

Managing National Assessment Report

Matamata College

2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Matamata 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 2021* (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
- information from Heads of Learning on their assessment processes
- *Matamata College NQF Policies and Procedures that include NCEA 2021*
- *Student NCEA Information 2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Learning for:
 - Arts
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- six students.

There was a report-back session with the Acting 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.

SUMMARY

Matamata College

20 May 2021

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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What the school is doing well

Matamata College uses the flexibility of the NCEA qualification to meet the individual needs and career aspirations of students. Engagement with outside providers and the school's Gateway programme enables students to undertake assessment programmes towards a range of vocational pathways. Differentiated assessment practices support students to present their best evidence.

The use of local contexts and gathering of assessment evidence in a variety of ways are features of the school's assessment practice. The *Poutama Pounamu* professional learning programme offers ongoing teacher support to provide relevant and culturally inclusive contexts that reflect student interests and needs.

Internal moderation is embedded practice with Heads of Learning responsible for monitoring the completion of internal moderation for all standards where grades are reported. An external moderation follow-up process that includes Heads of Learning documenting required actions and monitoring their completion is in place. Both processes require strengthening and are discussed further in this report.

The Principal's Nominee's carries out audits to confirm compliance with the school's internal moderation procedures and that external moderation is followed up by Heads of Learning.

NCEA results analysis undertaken by teachers and Heads of Learning is reported to Senior Management and the Board of Trustees. It is a basis for reflection on the previous year's programme, contexts and standards offered. This is good practice.

Student achievement data and progress is monitored to identify those at risk of not achieving a qualification or to their potential. Additional support and modifications to assessment programmes are provided to support these students where appropriate.

Areas for improvement

Follow-up to external moderation will be strengthened by the Principal's Nominee ensuring that planned actions of teachers will address the issues identified by moderators. This will assist in developing the teachers understanding of the standard and making accurate judgements.

To enable students who transfer to the school during the year to be awarded a course endorsement, the credits they have already achieved at their previous school must be assigned to a subject.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

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

- strengthen responses to external moderation by ensuring actions address any issues identified
- ensure the credits a transferring student brings to the school are assigned to their course of study.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

29 June 2021

NZQA

0800 697 296

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 17 May 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

Two of the four agreed action items have been completed. The random selection process used for external moderation has been updated to meet NZQA requirements and the school's documentation has been modified.

Progress has been made on the other two agreed actions.

Further clarification of the internal moderation grade verification process to ensure the selection of student work is at grade boundaries will strengthen with process.

The agreed action to review previous internal moderation for any standard with a low external moderation agreement rate is recommended to be part of the Principal's Nominee's auditing of external moderation follow-up.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school's response to external moderation requires strengthening. Heads of Learning who develop responses to moderator feedback with their staff, must ensure the actions are effective by enabling the assessors' understanding of the standard to be further developed to make valid assessment decisions. This will also assist with improving the trend in low agreement rates between the assessor and moderator in three subject areas.

The effectiveness of the actions should form part of the Principal's Nominees annual Quality Management System audit. It is recommended the school consider the following changes to further strengthen the response to external moderation:

- providing guidance and support to Heads of Learning to enable them to develop effective responses to external moderation. This will support assessment decisions consistent with the standard in those subjects where there is a trend of a low agreement by the moderator with teacher assessment decisions.
- including in the Principal's Nominee's audit of the Heads of Learning follow-up to external moderation feedback:
 - evaluating responses developed to ensure the action will support teachers' understanding of the standard and grade boundaries
 - reviewing the internal moderation process to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation and the extent to which its application could be a contributing factor to low agreement rates.
 - monitoring that the actions developed are completed, particularly in the subject areas where there is a low agreement rate.

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 2019 Education Review Office report identified that the school was not achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all students (particularly boys and Māori), noting the following for further development:

- setting schoolwide targets that focus teachers and leaders on accelerating the progress of those at risk
- increasing leaders and teachers understanding of effective analysis and use of achievement information for equity and excellence.

