

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Avondale College

September 2019

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Avondale 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
- *Curriculum and Assessment Policy, Avondale College, 2016*
- *Assessment Procedures, Avondale College, 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Assessment Support, Avondale College, 2019* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Qualifications Manager
- Directors for:
  - Art and Design
  - English and Media Studies
  - Languages
  - Mathematics
  - Social Sciences
  - Science
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Acting Principal, Principal's Nominee and Qualifications Manager 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

## Avondale College Coll

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

### What the school is doing well

Avondale College continues to provide appropriate programmes of learning for students to meet their academic needs and to prepare them to achieve their qualification goals. Assessment is comprehensively managed by experienced senior leaders and assessment rules are well understood by teachers.

All action items identified in the previous Managing National Assessment report have been addressed by the school.

A feature of the school is the priority placed on self-review, informed by data analysis and with a focus on meeting the needs of students. Detailed annual reports are prepared by Directors and senior leaders review student achievement during weekly meetings. An annual Quality Assessment Audit provides confidence to senior leaders that assessment practices are consistently and appropriately followed.

A number of initiatives have been introduced as a result of self-review, including the running of practice examinations twice a year and the introduction of a limited number of NCEA standards in Year 10 classes.

The tracking of student attainment is well-developed and students at risk of not achieving their qualification goals are identified and supported. Of particular note is the Individualised Personalised Achievement Course (IPAC) which is offered towards the end of the year to targeted students. The programme provides mentoring and tutoring opportunities.

It is notable that the percentage of students achieving in one Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subject in Year 13 is similar for Māori, Pacific and Other Students. The school's significant investment in digital technology innovation and programmes has provided an impetus for this achievement.

Teachers interviewed during this review had a very good understanding of the requirements for both internal and external moderation processes and were following these in accordance with NZQA expectations. The Qualifications Manager has developed effective processes to monitor the completion of moderation in departments and this assures senior leaders that results reported are credible and that robust moderation is occurring.

The management of assessment-related data is effective. Datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely way and issues are identified and corrected

The school has effective systems to ensure the currency of information about NCEA that appears in its publications. A comprehensive staff manual and a student manual are available. Assessment policy is communicated to the school community using a range of media.

### **Areas for improvement**

A system to both record and submit Unexpected Event Grades should be introduced to ensure that students will receive a result if an unexpected event were to occur that caused widespread disruption to examinations.

The positive initiative to ensure that a similar percentage of Māori, Pacific and Other Students are achieving in one STEM subject in Year 13 could be extended to those students taking more than one STEM subject.

The school could also consider extending the digital assessment opportunities available for students in internal assessment and participating in NCEA digital external examinations.

The effective approach to internal and external moderation could be further enhanced by the development of a more strategic focus to the selection of samples for verification and by devolving further responsibilities for the preparation of the online external moderation material to Directors.

With NCEA fees no longer being charged, the school should consider submitting all results to NZQA in the year that these are achieved rather holding these over to a subsequent year.

### **Agreed action**

The school agreed that an action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is to:

- develop a process to record and submit Unexpected Event Grades to NZQA.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

3 December 2019

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)**

# 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 30 April 2015 Managing National Assessment Report** The agreed action items from this report have been addressed by the school. These were to:

- use feedback from external moderation to reflect on the effectiveness of the previously undertaken internal moderation
- apply changes signalled by moderators to materials for parallel standards.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Directors are expected to review external moderation reports and develop plans to address any concerns that have been raised. Senior leaders monitor that these plans have been enacted and are producing the desired outcomes.

This is an effective process to ensure that necessary actions are developed and then followed up to provide assurance that the actions have been put into practice.

### 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's statement that "a robust and effective culture of self-review" is one of the features of their practice was confirmed during this review. Self-review is an embedded practice and is integral to the ongoing teaching and learning programme and to students' achievement in qualifications.

The process occurs at all levels with formal and informal opportunities for review being encouraged. Directors present a detailed annual report to senior leaders that is based on data analysis and which is used to shape the school's strategic direction. The introduction of "value-added" reporting adds another dimension to this process.

An annual Quality Assessment Audit focuses on the assessment practice and systems of each department and provides confidence to senior leaders that these processes are being undertaken appropriately.

An ongoing review of student attainment forms a key component of the weekly meetings of senior leaders.

Self-review has resulted in a number of developments at the school, including:

- a significant focus on innovative practices in technology subjects
- the introduction of a limited number of NCEA standards in most Year 10 subjects which lowers the assessment workload in Year 11

- the completion of all internal standard assessment by the end of Term Three, thus allowing time for any catch up and a focus on preparation for external examinations
- practice examinations, which also includes Scholarship, being held twice a year to fully prepare students for external examinations.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

## 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)*

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

- designing programmes of learning that are focused on their interests, needs and abilities
- advising and guiding them through the course selection process
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- extending assessment opportunities by offering courses through the Gateway and Outdoor Education programmes
- providing additional mentoring and tutoring for students at-risk of not achieving their qualification goals
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements and providing these resources for internal assessment where appropriate.

