

Managing National Assessment Report

Opotiki College

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Opotiki 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
- *Opotiki College QMS – Assessment Policies and Procedures 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Opotiki College 2019 Student & Whānau Assessment Guide* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal - Curriculum
- Curriculum Advisors for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Music
 - Te Reo Māori
- three students.

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

Opotiki College

12 June 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 three years.

What the school is doing well

The school has effectively addressed all the agreed action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment report. It has demonstrated the capacity for self-review at all levels within the school. Most assessment processes within the school are effectively managed, with teachers understanding and following assessment practices that meet school and NZQA requirements.

The school provides a range of academic and vocational courses to meet the local employment opportunities and the assessment needs of its students. Teachers described a range of approaches, including the use of local contexts, to gather evidence of students' achievement during assessment. Increased flexibility within a student's Programmes of Learning allow adjustments of the number of standards assessed and for students to be assessed when they are ready.

Effective Internal moderation practice is well embedded within curriculum areas. The processes are documented and closely monitored by the Deputy Principal - Curriculum and Principal's Nominee. Improvements made to the school's external moderation response process should ensure that timely actions are taken to address issues identified in moderation reports.

Assessment data is accurately and regularly reported to NZQA. This data is used effectively to report on student achievement, set strategic school and curriculum area goals, track student progress and identify those at risk of not meeting qualification requirements.

School communication ensures information on qualifications and assessment procedures is consistently provided to its community. The range of formats used to distribute this information has enhanced the development of a shared understanding of the school processes and NCEA requirements.

Areas for improvement

The Principal's Nominee is not confident of seeing all external moderation reports as some, from standard setting bodies other than NZQA, may be sent directly to the assessing teacher. These could miss being included in the school's external moderation response process. A system needs to be developed to ensure that an effective response process is applied across all external moderation.

The number of special assessment conditions applications has declined significantly over the last three years. This means that eligible students may be missing out on an entitlement to conditions that could reduce barriers to their access to fair assessment. The school has agreed they will ensure there is a process to identify potentially entitled students and apply for them to use special assessment conditions.

The school must ensure staff follow NZQA's resubmission requirements. A resubmission may be offered at the teacher's sole discretion if they judge a student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct on their own. This would usually preclude all students in a class being offered a resubmission for an assessment.

The staff assessment handbook requires some minor updating to ensure that the information it contains is consistent with NZQA's Assessment Rules and best assessment practice. The addition of an index would make it easier for staff to find specific information when needed.

Agreed action

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

- ensure the same external moderation response process is used for all standard-setting bodies
- ensure there is a process to identify and apply for students who may be eligible to use special assessment conditions (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 5.5*)
- ensure teachers follow resubmission requirements (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.7*)
- review and update the staff handbook.

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26 August 2019

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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 23 March 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed the agreed actions from the 2016 report. This review identified that:

- staff respond appropriately to external moderation and understand the need to purposefully select examples of student work around grade boundaries for internal moderation
- Memoranda of Understanding with outside providers are renewed annually, held centrally and checked, to ensure correct provider codes are used before results are reported
- staff and student handbooks have been updated as suggested. Some further modifications that would improve the handbooks are discussed in the communications section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school introduced a new process to record staff feedback on external moderation this year, after recognising that the previous online Google document was not working as expected. Curriculum Advisors discussed working with the staff in their curriculum area to respond to any issues identified in reports and recording planned actions on an *External Moderation Response* form. A follow-up meeting with the Principal's Nominee is then held to confirm the actions and when and how staff would report back on their completion.

However, as one Curriculum Advisor noted, there is no requirement for an evaluation of how effective the actions have been in addressing the issue. The school should consider adding this extra step to its process. It would also allow a curriculum area to consider if the standard should be included in its strategic selection of standards for future external moderation. An improved process should allow Senior Leaders to be confident that timely actions are taken to resolve issues raised by external moderation reports.

The school assesses standards covered by the moderation requirements of a number of standard-setting bodies besides NZQA. Some reports from Industry Training Organisations are sent directly to the assessing teacher. There is therefore the potential for the Principal's Nominee to miss these being included in the school's external moderation response process. A system needs to be developed to ensure there is a robust response to all identified issues.

