

Managing National Assessment Report

Tararua College

September 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tararua 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 families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

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 meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (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 *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019* (Assessment Rules).

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- 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 to consider 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 four 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
- *Tararua College New Zealand Qualifications Handbook for Senior Students 2019*
- *Tararua College Staff Procedures for New Zealand Qualifications 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Acting Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Acting 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.

SUMMARY

Tararua College

19 September 2019

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2018.

What the school is doing well

Tararua College is committed to providing personalised learning opportunities based on knowing each individual student and meeting their needs. Self-review is effectively used to plan and deliver quality assessment experiences for students. A consistent school-wide approach to the management of assessment was found during the review. Effective assessment processes and practices help ensure the credibility of assessment and robustness of quality assurance.

Assessment practices are consistent, and the provision of courses is effectively managed. The involvement of outside providers and the use of differentiated programmes help engage students and support their transition into meaningful pathways. Students eligible for special assessment conditions are identified and supported.

Effective moderation processes are evident throughout the school. Internal and external moderation is viewed as valuable feedback and additional support for assessor judgements. Teachers strategically select material for moderation at grade boundaries and document discussion around reasons for assessor judgements. The online data analysis tool provides visibility for Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee to monitor completion of the process. This assures Senior Management that all standards, where results are reported to NZQA, have been through a quality assurance process.

Assessment data is well managed to ensure results reported to NZQA are timely and accurate. Students' achievement is closely monitored and tracked. Data is used to identify students who may be at risk of achieving their assessment goal and support their progress.

Clear communication of assessment practice and NCEA information is evident among students and staff. Regular sharing of best practice at scheduled meetings reinforces expectations, ensures effective implementation of any changes and supports a consistent approach. School documentation is regularly updated.

Areas for improvement

Internal moderation ensures the reporting of credible results. The school's internal moderation monitoring process would be strengthened by the Principal's Nominee discussing moderation practice with teachers and reconciling this with moderation documentation. This will assure Senior Management that an effective internal moderation process has been completed and the results reported are credible.

Some minor updates to the staff handbook were noted for inclusion in the next publication to ensure information is accurate and reflects current practice. Memoranda of understanding with outside providers outline the nature of the relationship. The school should strengthen its process to ensure there is a current and fit for purpose Memorandum of Understanding with every outside provider used throughout the year.

Agreed action

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are to:

- strengthen the internal moderation monitoring process by reconciling documentation with actual practice
- update staff document as discussed in this report
- develop a process to reconcile memoranda of understanding with reported results from outside providers.

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7 November 2019

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

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

Action Items from 22 July 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed the three agreed items from the previous report. The school has:

- developed processes to support students at risk of not meeting literacy and numeracy requirements
- clarified internal moderation processes with staff to ensure that student work selected for grade verification is at grade boundaries
- worked with staff to limit the number of late entries with no reported results.

Response to external moderation outcomes The Principal's Nominee shares the results of external moderation with the relevant Head of Department and/or Teacher in Charge and a copy of the report is saved in the shared drive. Where inconsistencies are noted by the moderator, a *Response to External Moderation* sheet is completed. This requires a review of the report and a documented action plan to address the issues. These are discussed and followed up to ensure adequate completion.

Feedback from external moderation can confirm the effectiveness of internal moderation. Therefore, adding a reflection on internal moderation could strengthen the response to external moderation process. This reflection could include a review of the grade verifier used, such as ensuring they are a subject expert with recent standard-specific experience and considering if a change of verifier is warranted. It could also include reviewing the extent to which the strategic selection of samples is understood and implemented. Extending the external moderation response process will support robust internal moderation practice and maintain the assessor's understanding of the standard.

Internal review

Evidence for 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)

Self-review is focused on ensuring assessment best meets the needs of students. School processes are reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and any improvements identified are then actioned.

The school is committed to effective assurance processes that confirm the credibility and quality of assessment and aligns to NZQA requirements. At the time of the current Managing National Assessment review there were staff members acting in the roles of Principal and Deputy Principal. Furthermore, since the last Managing National Assessment review there have been three different people in the role of Principal's Nominee. The school is to be commended that processes to manage national assessment have been maintained during this time. This demonstrates

credible assessment practices are embedded and there is effective communication and support to maintain them.

Discussion on assessment practices and programmes is regular and ongoing through Heads of Department, department and staff meetings. These meetings provide a robust framework for ongoing self-review and improvement. Student feedback is also used throughout the school to support review of teaching programmes and assessments.

The school has identified areas for future review. This includes:

- trialling integrated and contextualised learning programmes
- encouraging certificate and course endorsement with a greater focus on the quality rather than the quantity of assessments.

As senior management positions are confirmed, the school welcomes the timeliness of this review to support consolidation of its assessment processes and practices. The school is well placed to continue its support of students and delivery of credible assessment.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- including a reflection on internal moderation as part of the school's response to external moderation process.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 5.5)

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

- identifying those eligible for special assessment conditions using school-based evidence and supporting these students to access entitlements
- providing multi-level courses in subjects
- negotiating with students the standards to be undertaken in their assessment programme to reflect student's needs, interests and future pathways
- engaging with outside providers to extend the school's capacity to provide a range of vocational assessment opportunities
- extending the scope and range of courses the school is able to offer by utilising programmes through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu and the Virtual Learning Network
- meeting the targeted needs of a range of students through the High-Performance Academy Programme and the Alternative Education Centre
- clarifying with staff and restricting the use of Supported Learning Standards to appropriate students
- supporting the management of NZQA external examinations and reviewing practice to identify improvements.

