

Managing National Assessment Report

Rodney College

September 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Rodney College

20 September 2023

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

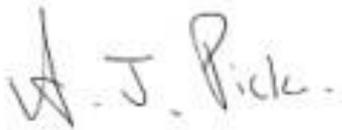
The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are to:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
respond effectively to concerns raised in external moderation reports and to monitor that any planned actions are completed as intended	Immediately following the current moderation round
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
develop a process to ensure potential derived grades are quality assured and to submit these to NZQA in a datafile prior to the examination period	Immediate
review the information provided in the staff handbook and how essential NCEA information should best be provided to students.	Within a year
develop a process to reduce internal entries with no result reported	Within this year
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
review the effectiveness of internal moderation practices	Immediate

For consideration

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

- implementing a more consistent schoolwide approach to basic assessment practices to ensure that these follow NZQA expectations and are fair to students.



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School Quality Assurance and Liaison

24 October 2023

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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 22 August 2019 Managing National Assessment Report

Three of the action items mentioned in this report have been addressed by the school and a start has been made on addressing the fourth item.

The Principal's Nominee now monitors the completion of internal moderation processes to ensure that only quality assured grades are submitted to NZQA. The content and format of course outlines have been reviewed to ensure that students have access to complete information, and students with special assessment conditions receive these entitlements for internal assessment when needed.

The process for following up issues identified in external moderation reports has been reviewed and a start has been made on strengthening the actions needed to address these issues. This is discussed in the next section of this report.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes Senior leaders need to continue to support the actions initiated by the Principal's Nominee to strengthen the response to ongoing concerns related to the outcomes of external moderation. These concerns have been correctly identified by the Principal's Nominee as the single biggest risk to the credibility of results being submitted to NZQA.

For a number of years, the external moderation outcomes for at least 40% of standards submitted have been either not or not yet consistent with the standard. Outcomes vary between departments, with some departments showing a high level of inconsistency over multiple years which is particularly concerning. This indicates that previous actions implemented to address concerns raised in external moderation reports for some departments have not been effective. Ongoing poor external moderation outcomes can result in direct action by NZQA, including the restriction on the reporting of results in some subject areas which will disadvantage students' choice of programme pathways.

As the quality of external moderation outcomes can reflect the effectiveness of internal moderation practices, this raises concerns about how robust these practices are in some departments. This is discussed later in this report.

The Principal's Nominee has now introduced a process to ensure that action plans are developed by Heads of Department in response to any concerns raised in external moderation reports and these plans are monitored to ensure that they are implemented thoroughly and effectively. Support by senior leaders for this process will elevate its importance for teachers.

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)

Self-review is considered to be an important activity at Rodney College and is intended to take place at all levels of the school in varying ways. During this review it

was a little difficult to ascertain how self-review that is occurring throughout the school is connected to inform overall school goals and strategic direction.

Heads of Department prepare an annual report for the Principal and School Board which includes an analysis of the NCEA results achieved by students in courses in the department and goals for the upcoming year. The Board also monitors student NCEA achievement a number of times during the year.

Senior Leaders and Deans receive regular results updates through the year and use these both to track individual student progress and also to identify any concerning patterns in achievement rates for certain courses or departments. Any concerns identified are raised with the head of that department.

Teachers and departments are also expected to review and reflect on the effectiveness of their courses on an ongoing basis during the year including on planning days. This includes reflection on the modes of assessment used and the suitability of assessment materials.

The school has recently restructured the senior leadership team, partly as result of a review that raised workload concerns for the Deputy Principal who was also the Principal's Nominee. These roles have now been split with the recently appointed Principal's Nominee (who is not a senior leader) working closely with the Deputy Principal (Assessment). This appears to be working well with the Principal's Nominee already identifying areas of concern and initiating action to address these, most importantly in the practices supporting external moderation.

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, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Meeting students' needs is a priority A feature of Rodney College is the commitment shown at every level to meet the needs of students and to provide as wide an opportunity for learning and assessment as possible.

As a relatively small school, there are limitations in terms of staffing and resources to readily meet all the needs of students. However, the school enhances what can be provided from the school's own resources with the dual enrolment of students at Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, online courses managed by an e-Dean and an extensive Gateway programme. At a course level, multi-level programmes are provided to maintain subject offerings and teachers are encouraged to differentiate. Students with learning or other needs are identified by the SENCO and special assessment conditions provided where needed.