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 Leaders, Curriculum Advisors and teachers interviewed were all able to discuss effective review processes within the school. Examples of recent improvements resulting from review included:

- strengthening the follow-up of external moderation after identifying this as an area of weakness
- working with outside agencies and developing learning and assessment programmes to improve local employment opportunities for students
- introducing a trade hub for secondary schools in the Eastern Bay of Plenty where students can be assessed against Aquaculture, Primary Industry and Engineering standards
- the development of two-year Programmes of Learning for students who would struggle to achieve NCEA within a year
- assessment loads in many courses being reduced to enable students to be assessed when there is a good chance of success
- the introduction of the online data tool linked directly to the school's student management system, to allow staff to more easily extract achievement data on students or courses
- creating an 'A' Team of teachers to provide 'in-house' staff professional development on how, as a classroom teacher, to use achievement data
- requiring Curriculum Advisors to annually analyse achievement data to show that curriculum area goals and school targets align

While review of assessment processes is embedded within the school, it is not always coherent. The school has shown it has the capacity to effectively resolve issues as they arise or are identified by outside review. However, there is presently no regular review of school-wide assessment practice that could identify areas for ongoing improvement. The school should consider introducing a systematic review of assessment processes.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure the same external moderation response process is used for all standard-setting bodies.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- adding a section to its *External Moderation Response* form that records the effectiveness of any actions taken
- developing a process to systematically review assessment processes.

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)

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

- introducing new or modifying existing courses to improve engagement and broaden the achievement pathways offered
- providing flexibility within students' Programmes of Learning to allow adjustments to the standards assessed based upon student aspirations and/or progress
- using relevant local contexts in assessment tasks to engage their interest
- extending the range of assessment opportunities available through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, Star and Gateway programmes and Trade Academy courses organised through Toi-Ohomai Institute of Technology
- assessing when ready, where appropriate and manageable
- using a range of physical and digital methods to collect evidence of achievement during assessment
- gathering evidence to assess students against the literacy and numeracy unit standards for those needing support to meet NCEA requirements.

Opotiki College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment, extensions, appeals and further assessment opportunities consistently school-wide
- 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
- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- collecting credible evidence to support derived grade applications
- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act, 1993 when handling students' assessment information.

Ensure that students eligible to use special assessment conditions are identified and supported It is a requirement of a school's consent to assess to have a process to identify and adequately support students who are eligible for special assessment conditions. The number of new applications the school has made has declined markedly since 2016, and in 2019 there have been no new applications. Senior Leaders are aware this is an issue, noting the difficulty in maintaining continuity of staff. The school has supported the recently appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to attend an NZQA run seminar on managing Special Assessment Conditions and has agreed it needs to ensure there is a better process to identify and make applications for eligible students. This will better ensure

students do not miss out on the use of conditions that could reduce barriers to their achievement.

Ensure staff follow resubmission requirements The school must ensure staff follow resubmission requirements. The teacher decides when, how and to whom a resubmission is offered. A resubmission may be offered at the teacher's discretion if they judge a student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct on their own. The teachers interviewed showed a clear understanding of when a resubmission should be provided. However, the three students interviewed discussed situations where all students in a class were offered a resubmission. This does not meet NZQA requirements. NZQA's *NCEA Mythbuster #4 - Resubmission* publication and material from the 2018 Principal's Nominee seminar are useful references that could be used to help improve teacher understanding of the resubmission process.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects In 2018 the school reduced the significant gap in equity between its Māori students and students of other ethnicities when comparing success in one or more STEM subjects at Level 3. Adding Level 3 Calculus and Technology to its senior curriculum in 2019 is expected to provide further opportunities for success for students, regardless of ethnicity. Senior Leaders noted that some of its senior students are successful when they are assessed against STEM unit standards.

Agreed action

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

- ensure there is a process to identify and apply for students who may be eligible to use special assessment conditions (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 5.5*)
- ensure teachers follow resubmission requirements (*Assessment Rules for schools with Consent to Assess 2019, 6.7*).

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)

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

- critiquing assessment material prior to use to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and provides students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
- teachers using published clarifications, and school and NZQA exemplars to inform their grade judgements during marking
- using subject specialists, either from within or outside the school, to verify samples of student work purposefully selected from around grade boundaries
- requiring staff to document on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* the steps of their moderation processes, including noting verification discussion and decisions
- centralising the collection and storage of all assessment material allowing the Deputy Principal Curriculum to monitor the completion of internal moderation processes to ensure all reported results are credible.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- providing staff with appropriate access to the NZQA External Moderation Application
- encouraging digital submission of material for moderation.