Tararua College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring authentic, valid and standard-specific evidence is available for derived grades if required
- holding discussions with staff and reinforcing expectations to develop a consistent approach and common understanding of:
 - managing missed and late assessment
 - resubmission and further assessment opportunities processes
 - withdrawing a student from a standard versus reporting Not Achieved
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is based on authentic standard-specific evidence from practice examinations or other appropriate assessment.

Encouraging students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school is looking to ways to encourage more students to experience success in STEM subjects. This includes:

- using outside providers to offer STEM-focused short course opportunities
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers such as Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu and Virtual Learning Network to deliver STEM programmes the school is unable to offer

- developing a collaborative cross-curricular approach in the junior school to develop understanding around STEM subjects and encourage further participation in the senior school.

Along with these initiatives the school is encouraged to consider ways to specifically address equity in STEM subjects between ethnic groups. The school's equity ratio over the last five years, shows the school's Māori and Pacific students continuing to be engaged in and achieve at lower rates than its students from other ethnicities in STEM subjects at Year 13.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 6.4b)

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

- ensuring new and amended assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work focusing on those at grade boundaries
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to clarify and support assessment judgements
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions either digitally or hard copy as applicable.
- using an online tool to monitor and provide visibility of the whole process.

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

- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- encouraging the digital submission of material. In 2019, 43 percent of material for external moderation was submitted digitally
- responding to external moderation issues including encouraging teachers to seek clarification if required, or appeal reports.

Strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation The monitoring of internal moderation by senior management can be strengthened by reconciling documentation with actual practice. Currently the school's online data analysis facility is used to view completion of internal moderation. While this provides excellent oversight of the progress of all standards, it is essentially administrative ensuring teachers comply with requirements. Reconciling the completed documentation with student work for a random sample of standards in each department area annually, will provide a transparent account of moderation effectiveness and issues, where identified. The reconciliation should involve a documented discussion on moderation processes and could cover aspects such as the selection of material, appropriateness of the grade verifier used, and evidence of discussions around borderline examples of student work. This will assure senior management that moderation processes are understood and undertaken effectively.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- strengthen the internal moderation monitoring process by reconciling documentation with actual practice.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

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

- utilising the visibility and access of the student management system to track and monitor student progress towards achieving qualification goals
- making use of estimated grades and using a 'traffic light system' to identify and track students at risk of not achieving so additional support can be provided
- identifying students on enrolment who may require literacy support or special assessment conditions in order to access Level 6 of the curriculum when in Year 11
- focusing on achievement of literacy and numeracy through:
 - identifying areas throughout the school programme that provide assessment contributing to NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements
 - sharing students' reading and writing levels with staff to guide the level of language used for assessment
- developing the use of real time reporting systems for parents that are linked to individual assessments rather than generic course comments to support timely identification of progress
- holding school practice examinations prior to 1 September and using results to inform student entry into external standards.

Tararua College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- using NZQA Key Indicators and data submission reports to check and monitor the accuracy of entries and results
- ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- developing a robust process to check entries in externally assessed standards to ensure accuracy and limit late entries.

Encourage students to use their NZQA Learner login The definitive way for students to check that entries and results have been reported accurately, make requests for review and reconsideration of external examinations, and order certificates and a Record of Achievement is through their NZQA Learner Login. The percentage of students who registered to use this in 2018 dropped notably from previous years. This coincides with the introduction of students using the student management system portal. The school is encouraged to support students to use their Learner Login in addition to the student management system option particularly later in the year and when results are released.

For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- encouraging student use of their NZQA Learner Login.

How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

Tararua College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment information with students and caregivers in print, in person and digitally
- supporting teachers new to the school through induction and mentoring programmes

Tararua College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- ensuring course outlines issued to students use the same template to provide consistent assessment information
- holding NCEA information evenings to inform caregivers about qualification details and assessment expectations
- using NCEA-based language and structure in the school's junior diploma to support students in transition to the senior school
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to NCEA teachers and discussed as necessary.

Update staff information to reflect current practice Some minor updates were suggested for inclusion in the next publication of the staff handbook to align with NZQA and school practice. These include:

- removing reference to Optional Teacher Selected Evidence as this process has been superseded
- reviewing the reasons given for students to appeal an assessment decision
- reinforcing the expectation that the grade verifier used for internal moderation should be a subject expert with recent subject specific evidence
- reviewing information relating to special assessment conditions such as including the use of school-based evidence for applications.

Reconcile Memorandum of Understanding with outside providers The school should develop a process to reconcile memoranda of understanding with results reported using outside provider codes.

This would ensure a current Memorandum of Understanding is held and allow the school to identify that the external provider meets NZQA requirements.

Enable and encourage staff to use the NZQA Provider Login Several of the staff interviewed for this review do not make use of their Education Sector Login (ESL) to access the NZQA Provider Login. The Provider Login gives visibility of school data and enables teachers to check the accuracy of student entries and results. It allows teachers to download and view copyright material, submit external moderation, and view, appeal and query moderator reports. The school is encouraged to ensure all teachers have an Education Sector Login and are supported in using it.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- update staff document as discussed in this report
- develop a process to reconcile memoranda of understanding with reported results from outside providers.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- encouraging staff to access and use their NZQA Provider Login.