Tracking of attainment and support for students are co-ordinated by Academic Counsellors and Deans. Regular updates on student achievement at standard level are provided to staff and are used to identify students at risk of not achieving their attainment goals with the Academic Counsellor or Dean providing support as required. The overall consistently good student achievement in NCEA across most demographics is evident of the success of this approach in most cases.

Submit credible derived grades to NZQA The school must develop a process to ensure potential derived grades generated from practice examinations or similar assessment events are quality assured according to NZQA's requirements and then submitted to NZQA in a datafile prior to the examination period. This will ensure that

these grades are readily available should they need to be applied for certain students due to a disruption to their end of year exams.

In recent years, the school has had a low reporting rate for these grades, particularly in 2022 when only 1% of grades were reported.

Review how NCEA information is provided to staff and students The school must review the information provided in the staff handbook to ensure that it is up to date and complete, and review how essential information should best be provided to students.

The staff handbook has recently been reviewed but needs some information updated and additions made as specified in this report. This is particularly important given the need to require more consistent schoolwide NCEA practices to ensure the credibility of results reported to NZQA.

A current NCEA handbook for students is not in circulation and the students interviewed stated that they receive important information from their teachers and Academic Counsellors when needed. The school must review what is the best method of providing essential NCEA information (for example about appeals and extensions) to students. This may be in a printed handbook or online or in some other manner. A central source of schoolwide expectations will ensure consistency and fairness to all students across all subjects.

Consider a more consistent approach to assessment practices The school should consider implementing a more consistent schoolwide approach to basic assessment practices that support the credibility of NCEA results.

Teachers interviewed during this review displayed a good understanding of assessment practices such as the rules for resubmissions and further assessment opportunities. However, it was evident that there were varying practices between departments regarding the approaches to investigate possible breaches of assessment conditions, or when a student wishes to appeal grades or apply for an extension of time to complete an assessment. It appears that these decisions are being made at departmental level without reference to a clear schoolwide expectation.

This inconsistency raises the risk of practices being introduced that are contrary to NZQA's expectations or are simply not fair to students. The school is encouraged to develop schoolwide expectations regarding these practices to mitigate this risk.

Develop a process to reduce internal entries with no result reported The school must develop a schoolwide approach to the circumstances in which a Not Achieved grade is awarded or an entry withdrawn when a student does not submit work to be assessed. This approach should then be published in the staff handbook and followed by each teacher.

The school has a rate of internal entries submitted without a result at about double the national average. The absence of a result does not accurately reflect the true nature of that assessment. This could be a student wilfully choosing to not submit work even though they had been adequately prepared and were expected to be assessed, or a student who wished to be withdrawn from a standard and never intended to be assessed, or it could be due to an error.

Clarifying a schoolwide policy will eliminate any confusion about the nature of entries without results and ensure a consistent approach.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Review the effectiveness of internal moderation practices The school must review the effectiveness of internal moderation practices at least in those departments which have a history of external moderation outcomes with a high inconsistency rate with the standard. A monitoring process that extends beyond reviewing records of completed moderation is also needed.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the outcomes of external moderation can be a reflection of the effectiveness of internal moderation practice. A department may be compliant in the administration of internal moderation but this alone does not guarantee that the process used is robust or effective in ensuring credible assessor judgements are being made.

A review may bring to light practices that need to be changed to enhance credibility and thereby provide senior leaders with increased levels of confidence. This may include the need to change verifiers. It must be acknowledged that the school has to use a high percentage of verifiers who are not teachers employed by the school. This creates additional challenges, particularly if a change of verifier is required to ensure credibility.

Internal moderation practices are occurring in the departments whose heads were interviewed during this review and the outcomes are being recorded appropriately. The Principal's Nominee can view these outcomes to ensure that moderation has occurred. He has indicated that a decision has been made to improve this process by introducing the digital internal moderation recording process that is provided by the school management system. A number of Heads of Department have also introduced changes within their departments aimed at making the internal moderation process more robust. These initiatives should be encouraged as they provide confidence in the intention of senior and middle leaders to improve these practices where needed.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Rodney College 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 to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- 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 expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Rodney College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- 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

Rodney College 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
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

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

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Rodney College 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
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Rodney College 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 families about assessment

Rodney College 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
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

Rodney College 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 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.

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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

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 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’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
- *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy, Rodney College, 2019*
- *Staff Assessment & Moderation Guide, Rodney College, 2023 (Staff Handbook)*
- *2024 Subject Selection Booklets for Levels 1, 2 and 3, Rodney College, 2023.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Assessment
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Music and Drama
 - Science
 - Social Science
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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.