

Managing National Assessment Report

Otamatea High School

July 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Otamatea High School

17 July 2025

Significant issues found

This review found that the school is not effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022*.

Significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were identified. The school's own review mechanisms have not been sufficient for them to identify and respond to these issues.

As a school that is not yet effective in aspects of self-review, credible assessment or quality assurance, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within one year to check that these issues are being addressed.

Required actions to address significant issues

To address these issues, the school must:

CAAS/ Rules	Significant Issue identified	Issue that must be resolved	Timeframe
External and internal review			
3v	Follow-up external review recommendations and findings (e.g. actions and considerations from the previous MNA review and CAA audit).	The school is required to respond to external review findings in the 13 September 2022 MNA report.	Immediate and ongoing
2.6iv	Comply with external moderation requirements of NZQA and SSBs (CAAS Guidelines).	The school must document external moderation follow up and evaluate the effectiveness of follow up action plans for standards that are Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent.	Immediate and ongoing

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

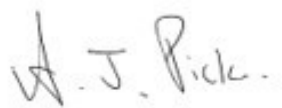
The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Create a NCEA staff handbook that is updated as required to ensure it is current and fit for purpose.	Immediate and ongoing.
Provide evidence of the quality assurance process carried out for each subject generating potential derived grades and ensure all derived grades are sent to NZQA by the due date.	Prior to the examination round annually.
Strengthen data management and use.	Prior to key dates in the NCEA assessment calendar.

For consideration

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

- creating line of sight meetings between members of the senior leadership team, Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge to review assessment and moderation outcomes and improve moderation outcomes schoolwide
- managing and monitoring internal moderation through the moderation tool in the Student Management System to improve visibility of the process and strengthen accountability
- putting in place a succession plan for the Principal's Nominee, so any future handover is effective, including storage protocols for the Principal's Nominee's documentation
- sharing ownership for the monitoring of internal quality assurance with Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge and ensuring they monitor internal assessment to avoid reporting Late Results.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. J. Picken'.

Amanda Picken
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Support

1 September 2025

NZQA

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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 13 September 2022 Managing National Assessment Report

This review found that the actions below have not been *appropriately or effectively addressed*. The school is still required to address the actions below to meet its Consent to Assess obligations. These are to:

- develop a school-wide process for monitoring and documenting that all school-based evidence for potential derived grades has been verified before being sent to NZQA, and to
- review and amend the staff NCEA handbook to ensure it outlines the processes and procedures expected by all learning areas, including the latest information about NCEA.

Considerations from the last review have been partially addressed and are discussed in the body of this report

External moderation response to outcomes and processes Otamatea High School's process for following up on external moderation reports is informal and inconsistent. The resulting Action Plans are not consistently documented, stored, nor necessarily made accessible to future assessors of the standard. To ensure the school's follow-up processes can be verified, Action Plans need to be documented and ideally stored in an accessible online location by subject and year. This change will also ensure that benchmark grade judgements are accessible to future assessors of those standards.

Under *CAAS Guideline, 2.6 iv*, every school is required to comply with external moderation requirements of NZQA and Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs). Every consented school must have a follow up process for external moderation reports that are Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent with the standard. This process ensures that issues identified by NZQA moderators are addressed and implemented, producing future grade judgements that are better aligned with the standard.

An additional requirement under *CAAS Guideline 3iv* is that every school must evaluate whether its external moderation follow-up has *achieved the desired outcome*. The school could consider implementing line of sight meetings between senior and middle leaders to check that external moderation follow up Action Plans will resolve the issues identified by NZQA moderators. These meetings could include an evaluation of the effectiveness of those follow up actions and close the moderation cycle for affected standards. Our evidence shows that schools that adopt this practice can strengthen external moderation outcomes for the school as a whole and outcomes are more likely to improve when the monitoring of both internal and external moderation is shared by middle and senior leaders.

