

Managing National Assessment Report

Otorohanga College

October 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Otorohanga 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
- *Otorohanga College National Certificate in Educational Achievement Staff Handbook*
- *Otorohanga College National Certificate in Educational Achievement Student Handbook*
- *Teaching and Learning – National Qualifications Assessment Procedures 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Deputy Principal/Principal's Nominee
- Acting Principal's Nominee – Terms 2 and 3, 2019
- Head(s) of Department for:
 - The Arts
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- six students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Otorohanga College

25 October 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

Otorohanga College's focus over the past three years has been to improve achievement levels of all students, in particular, Māori. Improvements in student achievement, at all NCEA qualification levels, is the result of a number of initiatives implemented including tracking and monitoring, mentoring, development of career pathway programmes, a school-wide literacy focus and support for at-risk students.

The school uses the flexibility of the NCEA model to offer a wide range of assessment programmes to support student needs, interests and aspirations. The use of outside providers enables students to work towards a vocational pathway to develop trade or employment-based skills. An expansion of career-related pathways linked to a student's plans beyond secondary school further supports student engagement and achievement of personal goals.

Internal moderation practice is embedded. Robust practice ensures all standards assessed are subject to a quality assurance process prior to the school reporting grades to NZQA. The Principal's Nominee effectively monitors internal moderation to confirm the documented information represents actual practice and checks that school expectations are being consistently followed. Teacher assistance and additional monitoring occurs in subjects where there is a low external moderation agreement rate between teachers and NZQA moderators.

The Deputy Principal and Deans effectively monitor student achievement data and progress toward qualification completion. Students at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification are identified, tracked and mentored. Where appropriate, additional support and modifications to assessment programmes are implemented for these students. Literacy and numeracy support in the junior school and targeted programmes in the senior school assist students meet the Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements.

Teachers described consistent and credible assessment practice that is underpinned by clear and effective ongoing communication and reminders from the Principal's Nominee.

Areas for improvement

Currently the Principal's Nominee only confirms the completion of the actions, to address issues identified by external moderators, for those standards that will be assessed again in the next year. Ensuring all actions are completed would meet the

school's obligation to adequately follow-up on external moderation and enables the ongoing development of valid assessment tasks and teacher understanding of the standard. A next step would be to monitor the effectiveness of these actions in addressing identified issues.

Not all Heads of Department interviewed could describe the requirements for providing a valid resubmission opportunity. Further clarification and monitoring is required to ensure that a resubmission opportunity is offered only to individual students who are on a grade boundary who can independently identify the error and correct it themselves.

The staff handbook requires updating to reflect the school's current good practice for appeals and assessments that may be used to report a derived grade. It is recommended the information provided to students be reviewed to include only that which is relevant to them and the document is written in plain English to make it more accessible.

Agreed action

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

- ensure all actions developed to address external moderation feedback are completed
- ensure that all teachers offer valid resubmission opportunities
- review the student handbook to ensure it is relevant and accessible to students
- update the staff handbook as outlined in this report.

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24 January 2020

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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 27 March 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

The single agreed action, of updating the school's communication information has been completed.

Response to external moderation outcomes The Principal's Nominee reviews external moderation feedback with Heads of Department to develop and document actions to address inconsistencies in assessor judgements. Evidence of thoughtful reflection and actions to address an issue was sighted during this review visit. Three subject areas with low agreement trends are currently being monitored, with ongoing teacher support provided.

At the start of the year the Principal's Nominee confirms that the actions to address issues identified through external moderation have been completed. However, she only confirms completion for those standards that will be assessed in the current year. An effective follow-up process involves ensuring actions in response to all issues in externally moderated standards are completed. This will enable the development of valid assessment tasks and teacher understanding of the standard and support future assessment decisions consistent with the standard. A further step, monitoring the effectiveness of the actions taken, should also be included in the follow-up process.

The school is encouraged to use the NZQA Moderation Application tool to request standards for external moderation. Targeting standards where actions are required to address an issue provides a way for the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies to improve teacher assessment practice.

Derived Grade Management review A derived grade management review was carried out in 2018. The review confirmed the school has effective processes for managing student applications and ensuring the grade reported is based on authentic standard-specific information.