Encourage staff to strategically request standards for external moderation In 2018, in contrast to the previous two years, staff did not take advantage of the NZQA facility to request standards for inclusion in the school's annual external moderation plan. External moderation is a source of professional feedback and supports teacher practice. Supporting teachers to engage in this process will promote greater ownership.

Encouraging teachers to think strategically about the standards they request will ensure that:

- standards identified with issues are re-moderated within an appropriate timeframe
- currently assessed standards are selected rather than those assessed in the previous year or those no longer in use
- all standards assessed are externally moderated over time.

Provide staff with appropriate moderation access Providing staff with appropriate Education Sector Login access to the External Moderation Application will ensure they can be better informed of moderation outcomes. Giving Curriculum Advisors *moderation processor* access would allow them to improve feedback from moderators by querying issues identified in reports and permit them to assist with the submission of moderation material.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency 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.

The staff interviewed currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However most verified more samples of student work than this. 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.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school could consider:

- encouraging staff to strategically request standards for external moderation
- providing staff with appropriate access to NZQA's External Moderation Application.

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)

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

- the school setting strategic goals based upon comparative analysis of longitudinal achievement data
- Curriculum Advisors analysing NCEA data to report to the Board of Trustees on academic goals, trends in student achievement and areas for development in their curriculum areas
- staff analysing previous years' achievement data to inform current year course or programme design
- the Deputy Principal - Curriculum tracking progress towards qualifications so that appropriate support can be offered to those students at risk of not meeting requirements.

Opotiki College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- checking for, and correcting where necessary, data submission errors shown on the Key Indicators and data file submission reports from NZQA
- removing internal entries of students who have left or changed assessment programmes, to ensure all entries have a reported result
- reporting results for standards for which the school has consent to assess, or against the provider codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

Goal to reduce late external examination entries The school has identified that it needs to reduce the number of late entries made for external examinations. It has reviewed its entry processes to ensure student external entries are confirmed prior to the NZQA September deadline. In 2018, five per cent of external entries were made too late for students to receive personalised examination papers. This can hinder the smooth running of the school's examination centre and increases the possibility of examination material being misplaced or lost.

Encouraging staff use of the *External Entries Variance Check* on the school's NZQA Key Indicators page can help reduce late entries by identifying changes in the patterns of entries for externally assessed standards.

Encourage students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login In 2018 only 56 per cent of senior students registered for their NZQA Learner Login. While students can see their results through the online portal to the school's student management system, it is only through their Learner Login that they can:

- check the accuracy of their results reported to NZQA
- order copies of their qualification certificates
- request reviews or reconsiderations of external examination papers
- print an official copy of parts, or all, of their Record of Achievement.

The school should consider how it can assist students to register for their Learner Login and provide them with advice on its use.

For consideration

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

- assisting students to register and use their Learner login.

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))

Opotiki College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive consistently formatted outlines, with specific assessment information, for all courses they undertake
- regularly communicating assessment information to students and their families using a range of media such as, newsletters, texts, emails, the local newspaper, Facebook and face-to-face *Check and Connect Hui* with students and their parents
- reporting on student progress towards qualifications by providing online access to achievement data held on the school's student management system

Opotiki College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- the Principal's Nominee holding professional development sessions for staff early each year to explain NCEA requirements and school assessment processes
- using *Kahoot* to quiz staff on their knowledge of the handbook, and checking on their engagement with school assessment processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing them with opportunities to discuss these, and any changes in school or NZQA requirements, at staff and curriculum area meetings
- Learning and Curriculum Advisors helping students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Minor changes required to staff handbook Some minor changes are required to ensure the information in the staff handbook is in line with the Assessment Rules and best assessment practice. These include:

- where a proven breach of the Assessment Rules undermines the credibility of the result, a Not Achieved grade must be awarded
- applications to use special assessment conditions can be made using school-evidence as well as with reports from registered professionals
- guidance on sufficient grade verification during internal moderation process by the strategic selection of student work.

It was also noted by several staff that adding an index to the handbook would make it easier to find specific information when needed.

Review student assessment information to make it more accessible Simplifying and personalising the information in the student handbook and having it available in a range of digital formats, would make it more accessible to students. Only a small amount of the information it contains is written in language appropriate to its intended audience.

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:

- review and update the staff handbook.

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:

- reviewing the student handbook to improve its accessibility for its intended audience.