Teachers interviewed in this review are aware of the Query and Appeal functions available to them, but no one has yet used either process. Use of the Query function should be encouraged to unpack any parts of the external moderation feedback that assessors want to clarify.

The school had two additional standards added to its moderation plan in 2025 with a request to send 2024 work. Both standards received a Consistent report.

Common Assessment Activities (CAA) Quality Assurance visit The school's May 2025 Numeracy CAA quality assurance visit included several recommendations for preparation, resourcing and assessment, which the school has agreed to implement for the September assessment opportunity, where applicable. This demonstrates the school's willingness to ensure its assessment processes can be continuously improved in response to external feedback.

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)

Otamatea High School's whakataukī, *He waka eke noa*, clearly represents the ethos of the school and the communal ownership teachers take in preparing their students for the future world. The school's strategic plan reflects the identities, needs, and aspirations of its school community, including how the needs of priority students can be further supported. Each department's annual report to the Board of Trustees provides a data driven reflection and review of its progress towards achieving the goals set out in the school strategic plan and the department's annual plan. Subjects' course assessment outcomes are disaggregated by standard and include a Grade Point Average (GPA) enabling senior leaders to see how well each course has enabled students to achieve their best and the GPA enables useful comparisons to be made between outcomes for different cohorts in a subject/course over time.

Since the last Managing National Assessment review, there has been a change of Principal and Principal's Nominee, as well as changes within the senior leadership team. Transition arrangements for the new Principal's Nominee did not provide an optimal handover. Consequently, some of the previous Principal's Nominee's documentation was not passed on to the incumbent, which has meant that the 2022 review's actions have not been effectively addressed. The school is advised to put in place a succession plan and storage protocols for the Principal's Nominee, so that any future handover is effective.

The school is readying itself for planned changes to national curricula and has initiated changes to ensure all students are able to complete the NCEA co-requisite. Initiatives to address this include:

- making timetable changes, so that English and Mathematics classes with a literacy or numeracy focus run in the same line as mainstream classes. Once students gain their literacy or numeracy credits, they can move out of the literacy or numeracy class. This ensures that the classes with a literacy or numeracy focus can deliver targeted teaching and learning for students who are yet to complete the NCEA co-requisite
- appointing a Teaching Assistant who tutors small groups of students needing a more personalised approach to meet their literacy and/or numeracy learning and assessment needs
- offering an intensive two-day workshop with a focus on completing additional numeracy standards where the time-bound, digital online method of assessment presents a barrier for some students.

For the past five years, the school's NCEA achievement outcomes have been consistently above those of comparable schools and schools nationally. This includes literacy and numeracy outcomes for Year 11 and outcomes for Māori students. This is evidence of the school's inclusive, culturally responsive approach and the staff's collective desire to reduce barriers to qualifications for its learners.

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 2024)

Student Academic Mentoring well supported All staff at Otamatea High School are academic mentors. Each student engaged in NCEA receives a personalised Academic Mentoring booklet to record their academic and personal goals. Checks are made on progress towards the goals at various intervals during the year. An additional printed NCEA Summary records potential total credits, credits gained and credits yet to be earned, supported by student-friendly infographics. This documentation provides students with agency for monitoring their own progress towards completing qualifications and awards and enables the school to implement interventions in a timely manner, as appropriate.

Academic integrity effectively monitored to ensure student work is authentic Otamatea High School has invested in a range of tools and strategies to ensure that student work is authentic. Staff have access to a secure platform for work completed over time and another to imitate examination conditions for the generation of potential derived grades. School staff know their students well, enabling them to readily identify work that is not authentic. In some instances, a teacher may insist on a handwritten response, where they feel this is required. With rigorous checks in place, breaches of authenticity for internal assessment are rare. A consistently formatted cover sheet, with an authenticity declaration and checklist of permissible use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for each individual assessment is used in some departments and this good practice should be shared.