In response, the school conducted an extensive review with their main focus on Māori and Pacific student achievement. They have made the following changes as a result of this review:

- Supporting teachers to provide culturally responsive assessment programmes by providing professional learning focussed on pedagogical practice through Waikato University's *Poutama Pounamu* programme. The school noted that this professional learning has resulted in subject teachers showing better understanding of student's cultural differences and using greater differentiation in their assessment programmes to better meet individual needs.
- Accentuating the importance of the shared partnership in supporting individual students' learning journeys and aspirations by deliberately increasing school contact with whanau.
- Tracking student progress to identify those at risk of not achieving a qualification with the introduction of a digital system that provides a weekly snapshot of individual student achievement.
- Using a multipronged approach to enable the prompt identification of students at risk and provision of additional support including:
 - classroom teachers tracking student progress to identify those not achieving, to enable a programme review
 - Group Teachers' responsibilities now including having regular conversations with students on '*where they are at with their assessments and credits*', and '*what is next for them?*'
 - Deans monitoring at risk students and providing support when needed
- *Careers Central* is used to assist students to explore pathways linked to their interests, aspirations and programme of study. Students map a planned pathway at the beginning of the year with further meetings during the year to review progress against their plan.

The school's response has resulted in an increase in student achievement in 2020. NCEA qualifications attainment and boys' achievement at Level 1 and 2 is above national and decile levels. Māori and Pasifika achievement is at or above the national averages for NCEA Levels 1 and 2.

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:

- strengthen responses to external moderation by ensuring actions will address an issue and support teachers' understanding of the standard.

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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

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

- differentiating assessment practice including:
 - assessing students when ready through flexible timeframes
 - designing assessment activities with authentic and relevant contexts
 - negotiating with students the choice of standards, contexts and presentation methods
- supporting teachers to use relevant and culturally inclusive contexts through the *Poutama Pounamu* Professional Learning Programme
- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational focus courses and opportunities
- providing digital external examination opportunities
- monitoring and supporting Level 1 literacy and numeracy achievement
- collecting school-based data to support special assessment conditions applications
- monitoring assessment programmes and achievement of students in the attached Totorā Learning Centre and Alternative Education Units.

Matamata College has effective processes and procedures for:

- submitting derived grades to meet NZQA expectations
- reporting *Not Achieved* for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- monitoring the authenticity of student work by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- managing NZQA external examinations.

Māori engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects A number of teaching staff attended the 2021 STEM Symposium and plan to use the learnings and strategies shared by speakers to support increased participation and success of Māori students in STEM subjects. Currently engagement and achievement of Māori students in at least one STEM subject at Level 3 is very low compared to students of other ethnicities.

Ensure consistent granting of extensions While the school has clear criteria for managing missed and late assessment, it is suggested they consider shifting the responsibility for approving extensions to Heads of Learning to ensure consistency of application. Currently individual classroom teachers are responsible for granting extensions which can lead to inconsistencies for students across classes. One Head of Learning does approve extensions, which is good practice.

Review resubmission policy and practice It is recommended the school's Senior Management review the "*resubmission will not occur*" policy to confirm it aligns with the school's assessment philosophy and does not present a barrier to student achievement. Students described inconsistent application of the policy with teachers in some subjects offering a resubmission.

Following the "*resubmission will not occur*" policy statement is the statement "*Assessors will take a holistic view and minor errors and omissions will not have a significant effect on the assessment outcomes*". Further investigation and discussion with teaching staff is recommended to confirm that when teachers make a holistic decision, the student work is consistent with, and there is sufficient evidence to support the award of the standard. As discussed at the review, this advice has the potential for teachers to award grades that are not consistent with the standard.

For consideration

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

- making Heads of Learning responsible for managing granting of extensions to ensure consistency across classes
- reviewing the school's "no resubmission" policy and, if retained, monitor its consistent application across all subject areas.

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 2021 6.4b)

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

- ensuring teachers are provided with clear expectations on internal moderation requirements
- documenting the internal moderation process for each standard assessed before results are reported to NZQA
- using subject-specialists from within and outside of the school to verify assessor judgements
- Heads of Learning monitoring internal moderation completion
- the Principal's Nominee completing audits twice a year to confirm compliance with the school's internal moderation processes.

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

- using a random selection method that meets NZQA requirements
- storing assessed work securely so that it is available, if requested, for external moderation.

Strengthen Internal moderation processes The Principal's Nominee conducts audits to confirm compliance with the school's internal moderation processes. These audits should also include monitoring that the selection of work for verification is at grade boundaries and any discussion held in determining the final grade is documented.

The purposeful selection of work at grade boundaries will provide benchmarks to support future assessor judgements, in addition to assisting with managing teachers' assessment workload. While teachers interviewed described using a sufficient sized sample for verification, they were not consistently selecting student work at grade boundaries.

