

Managing National Assessment Report

Tuakau College

March 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tuakau 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 2018* (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
- *Tuakau College Assessment Policy*
- *Tuakau College NZQF Teacher Assessment Guidelines 2018*
- *Tuakau College New Zealand Qualifications Framework NZQF Assessment information for senior students 2018*
- other assessment related material
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, Assistant Principal, three students and Heads of Learning Area for Art, English, Physical Education and Health, and Social Sciences.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Assistant Principal - Curriculum 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

Tuakau College

1 March 2018

This Managing National Assessment review was rescheduled from 2017 with the school's agreement.

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.

What the school is doing well

Tuakau College demonstrates sound assessment procedures and processes that ensure credible results are reported to NZQA. Internal review of these is regular, ongoing, and involves all staff. Courses and programmes throughout the school are tailored to meet student needs. This includes differentiation within courses, personalised standard selection, and provision for students who may be on a two year programme to gain their qualification. Data analysis including the use of predictive grades is used to identify students at risk of not achieving qualifications, including literacy and numeracy requirements.

Moderation processes are well communicated and embedded throughout the school. Staff view the process as a way to confirm and improve understanding of the standard. The idea of sufficiency and purposeful selection of student work for internal verification is understood and practiced. The process is documented allowing for monitoring of its completion. Heads of Learning Area take responsibility for oversight and storage of material. The Principal's Nominee is able to reconcile practice with submitted internal moderation cover sheets through audits of department areas and discussion with staff. Follow up from external moderation is timely and comprehensive. All staff are required to respond to the Principal's Nominee with a reflection on the feedback received. The Deputy Principal works with, and supports staff where additional issues has been identified.

School documentation is clear, thorough and easily accessible. They are reviewed regularly. Written documentation is supported by regular emails and discussion led by the Principal's Nominee on assessment practices and procedures. There is regular, open and robust discussion held throughout the school.

Areas for improvement

Some variety in the understanding and application of resubmission processes was evident in the review. The school acknowledges clarification and reinforcement of resubmission requirements is needed to ensure it is applied appropriately in all areas.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of its communication, this review suggests areas where a consistent message and format may improve understanding. Using the term *further assessment opportunity* rather than *reassessment* aligns the school

with NZQA terminology. Adding information in a standardised course outline format will make accessing subject information simpler and clearer.

Agreed action

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

- clarify understanding and implementation of the resubmission process
- align language in school documentation with NZQA terminology.

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30 April 2018

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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 6 June 2014 Managing National Assessment Report There were two action items agreed to in this report which have been addressed. The first concerned developing guidelines for teachers to refer to when deciding on the appropriateness of offering additional assessment opportunities for students. Details on the availability of further assessment and resubmission have been developed, however, these need to be strengthened and clarified with staff. The second action related to one specific subject area not reporting credible results. Support, guidance and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee and senior management has been provided to ensure the grades awarded to students are at the national standard.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school responds effectively and in a timely manner to external moderation feedback. Heads of Department and Learning Area are required to read and then forward to the Principal's Nominee their response to the detail of any external moderation report. Where items of concern are identified such as a low agreement rate, consistency issues, or authenticity, the Deputy Principal with oversight for Curriculum is involved to offer additional support, including providing focused professional development, discussion and monitoring as needed.

Internal review

Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)

Review and reflection is an integral part of current practice within the school. This is undertaken in response to identified issues as well as 'business as usual'. This allows the school to be confident that the results they report are credible and meet NZQA requirements. Recent areas of review and reflection have included:

- greater ownership of the details of Memoranda of Understanding with outside providers to ensure they are robust and meet the needs of the school and students
- reducing whānau group size to support individualised guidance and programme planning for students
- giving responsibility to Heads of Department and Learning Area to analysis and report achievement findings to staff at the beginning of the year
- annual meetings with Heads of Department and Learning Area that encourage ownership, feedback and review of assessment systems within the school
- involving all staff, especially Academic Deans, in the process to review documentation and communication within the school. The recent inclusion of signatures in the critiquing and verification section of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* is one such adjustment following school-wide review.

