

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Te Awamutu College

May 2018

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Te Awamutu 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
- *Managing National Assessment, Teacher Handbook, Te Awamutu College 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *Student Handbook, National Qualifications, Te Awamutu College 2018* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Department for Agriculture and Horticulture, Geography, History, Mathematics and Statistics, Science, and Technology/Hard Materials.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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

## Te Awamutu College

30 May 2018

### 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.

This review was rescheduled from 2017 at the school's request because of changes in the college's senior leadership team.

### What the school is doing well

Te Awamutu College is committed to fostering a culture in which every student achieves a meaningful and credible qualification. Senior management has developed schoolwide goals to meet the needs of all learners.

The school has processes in place to ensure that all staff respond appropriately to external moderation issues. Managers co-construct through self-review to implement a number of additional processes. These have strengthened internal moderation systems through centralising documentation, the Principal's Nominee conducting data-matching checks, and communication in Heads of Department meetings. The reviews have embedded increasingly robust quality assurance.

The Principals' Nominee, Heads of Department and classroom teachers manage assessment well and opportunities are offered to ensure that students have access to a wide range of learning pathways at all three levels of NCEA. Timetabling allows students to complete academic and vocational pathways through one or two-day Trades courses while maintaining full access to other school subjects.

Internal moderation is an embedded process in departments. External review of monitoring systems has led to further self-review of internal moderation, to ensure only those results that have been quality assured are reported to NZQA. In addition, staff are developing their understanding of NZQA's External Moderation Application and now most teachers submit most of their moderation digitally. As a next step the Principal's Nominee plans to add strategic internal moderation monitoring visits to departments to close the loop of quality assurance.

Student assessment data is checked for accuracy and reported to meet NZQA's deadlines. Data is effectively analysed to set strategic direction, review school course design, and track and monitor student progress towards completing qualifications, including those at-risk of not meeting requirements.

Clear, consistent and current assessment information is communicated to the school community through a range of media. This provides staff, students and whānau with a common understanding of school assessment procedures in a plain English format.

### **Areas for improvement**

The school should continue to provide staff with further guidance on what constitutes strategic selection of student work for verification. This has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

The Principal's Nominee has agreed to develop a system to reconcile memoranda of understanding held with external providers, with all reported results. This ensures the school does not act outside its consent to assess when reporting results, that student achievement can be counted toward attainment of a qualification, and provides assurance for senior managers that the memoranda of understanding are current.

### **Agreed action**

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

- reconcile memoranda of understanding held with all results reported against external provider codes.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

30 August 2018

**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 24 July 2014 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has responded effectively to all action items raised in the 2014 Managing National Assessment review.

The school now:

- ensures that staff follow the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1993* when returning student work and ask for permission if student work is to be maintained as exemplars
- uses review processes for identifying students who may be entitled to special assessment conditions using school-based evidence
- selects grade boundary samples for verification purposes for internal moderation
- requests appropriate changes to their external moderation plan annually to seek useful moderation feedback and support the delivery of new standards
- manages a Principal's Nominee sign-off for the completion of external moderation action plans, to address issues identified, in a timely manner
- makes appropriate withdrawals of internal entries, where students have not had an adequate assessment opportunity before 1 December of each year.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has a high agreement rate between teachers and NZQA moderators. This reflects effective internal moderation processes.

The Principal's Nominee requires staff to develop an action plan to resolve any issues identified in external moderation reports. She monitors completion of planned strategies, trends and agreement rates and, where appropriate, these strategic actions form part of staff appraisal. The Principal's Nominee supports teachers to ensure effective changes to assessment practice including adjustments to assessment materials and marking schedules, identification of more appropriate verifiers, and consultation with subject advisors. She evaluates the effectiveness of change strategies in discussion and keeps annotated records of outcomes. Where necessary she requires similar selection of standards for external moderation to confirm best 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)*

Senior Managers meet regularly to implement a detailed annual plan including evidence-based schoolwide goals for groups of learners within the school. Heads of Department meet fortnightly to develop improvement strategies with the Principal's

Nominee and Deputy Principal – Curriculum. The latter is an experienced Principal's Nominee and supports the current Principal's Nominee who is new to the role. Review structures are used to co-construct strategies based on school goals and to manage change to assessment and moderation practice. The Principal's Nominee has a specific brief in these meetings to lead discussion on ongoing improvement of NCEA through introduction of new courses, reinforcement of best assessment and moderation practice and discussion of student data.