### **Avondale College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring grades awarded are valid, authentic and verified
- ensuring that teachers understand the requirements for:
  - providing one further opportunity for assessment when appropriate
  - providing suitable opportunities for resubmissions
  - managing missed and late assessment
- investigating appeals by students of assessment decisions
- addressing any authenticity concerns using the principles of natural justice.

**Equity in the achievement of students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects is evident** The school has been commendably effective in ensuring that all students are encouraged to take one or more STEM subjects as part of their overall programme. The commitment to an innovative digital technology programme has aided this achievement.

In 2018, the success rate of Year 13 Māori and Pacific students in one STEM subject was similar to all other students. The school is encouraged to consider ways to increase the number of Māori and Pacific students who are taking more than one STEM subject as part of their overall programmes.

**Tracking of student attainment and follow up is well developed** The school has developed an effective process to track the ongoing attainment of students, to identify students at-risk of not achieving their qualification goals and to intervene to support these students.

Of particular note is the Individualised Personalised Achievement Course (IPAC) with the stated aim to “ support every student through achievement focused

conversations, advocacy and encouragement”. This programme is activated in the latter stages of the academic year, offering mentoring and tutorials to targeted students. The success of this programme (and academic support in general) is evidenced by the ongoing very good attainment in student qualifications.

**Extending digital assessment opportunities should be considered** The school’s extensive investment in digital technologies has borne fruit, particularly in technology-rich subjects. However, assessment in other subject areas has not yet embraced digital opportunities to the same extent and the school has yet to enter any students in online external examinations. The school should consider the value of digital assessment in general and how to expand these opportunities for students.

### **No action required**

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

### **For consideration**

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

- ways to extend the number of Māori and Pacific students succeeding in more than one STEM subject
- extending digital assessment opportunities, including participating in online external assessment.

## 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)*

### **Avondale College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- purposefully selecting samples of student work at grade boundaries for verification purposes
- using subject specialists to verify the selected samples and, where appropriate, using verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the process on *Internal Moderation Coversheets*
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions.

### **Avondale College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are stored so that they can be provided for external moderation.

**Processes are effectively monitored** Directors are responsible for managing internal moderation processes in their departments and for ensuring that the coversheets are completed. They also complete an *Internal Moderation Attestation Form* that confirms that all processes have been completed for each standard. This form is lodged with the Qualifications Manager.

The Qualifications Manager tracks the completion of internal moderation by correlating the attestation form information with published assessment deadlines to ensure that processes have been completed before results are submitted to NZQA. He further follows up with routine physical checks of departmental procedures and documentation.

This is an effective process and provides assurance to senior leaders that internal moderation procedures are occurring in a rigorous manner and any concerns are followed up.

**Focus on the strategic selection of samples for verification should be considered** Departments currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements, which is good practice. However, many of those interviewed verify grades awarded on more samples of student work than this.

The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work. Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as

assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

**Consider devolving some responsibilities** The school should consider devolving the responsibility for preparing the submission of the material required for external moderation to the Directors.

Directors currently collate and hand these to the Qualifications Manager who prepares the online submission. Devolution could lead to greater efficiencies, lighten the workload of the Qualifications Manager and strengthen the agency of the Directors. The final decision to submit the material to NZQA will still reside with the Qualifications Manager.

**Investigating innovation in external moderation practices** The school has engaged with NZQA to investigate innovative practices for external moderators to interact more directly with student work in situ on the school's servers as an alternative to current external moderation procedures.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

### **For consideration**

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

- developing a more strategic focus for the selection of samples for grade verification
- devolving the online preparation of external moderation material to Directors.

## 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)*

### **Avondale College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- using data to monitor and track student progress and to identify students at risk of not achieving their goals
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals, and inform changes to standards offered
- annually reporting to senior leaders an analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

### **Avondale College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- ensuring that datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
- checking reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any errors
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of external providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA Learner login.

**Consider submitting results for Year 10 students** As previously noted in this report, most Year 10 courses contain at least one NCEA standard. In the past, the school would hold these results until the student was in Year 11 before reporting to NZQA.

With the removal of NCEA fees, there is little benefit to “banking” results. The school should consider submitting all NCEA results to NZQA in the year of achievement. This will minimise possible errors and ensure that students who may transfer out of the school have accurate results reported.

**Unexpected Event Grades must be submitted to NZQA** The school should introduce a procedure to ensure that, if available, Unexpected Event Grades (previously Emergency Grades) are recorded in the student management system and subsequently reported to NZQA in a timely manner.

Submission prior to the start of the external examinations means that the grades are available if needed. This ensures that students will receive a result if an unexpected event were to occur that caused widespread disruption to their examinations.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- develop a process to record and submit Unexpected Event Grades to NZQA.

**For consideration**

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

- reporting all results to NZQA in the year in which these are achieved.

## **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))*

### **Avondale College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring all course assessment outlines and other materials provide consistent information for students
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and parents using a range of media
- annually reviewing staff and student handbooks to maintain current best practice and ensure consistency school-wide.

### **Avondale College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- publishing a staff manual containing assessment procedures
- providing comprehensive information for students online and in a published student manual about schoolwide NCEA procedures
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year.

### **No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.