Response to the 2016 Education Review Office (ERO) report This report's conclusion stated "*An unrelenting focus on raising the achievement and progress of all students is now required to enhance academic success*".

At the time of the ERO report:

- the proportion of students achieving Levels 1, 2 and 3 NCEA qualifications was significantly below that of similar schools
- there was a declining number of students gaining the Level 1 literacy and numeracy credits required to achieve their NCEA qualification
- achievement levels of Māori students, who represent the majority of students attending the school, were below other students in the college and that of similar schools.

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)

In response to the 2016 ERO recommendations and to accelerate the achievement of all students the school has conducted a number of reviews and made changes to improve student outcomes. Particular focus has been on improving Māori student achievement. Changes to assessment practice include:

- setting strategic achievement targets for NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3 qualifications
- the introduction of a mentoring programme for at-risk Māori and Pacific students to assist them to set academic and career pathways goals and to monitor their progress to achieve these
- implementing an NCEA tracking system, whereby the Deans monitor student achievement by year level, identifying those at risk of not gaining a qualification and initiating support, including changes to assessment programmes, where appropriate
- a school-wide literacy focus in Years 9 and 10 to accelerate targeted students' literacy skills to enable them to access NCEA when in Year 11
- tracking Level 1 literacy achievement and using a call back system in November, for targeted students to complete an additional standard to gain Level 1 Literacy
- broadening programmes to better meet the vocational and employment aspirations of students.

These changes and strategies have contributed to an improvement in student NCEA qualifications achievement at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Boys achievement and Māori student achievement at levels 1, 2 and 3 and is now above national and decile levels.

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:

- ensure all actions developed to address external moderation feedback are completed.

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)

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

- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational courses and work experience opportunities including hotel management, hospitality, Māori Tourism, outdoor education and alpine skiing
- offering a skills academy for students to assist those wanting to transition to employment or further vocational training
- teachers annually modifying the list of standards offered in a course to reflect the abilities and interests of the class
- negotiating individual NCEA assessment programmes with students to support their future pathway plans
- adapting assessments to make use of local and cultural contexts to provide authentic learning opportunities and to engage student interests
- supporting students to present their best evidence of achievement by scaffolding assessment tasks, providing feedback and feedforward information and assessing students when ready.

Otorohanga College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions and further assessment opportunities
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- tracking student progress towards meeting literacy and numeracy requirements
- ensuring derived and unexpected event grades are based on authentic standard-specific evidence from practice examinations that have been subject to a quality assurance process
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Increasing numbers of students are provided with special assessment conditions School-based evidence is now being collected in Year 10 to support applications for special assessment conditions. Prior to 2019, Level C Assessor Reports were used with the school supporting the cost of these with some families. This change has been supported by the appointment of a new Special Education Needs Coordinator, who has attended NZQA-run special assessment conditions seminars, and the assistance of Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour. Using school-based evidence removes the potential financial barrier for students to access entitlement and can assist students to achieve to their potential.

Clarification of resubmission opportunities required One teacher interviewed was uncertain on the requirements for providing a valid resubmission opportunity, describing offering one to all students, if they wanted it, rather than only those at a grade boundary at the teacher's sole discretion. The Principal's Nominee provides clarification and reminders of the correct process for offering resubmission opportunities at staff and Head of Department meetings. Students interviewed correctly described the process and confirmed the valid offering of resubmission by their teachers.

The school must monitor that all teachers follow the correct resubmission practice.

Engaging students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects (STEM) The school is aware of the low level of engagement in STEM subjects by all students and in particular that of Māori students. The school's Kāhui Ako focus is on increasing student achievement in sciences by:

- ensuring STEM subjects are offering 14+credits
- the inclusion of a STEM section in the 2020 course selection handbook
- using course selection interviews to encourage students to consider STEM subjects
- planning for STEM subject teachers to regularly report on Māori and Pacific student achievement in 2020.

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 that all teachers offer valid resubmission opportunities.

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)

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

The Principal's Nominee:

- tracking the completed moderation cover sheets to confirm internal moderation has occurred for all standards assessed, prior to reporting of grades
- annually monitoring a sample of cover sheets to confirm the documented moderation process reflects actual practice
- auditing all departments on a two-year cycle to ensure assessment materials and student work are adequately stored and school expectations are followed, and co-constructing actions plans were necessary
- using external moderation feedback to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation.

