

Managing National Assessment Report

Rodney College

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Rodney 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
- *Rodney College Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy*
- *Rodney College 2019 Staff Assessment and Moderation Guide (Staff Handbook)*
- *Rodney College NCEA Assessment Guide Levels 1, 2 & 3 (Student Handbook)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee (who is one of the school's Deputy Principals)
- Deputy Principal – Assessment / Data
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Performing Arts
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- four students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, the Principal's Nominee and the other Deputy Principal 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

Rodney College

22 August 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 most issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

What the school is doing well

Rodney College aims to provide students with an achievement pathway that meets their individual aspirations in a culturally responsive context. Individual courses have flexible assessment programmes and students report appreciation for the support from their classroom teachers and academic counsellor.

Consistent and credible assessment is evident in the school's practice. Teachers engage with the internal moderation process and have developed professional contacts with colleagues both within and external to the school to assist with the verification of their assessment judgements. The school meets the requirement to submit work as required for external moderation. Heads of Department follow up any identified issues, and where appropriate, additional support for departments or teachers is provided by the Principal's Nominee.

The school has developed an effective model of using data to inform review and monitor student progress. As a result, targeted support is arranged for individual students. Data management practices ensure that entries and results reported to NZQA are accurate and timely. The school actively encourages best assessment practice and reflection to identify changes or areas for improvement.

The Principal's Nominee works closely with the school's middle managers and his approachability and support is appreciated by teachers.

Areas for improvement

The school has made a number of successful applications for students to use special assessment conditions. To ensure that all entitled students are well supported, teachers should have access to appropriate information and students be assisted to request their entitlement for internal assessments and practice examinations.

The monitoring process that assures senior managers that all grades been quality assured prior to submission to NZQA should be reviewed for timeliness. Currently, some of the checks are carried out at the start of the year on previous year's work. The does not meet NZQA's expectations as it is a potential risk to the credibility of results that have contributed to a student's qualification or award.

Rodney College agrees that it will review how it follows up that actions planned in response to external moderation lead to assessment judgments consistent with the standard. The current process is a high trust model where completion is not always

checked by senior management. Closer monitoring will assure the senior managers actions that the planned actions have been completed and effectively address the issues.

The school has agreed to review the course outlines with the aim of providing more consistency and ensuring that the content is aligned with the staff and student handbooks. The Principal's Nominee has also noted that a regular annual review of the handbooks would more effectively ensure that they remain current.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that the monitoring of internal moderation is carried out before grades are submitted to NZQA
- review the process for following up issues identified in external moderation to ensure planned actions are completed and lead to improvement
- ensure that entitled students are provided with approved special assessment conditions for internal assessments and practice examinations
- review the content and format of the course outlines.

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18 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 23-24 March 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

The 2016 review identified two issues that the school's managers agreed to address.

- The school agreed to clarify how the senior managers would monitor the completion of internal moderation to ensure there is school wide consistency and practice. This has been addressed; however, the moderation section of this report suggests some further refinements.
- The school has updated the communication about managing potential breaches of the rules to ensure documentation matches practice.

Response to external moderation outcomes External moderation outcomes show that overall the school's quality assurance processes are effective. The Principal's Nominee or the line manager discusses the report with the Head of Department. Teachers follow up any issues identified, and remedial actions, are planned. If required, the Principal's Nominee arranges targeted professional development. The school agrees that the next step is to formalise the process that assures the school's managers that the actions are completed and effective.

Māori and Pasifika engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The Senior Management team at the school has noted the lower participation and achievement in STEM subjects for Māori and Pasifika students than for students of other ethnicities. The school understands the need to engage students in these subjects prior to students starting NCEA and is reviewing programmes at the junior level. The school is explicit about developing teachers' use of culturally responsive pedagogy. These actions are expected to lead to more equitable outcomes.

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)

The school noted the lower success in Level 1 achievement in 2018 compared with previous years. They had identified that the cohort was weak and had put in place a number of remedial measures such as close tracking of progress and providing additional support to identified students. The school's review concluded that the measures had raised achievement but not sufficiently for more students to achieve the qualification.