Review assessment-related communications to ensure they remain current, accurate and fit for purpose

As the whereabouts of the former Staff Handbook are unknown, this review could not verify whether the action had been carried out, or not. The school has agreed to create a new staff handbook that meets NZQA's requirements, so that staff will have access to current information in a document, or online format, that is current and fit for purpose. This action will better support teachers new to NCEA and ensure consistent, credible assessment practice across all departments.

Students and whānau also need access to *accurate and sufficient information about assessment processes*. The school should annually review all information for students and their whānau to ensure that the student handbook is current and aligns with information on the school website and in students' course information.

The revised staff and student handbooks need clear information on the following processes, ideally with hyperlinks to the NZQA website and access to forms used by the school, including:

- extensions for missed and late assessment
- breaches of authenticity

- appeals of assessment decisions
- resubmissions and further assessment opportunities,
- reporting Not Achieved grades, and
- managing authenticity, including use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools.

The school must also ensure that an ongoing consideration from the 2022 MNA review, namely, *to reinforce students' understanding and use of the processes outlined in the student handbook*, is addressed.

Strengthen the quality assurance and provision of potential derived grades

Another action required by the previous Managing National Assessment review was to:

- develop a school-wide process for monitoring and documenting that all school-based evidence for potential derived grades has been verified before being sent to NZQA.

Although teachers in the school have been directed to supply the Principal's Nominee with this information, some departments are yet to comply with this request. This action is required under the *Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*, Schedule 4, 4.1, as below:

- *4.1 Before the commencement of external examinations in November or prior to results release for other eligible external assessment events during the school year, Schools and TEOs must submit to NZQA for external Standard entries, grades from quality assured Standard specific evidence, so that the Derived Grades are available if required for consideration by NZQA.*

The Principal's Nominee can monitor progress through the appropriate report in the school's Provider Login.

Strengthen data management and use Data management and use is generally effective but there are two areas which the school can strengthen. These are to:

- ensure all internal entries without a result are withdrawn, or have a result prior to the 1 December data file submission, and
- monitor the reporting of internally assessed results by school assessors and external providers to reduce the number of Late Results.

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)

Managing and monitoring internal moderation The school is encouraged to adopt the moderation tool in its Student Management System to manage and monitor internal moderation. This would consolidate several processes onto one platform and provide senior leaders with more transparency on progress, make monitoring easier and introduce an additional accountability loop to ensure results are not reported until moderation has been satisfactorily completed.

The school currently manages its internal moderation processes outside the Student Management System and the Principal's Nominee ensures that results are not published until internal moderation has been completed. Sharing ownership for the monitoring of internal moderation with Heads of Department (HODs) and Teachers in Charge (TICs) is recommended to ensure that each subject area undergoes a consistent quality assurance process. Although external moderation outcomes have been around fifty percent Consistent over the past three years, the school can strengthen its internal moderation by having HODs and TICs actively monitor the following practices:

- ensuring all departments add verification comments on their cover sheets to inform future assessors of the standard of the reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with a grade
- completing activities in NZQA's *Assessor Practice Tool* on Pūtake and using the *Request clarification of an internally assessed standard* form to gain clarity when assessing new or unfamiliar Achievement Standards
- re-affirming NZQA's requirement that the pieces of work selected for internal moderation are strategically selected, that is, *purposeful and sufficient*
- considering whether there is a problem with the verification process or choice of verifier when external moderator feedback is Not Consistent
- managing any patterns of inconsistency that develop or persist over time.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Otamatea High School 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
- 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.

Otamatea High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Otamatea High School 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
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

Otamatea High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Otamatea High School 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.

Otamatea High School 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
- 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

Otamatea High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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
- celebrating students' success.

Otamatea High School 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 Otamatea High School:

- 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 *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 its *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
- a range of policy and student support documents
- a sample of departmental reports to the Board of Trustees
- *Assessment Procedures 2025 Student and Parent* (Student Handbook)
- *Otamatea High School Strategic Plan 2025*.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - Arts
 - Health and Physical Education
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- 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.