/usability-evaluation/index.html>

The plan for the trial was for staff from the NZQA exam management team to trial all functionality. If the outcome of the initial trial was successful, a small group of ECMs would be invited to participate in a subsequent trial of all four features of functionality.

Trial outcome and evaluation

The initial trial showed that none of the tested functionality entirely met the needs of either the NZQA exam management team or the EC staff.

There were significant issues with the design and functionality of the features, including:

- No alignment with NZQA processes and data requirements in the design of the custom planner features.
- No consideration of downstream needs, such as aggregation of incident report data for analysis, and data to support payments to EC staff claims.
- Apparent defects preventing thorough testing of some features.

Due to this, the trial with ECMs did not proceed.

Trial participants were given an evaluation questionnaire to provide feedback on how the trial was managed. All respondents agreed that they understood the purpose of the AM Planner Innovation Trial, and that the trial was an accurate and reliable test of the functionality. Respondents indicated that functionality didn't appear fit for purpose in the first instance and didn't appear to provide any benefits or improvements to current processes.

Next steps

Recommendations from the trial include:

- More in depth analysis of the needs of those groups who benefit from the features of trialled functionality.
- A thorough gap analysis between the functions of AM Planner and the needs of potential users.

Once analysis is completed in 2021, this functionality will be considered for future trialling and/or development.