Other self-review and ensuing actions include:

- identifying that students need more support if they are at risk of not achieving a qualification or meeting their goals. To address this, more mentoring opportunities have been established including using external services

- developing teachers' understanding that relationships are key to student success and working to develop these by:
 - introducing academic counselling groups for all students. The students confirmed they valued the support provided
 - working to improve attendance at parent/teacher/student conferences, these now consistently have around an 85 percent attendance rate
- aiming to better meet the needs of the Māori students by helping teachers to develop culturally responsive pedagogy
- noting that many students are being assessed against many more credits than needed for a qualification and reviewing the number of credits in each course aiming for around 18. However, some courses still offer a number higher than this and review will continue.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- review the process for following up issues identified in external moderation to ensure planned actions are completed and lead to improvement.

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)

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

- individualising programmes for students by providing differentiated assessment or student choice within some courses
- classroom teachers and academic counsellors working with students to plan their pathway for further study
- applying for special assessment conditions for eligible students
- assessing when ready where manageable
- having students enter to sit online examinations and supporting their preparation by having them sit the practice examinations for these digitally.

Rodney College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- providing students with a clear understanding of what constitutes authentic work
- investigating and resolving appeals and possible breaches of the rules
- ensuring credible, standard-specific evidence is available for derived grades
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Provide special assessment conditions for practice examinations Students entitled to special assessment conditions should have these available for internally assessed standards and practice external assessments. Some teachers were unsure of how to provide for individual needs for some students, which could affect their experience and overall performance. It is suggested that all teachers are given any necessary information and reminded of the conditions that should be available as part of preparing for practice examinations. Students should also be supported to understand their entitlement and assisted to self-manage.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that entitled students are provided with approved special assessment conditions for internal assessments and practice examinations.

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)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, including colleagues outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the completion of all steps of internal moderation. All Heads of Department interviewed provided evidence of their engagement with the internal moderation process.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- encouraging teachers to appeal or query a report if the feedback is not sufficient to inform improvement.

Monitoring completion of the quality assurance process The Principal's Nominee checks from time to time that teachers are meeting expectations, but also relies on teachers' professionalism. Some of the checks are carried out on work from the previous year. To ensure that there is a robust quality assurance process behind all grades reported to NZQA, the Principal's Nominee should ensure the checks are completed in the year of assessment. Different models to manage this were discussed at the visit.

Teachers understand grade verification requirements for sufficiency The school has provided staff with guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work. This has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. Departments currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. In some departments the reasons for an assessment decision is recorded on the internal moderation cover sheet or noted digitally. This good practice helps to inform future assessment decisions and should be encouraged.

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:

- ensure that the monitoring of internal moderation is carried in the year the grades are submitted to NZQA.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- encouraging all teachers to record the reasons for an assessment decision.

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)

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

- reporting an analysis of achievement, including by ethnicity and gender, to the school's Board of Trustees to inform review and plan improvements to courses or contexts
- closely tracking achievement and using the data to identify and support students needing additional assistance
- providing parents with access to a portal into the school's student management system so they can track their child's progress.

Rodney College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting regular data files to NZQA
- checking the data and using the data file submission reports and Key Indicators to identify and resolve errors
- ensuring there are current memoranda of understanding with external providers and reporting results against the correct provider code.

High rate of absence in external examinations The school has noted the high rate of absence in external examinations. The Principal's Nominee commented that the issue is compounded by the timing of the last date for on-time entries being at around the same time as the school's practice examinations. As a result, the decision whether to enter a student for an examination is made with incomplete information. The school is working to manage this tension.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

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))

Rodney College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to students, whānau and staff
- supporting teachers new to the school.

Rodney College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- helping students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Suggestions to improve course outlines The current course outlines at Rodney College follow a variety of formats and it is suggested that this be reviewed. Some outlines include advice that contradicts the information in the staff and student handbooks; this could be replaced by a reference to the handbook to maintain version control. The outlines should note if any standards are optional so that students can get a clear understanding of their assessment programme or tailor an individual course if appropriate. Having course outlines in a consistent format and with standardised information helps students to easily access information.

Review of handbooks planned The Principal's Nominee has identified that the staff and student handbooks should be reviewed annually to ensure they remain up-to-date. This is good practice.

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:

- review the content and format of the course outlines.