Schoolwide self-review is building on existing systems. The school identifies goals and responds to trends through its own internal review. Practice is focussed on continuous improvement to support student achievement and to ensure credible assessment practice. A number of learning and assessment strategies have been introduced or strengthened as a result. These include:

- focusing on the school's attendance initiative to ensure students "attend, complete and achieve" to gain their best possible NCEA outcomes
- extending the range of courses in vocational pathways so that all students have access to clear vocational and academic pathways
- discussing internal moderation cover sheets in Heads of Department meetings, including correct processes, and sample verification comments, to ensure there is a common understanding across departments and to strengthen staff discussion over grade boundaries
- centralising the storage of internal moderation coversheets with the Principal's Nominee, and data matching these against dates in course outlines, to ensure timely reporting of results and monitor internal moderation
- trialling a Head of Department sign-off to attest that all materials offered on course outlines will be available for the school's 1 December external moderation round, unless negotiated with the Principal's Nominee, to ensure improved storage of evidence in departments
- conducting standard-by-standard reviews of results of student achievement at the end of each unit of work to reflect on student attainment and inform future delivery of standards and course design
- promoting academic success by inviting recently graduated Year 13 students to a whole school assembly to recognise achievement and support the aspirations for those students seeking University Entrance.

These initiatives indicate that the school has the capacity for self-review and is developing strengthened communication, and school-wide ownership of effective NCEA assessment and moderation practices. Teachers reflect on data to inform course design to more effectively meet the needs of students.

### **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 2018 5.5)*

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

- mentoring students to follow academic, and vocational pathways, according to their interests and abilities including, agriculture and horticulture, early childhood studies, carpentry, hospitality, engineering and tourism
- offering one and two-day courses through Waikato Trades Academy
- offering work placements with local retail businesses
- collecting assessment evidence in a variety of digital, visual, written and oral forms
- providing online courses through Te Kura to increase the range of suitable options for students
- providing differentiated assessment programmes by including optional standards within courses
- using feed-forward and feedback to support students to present their best evidence
- applying to NZQA for special assessment conditions and using school-based evidence to support students entitled to these
- assessing students when ready, where appropriate

### **Te Awamutu College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- equitably managing missed and late assessment, resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- using a range of digital tools and teacher knowledge of students to check the authenticity of student work, and following up where there is a possible breach
- ensuring derived and emergency grades are based on pre-existing standard-specific evidence
- reporting 'Not Achieved' where a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Strategies to support student attainment** The school's annual plan refers to its "commitment to developing meaningful qualifications" for students. To action this plan the school is:

- using predictive credit summaries and mentoring discussions with deans to support students to decide on whether to elect optional standards throughout the year
- identifying students at-risk of not achieving and offering Booster Week activities each term to help meet their assessment needs



- holding careers and pathways discussions with students to help them define their assessment plans
- delivering project-based horticulture credits by establishing an extensive community garden. This complements assessment offered through the existing school farm and agriculture courses for students who plan to follow career pathways in Primary Industries.

**No action required**

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

## 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)*

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

- critiquing any new or amended assessment materials before they are used
- using subject specialists from within or outside the school to verify a sample of student work
- documenting processes on an internal moderation cover sheet, and completing a Head of Department check, followed by a Principal's Nominee audit before the Principal's Nominee submits these results to NZQA
- holding current benchmark exemplars in departments to assist with making future assessment decisions

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

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to meet NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- providing written responses on external moderation feedback to the Principal's Nominee
- monitoring trends and agreement rates to identify any issues and taking action or providing support as needed
- using feedback from external moderation to identify and store exemplars to help with making future assessment decisions.