Internal moderation cover sheets sighted did not consistently document evidence of grade boundary discussion or the final grade awarded. Good practice is to document this discussion for future reference.

For consideration

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

- strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation by checking that grade boundary samples are selected for verification and evidence of discussion in determining a grade is documented.

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)

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

- tracking student progress, identifying those at risk of not achieving literacy, numeracy or a qualification and providing appropriate support where required
- identifying Year 9 and 10 students who need additional literacy support to access Level 1 when in Year 11
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and inform changes to contexts and standards
- analysing NCEA achievement data to inform changes to standards offered.

Matamata College reports accurate achievement data by:

- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- checking the accuracy of external entries to ensure minimal late entries
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate.
- timely reporting to NZQA of results that have been checked for accuracy.

Ensuring memoranda of understanding are held for all outside providers The review identified that currently the school could not confirm a memorandum of understanding is held for each provider whose code is used by the school when reporting results. An annual reconciliation process needs to be developed. Memoranda of understanding detail the obligations of each party and offer protection for the students who are assessed by outside providers.

Currently Memorandum of Understanding are held by the Principal's Nominee, the Gateway Coordinator and some Heads of Learning. Storing memoranda of understanding centrally can facilitate an annual reconciliation process to confirm one is held for all outside providers before results are reported.

Credits of transferring students need to be assigned to a course The credits a transferring student has earned at their previous school are reported to NZQA as unassigned, resulting in some students missing out on course endorsement. The school must assign the credits a transferring student has gained at their previous school, to the appropriate subject in their assessment programme. This will enable students to be awarded a course endorsement where they meet the required criteria.

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:

- ensure the credits a transferring student brings to the school are assigned to their course of study.

For consideration

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

- develop a reconciliation process to confirm a memorandum of understanding is held for all external providers a grade is reported against.

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))

Matamata College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students are provided with assessment information for all the courses they undertake
- annually reviewing the staff and student handbooks
- providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system to support students to monitor the accuracy of results reported and progress towards qualifications
- supporting teachers new to the school through mentoring provided by Heads of Learning.

Matamata College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- providing an NCEA information evening for students and whanau
- providing opportunities for Heads of Learning to discuss changes and assessment best practice at the Principal's Nominee's Quality Management System meetings
- emailing the *Student NCEA Information 2021* to students and their whanau.

Senior Management requires a line of sight to assessment risks, audit outcomes and policy decisions Currently Senior Management does not have a line of sight of assessment outcomes, issues or potential risks to the school's Consent to Assess. It is recommended a reporting protocol be developed whereby the Principal's Nominee reports to Senior Management the outcome of his quality management system audits so that they are aware of assessment issues including poor external moderation outcomes.

The review identified that there is a potential risk of assessment decisions being made by the Quality Management System group that do not reflect the school's assessment philosophy. It is recommended a Senior Manager attends the Quality Management System meetings to ensure decisions on school wide assessment policy and practice align with the school's assessment philosophy and do not result in an unnecessary barrier to student achievement.

The Principal's Nominee runs Quality Management Systems meetings with invited attendees. Heads of Learning who attend this meeting described them as being timely, providing the opportunity to discuss and share practice and seek clarification of good assessment practice.

The Principal's Nominee carries out compliance audits of the Learning Areas to confirm internal moderation process are followed and there is follow-up to external moderation. These audit visits are documented and focus on confirming compliance with the school's assessment policies and procedures. Actions to strengthen these audits are discussed in the review and moderation section of this report.

Consider methods of communication to students Students interviewed were unsure of the requirements for certificate and course endorsement, and University

Entrance. A copy of the *NCEA Student Information* is emailed to parents and students and is available on the school website. It is suggested the school review how NCEA information is made available to students and its effectiveness as a means to communicate information to all students.

Amendments to staff handbooks The staff handbook contains relevant information and is presented in plain English. When next updated information on the following are recommended to be included to provide clarity and reflect current teacher practice:

- clarification that the selection of student work for verification should be at grade boundaries, and those assessment decisions that teachers are unsure of
- the internal moderation monitoring process to confirm documentation aligns with actual practice
- the follow-up process to external moderation to include clarification that actions will support the development of teacher assessment decisions
- the derived grade process including the justification and verification processes
- the availability of special assessment conditions and the school process to enable students to access these.

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:

- developing reporting protocols to ensure Senior Management is informed of assessment policy changes and assessment issues
- updating the staff handbook.