The Principal's Nominee reports regularly in staff meetings on assessment updates, and gives reminders about processes and upcoming deadlines. All new staff are supported to work through and understand school procedures. Staff spoken to during the review visited commented on the open communication that operates with staff, the Principal's Nominee and senior management. This allows for feedback to be shared and processes regularly reviewed to ensure they remain understood, embedded, and workable for staff while maintaining credible assessment.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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 2018 5.5)

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

- applying for special assessment conditions for those eligible
- providing differentiated assessment within courses
- having flexibility with the timing of assessments where deemed appropriate
- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational and trade-based courses
- modifying the timetable for identified students to develop a personalised programme
- identifying those students who will complete a qualification over two years and developing a programme to assist them to achieve this
- staff using an assessment notice board to monitor possible assessment pressure points for students and the timeliness of moderation completion
- efficiently managing NZQA external examinations.

Tuakau College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- tracking student progress towards meeting qualifications, and literacy and numeracy requirements
- encouraging students to work towards gaining course and certificate endorsement
- ensuring evidence for derived and emergency grades is standard-specific
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Reinforce resubmission requirements The review identified a subject area where work that has been undertaken early in the year, marked and results reported, was reworked later in the year and submitted again for assessment. A resubmission must be undertaken in a timely manner following marking, and before there is any further teaching or learning. It is to be used where borderline student work may be upgraded through a candidate identifying a minor error or omission. The school has already put strategies and support in place to ensure the requirements and application of resubmission and further assessment opportunities processes meet both school expectations and NZQA requirements. They acknowledge that ongoing reflection and review of practice is required to maintain understanding and guarantee correct application.

Agreed action

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

- clarify understanding and implementation of the resubmission process.

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 2018 6.4b)

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

- ensuring new and amended assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- teachers understanding the reason for and demonstrating the purposeful selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to clarify and support assessment judgements
- engaging with suitably-qualified subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify samples of student work
- documenting the critiquing and verification processes for each standard before results are reported, including detailing discussions on grade judgements for future reference
- the Principal's Nominee monitoring to ensure no results are reported to NZQA until the process has been completed.

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

- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation through a unique system that meets NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored.

Moderation processes robust and embedded The requirements for internal moderation are well documented, clearly communicated, and understood by staff. The Principal's Nominee provides effective leadership in this area. All teachers spoken to during the review visit commented on the '18-step process' required for internal moderation.

No action required

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

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)

Tuakau College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - using grade predictions to monitor student progress toward NCEA qualifications, identify students at risk and to negotiate programme changes as appropriate
 - tracking student achievement to identify students at risk of not realising their chosen assessment pathway
 - informing changes to standards and assessment programmes for the year ahead
 - celebrating student success through Matariki awards, honours board and endorsement assemblies
 - Heads of Learning Areas reporting to the staff and Principal an analysis of NCEA achievement
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
 - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
 - ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
 - ensuring low levels of late external entries
 - using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
 - encouraging teachers and students to use their respective NZQA logins to check entries and results
 - having a sign off system for students and teachers to ensure the results reported match those awarded.

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))

Tuakau College has effective processes and procedures for:

- supporting teachers new to the school to understand assessment procedures at Tuakau College, and to use the student management system
- ensuring students receive information for all courses they undertake
- annually reviewing the accuracy, relevance and means of communication of all information provided to students, parents and caregivers
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families in print, in person and digitally
- ensuring a fit-for-purpose memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose codes grades are reported.

Tuakau College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- making use of links to the NZQA website within staff and student documentation to ensure the information given is accurate, current and consistent
- ensuring relevant NZQA updates are circulated to teachers assessing against the NCEA and discussed as necessary
- the Principal's Nominee developing focused questions for Heads of Department, subject and whānau teachers to support their use and application of assessment processes
- providing time for departments to evaluate and discuss assessment practice and procedures
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Align language with NZQA Consistent assessment language aids coherent application and understanding between subject areas, teachers, and schools, and with NZQA. The school recognises the importance of using standardised assessment language, particularly the use of *further assessment opportunity* rather than reassessment.

Consider the use of common and consistent course information Use of a common format to communicate course information for students is good practice. It is to be encouraged for a number of advantages including:

- making it easier for parents and students to understand.
- communicating information in a consistent format throughout the school
- ensuring accuracy as information comes directly from the school's student management system
- including additional information such as standards contributing towards literacy and numeracy

A common template for course information, obtainable through the school's student management system, is used for the student course selection booklet. However, at the start of each academic year, departments develop their own, additional course information for issue to students, some which differ in layout. The school is encouraged to consider requiring teachers to use the common template, thus lessening the workload in developing an additional format. Different faculties and subjects can still provide additional subject-specific information for students as the use of a common outline does not preclude that.

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:

- align language in school documentation with NZQA terminology.

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:

- using a common template for course information provided to students and whānau.