Teachers:

- having a clear understanding of the purpose of internal moderation and the school's internal moderation expectations
- critiquing new and amended assessment activities before use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using a panel marking process and subject specialists from outside of the school to verify assessor judgements for a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and the final grade decision for future reference
- responding to recommendations developed at the biennial audit of the department's internal moderation procedures.

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

- selecting samples of student work using a valid selection process
- ensuring student work is adequately stored, and the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of the materials
- using a response form to document actions undertaken to address issues identified in external moderation reports
- encouraging teachers to appeal reports where they do not agree with the moderation outcome
- using the same external moderation follow-up process for both Industry Training Organisation and NZQA owned standards.

Grade verification sample and sufficiency clarified The Principal's Nominee shared information from the NZQA Managing National Assessment Seminar on strategic selection for verification of grades awarded to student work. While most teachers select work around grade boundaries for verification, some described checking all work where the class is very small. A purposeful selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. The school is encouraged to check that teachers with very small class sizes are verifying grade boundary samples to manage their and their verifier's assessment workload.

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)

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

- providing student progress data toward NCEA qualifications to the Board of Trustees throughout the year
- identifying students in Year 9 and 10 who require literacy support to enable them to access Level 6 of the curriculum when in Year 11
- requiring Heads of Department to report a comparative analysis of NCEA achievement data to the Principal and Board of Trustees and planned future teaching and assessment changes
- supporting students to use the parent portal and their Learner login to track their NCEA progress
- reconciling reported results from outside providers with a current Memoranda of Understanding
- collecting student feedback to inform changes to courses and standards offered.

Otorohanga College reports accurate achievement data by:

- using NZQA Key Indicators and data reports to check and monitor the accuracy of entries and results
- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- having teachers and students confirm the accuracy of external entries and internal results reported to NZQA.

Effective tracking and mentoring programme supports student achievement

Deans and the Principal's Nominee track student progress toward NCEA qualifications, identifying students at risk and negotiating programme changes where appropriate.

An effective mentoring programme supports students to identify their career pathways and set qualification goals. Mentors regularly meet with students to review academic goals and track progress towards qualifications.

Students interviewed described the support and guidance the school provided in assisting them to track their qualification progress, select subjects for their planned career pathway and provide additional support, if needed.

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))

Otorohanga College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring that students are provided with consistent assessment information on each of their courses of study
- annually reviewing:
 - the accuracy and relevance of the staff handbook to ensure it is fit for purpose
 - communication methods used to share information with students and parents
- ensuring information on assessment procedures and courses offered is readily accessible to students and parents using the school website, providing NCEA information evenings and NZQA published booklets.

Otorohanga College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- weekly student year level meetings with the Principal's Nominee and Dean who provide NCEA timely and relevant reminders and information
- using staff and Heads of department meetings to inform teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- assisting students and parents to monitor NCEA progress through the parent portal and Learner Login
- the Principal's Nominee providing targeted professional learning on resubmission and further assessment opportunities and the purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation verification.

Amendments to staff and student handbooks The staff handbook is a comprehensive and relevant document presented in plain English. The school agreed that when next updated that the following information would be included to reflect the school's current good practice:

- that students can appeal any assessment decisions
- the school's quality assurance methods for assessments that will be used to generate evidence for derived grades.

The student handbook is essentially the same information as that in the staff handbook, and therefore sections are not relevant for students. It is recommended that the school review the information to ensure that it is more student focussed and relevant. To be more accessible it should be written in plain English

Succession planning supports sustainable NCEA systems and processes

An Acting Principal's Nominee held the role for Terms 2 and 3 while the Principal's Nominee acted as Principal. Evidence at the review demonstrated that the NCEA processes and communication methods in place continued to ensure the credibility of assessment for qualifications with the change in leadership.

To ensure that an experienced and capable person is able to assume the role of Principal's Nominee the school is planning to share aspects of the role with another teacher from 2020 onward.

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 the student handbook to ensure it is relevant and accessible to students
- update the staff handbook as outlined in this report.