**Reconciliation of internal moderation documentation with actual practice a next step** The Principal's Nominee explained that her next step is to make annual strategic visits to departments to strengthen the embedded processes around internal moderation. These visits may include a check that actual practice, including storage, verification and maintenance of current exemplars, matches documentation, as appropriate. This will close the loop of quality assurance monitoring and reinforce senior management confidence that all results have been subject to the school's quality assurance process.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** The school needs to provide staff with further guidance on sufficient verification of grade judgements through the strategic selection of student work.

Learning Areas assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this. 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.

**Development of digital storage systems is encouraged** Digital evidence conventions and collection is developing as the school phases in its 'bring your own devices policy'. To support this the school is encouraged to develop storage and file-naming protocols. This will assist departments to organise evidence so that it is readily available for external moderation.

### **For consideration**

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

- developing a digital assessment policy and procedures
- reducing staff workload by ensuring teachers are selecting a sufficient sample, for verification of teacher judgements, when they are internally moderating.

## 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)*

### **Te Awamutu College effectively:**

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - setting a range of schoolwide goals based on analysis of student achievement
  - tracking and providing Dean support and teacher intervention for students identified as being at-risk of not achieving their NCEA goals
  - encouraging students to use the school management system and their Learner login to monitor their own academic progress
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - ensuring timely and accurate reporting of results to NZQA
  - checking that the school reports only those grades for which it holds consent to Assess
  - using the Key Indicators to resolve any errors in data submission
  - ensuring that all entries have results reported by 1 December or that entries are withdrawn as appropriate
  - ensuring that students check and sign-off the accuracy of internally assessed results, and developing robust checking procedures to minimise late external entries.

**Effective data analysis supports strategic goals** Heads of Department analyse student achievement data against similar schools, by ethnicity and gender, and reflect upon barriers and enablers to student achievement. Consistent standard-by-standard analysis provides useful information:

- to better engage student interest and develop attainment
- on changes to timing of standards in courses
- to support the introduction of new standards and courses.

The Deputy Principal in Charge of Curriculum summarises this analysis for presentation to the Board of Trustees and, in consultation with senior management, prepares schoolwide goals.

### **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))*

### **Te Awamutu College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines with comprehensive information on each course they undertake
- communicating consistent assessment policy and procedures to students, teachers and whānau
- supporting teachers new to the school, and provisionally registered teachers, to meet expectations around assessment and moderation practice
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current

### **Te Awamutu College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- proactively checking whether students and whānau are following processes by surveying their understanding through the parent portal
- conducting end-of-unit student surveys to inform future delivery of appropriate standards and provide an evidence-base for reflection on course design
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- ensuring regular communication with whānau through a range of media and kanohi ki te kanohi meetings to ensure their understanding is consistent.

**Consistent communication provides confidence** Staff and students spoke confidently about school's assessment procedures and showed a consistent understanding of these. Students explained that they know who to ask if they need advice about assessment matters. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of NCEA.

Handbooks for staff and students developed by the Principal's Nominee are written in plain English, providing accessible guides to assessment and moderation practice.

**Consider making student handbooks available online** The school is phasing in a 'bring your own device policy' over five years. In 2019 this will apply to Year 11. The Principal's Nominee agreed that it is timely to provide further online advice for students. As a next step the school will consider putting the student handbook online to enhance access.

**Reconcile Memoranda of Understanding with results reported** The school holds a number of memoranda of understanding with external organisations. Currently these are stored in a range of locations around the school. The Principal's Nominee agreed to add a system to assure senior management that memoranda of understanding are current, that student achievement can be counted towards attainment of a qualification, and that all results are reported against correct external provider codes.

**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:

- reconcile memoranda of understanding held with all results reported against external provider codes.

**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:

- making student handbooks available online.

