

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Tauhara College

October 2018

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tauhara 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
- *Tauhara College Assessment for National Qualifications Policy and Procedures*
- *Tauhara College NZQA Assessment Staff Handbook 2018*
- *Tauhara College NCEA Assessment Student Guidelines 2018* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Faculty for:
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Visual Arts
- Teachers in Charge of:
  - Geography
  - Home Economics
  - Te Reo Māori
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

## Tauhara College

24 October 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.

### What the school is doing well

Tauhara College offers a range of academic and vocational assessment pathways to meet students' needs. Teachers are encouraged to individualise assessment programmes and students have a range of opportunities to engage with external providers.

Learners are supported to set academic and career goals and are encouraged to achieve these by their Tutors and Deans. Data is used to track progress towards qualifications and target support appropriately. School-wide strategic targets include improving academic success for Māori students. The effectiveness of this strategy has yet to be evaluated.

The Principal's Nominee has a clear understanding of what constitutes an effective quality assurance process for credible grades. For most teachers, internal moderation is embedded and includes professional contacts with colleagues developed to verify a selection of grade judgements. The Principal's Nominee analyses external moderation reports, and other information to identify areas of concern and plan how these will be addressed. Most teachers value the moderation process for their professional learning as well as to confirm their assessment decisions.

The Principal's Nominee works with the support of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team to oversee the school's assessment practice. Teachers appreciate her efficiency and approachability.

### Areas for improvement

This report recommends some changes so that the school is more effectively managing its quality assurance processes. It is suggested that the Senior Leaders support the Principal's Nominee to ensure that these are completed.

- There is a need to strengthen the follow up of issues raised in external moderation so that planned actions are completed in a timely manner.
- Some faculties are slow to complete and submit to the Principal's Nominee evidence that grades reported have been internally moderated. Grades must not be reported to NZQA until they have been quality assured, and delays can make it difficult for students to accurately track progress towards completing qualifications.

NZQA evaluates evidence that a school gathers to support applications for a student to use special assessment conditions. The school's documentation states that an assessor's report is required. This can have financial implications for the school or a family. The Principal confirms that this will be reviewed.

In some courses, students are assessed against a large number of credits. This can impact the assessment workload for students. It should be made clear if some assessment is optional. As well, a number of students are not entered for enough credits to achieve a qualification. These should be areas for review.

Students are encouraged to use a digital device and teachers are gathering evidence of achievement for internally assessed standards using Google Docs or other online applications. However, the school has had no involvement in digital assessments for examinations. As well, only a small proportion of external moderation is submitted digitally. It is suggested that the school identify teachers who could lead change in these two areas.

This report outlines some amendments that need to be made to the staff and student handbooks to ensure that messages are consistent with NZQA's expectations.

### **Agreed action**

The school agreed on actions to improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are to:

- ensure that the actions planned to address issues raised in external moderation reports are completed in a timely manner
- use the review of outcomes of external moderation to identify required improvements in internal moderation
- review course design, in particular the number of credits in a course
- review the courses of students who are not entered in sufficient credits to achieve a qualification
- make the suggested changes to the staff and student handbooks.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

12 February 2019

**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 19 & 20 March 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has addressed the items agreed in the 2015 Managing National Assessment report as outlined below. In some areas, further action is suggested.

- The school's senior managers undertook to ensure they could be confident that internal moderation is completed for all results. The Principal's Nominee now collects a copy of the completed internal moderation cover sheet for every standard and cross checks this against course outlines. She commented that while most faculties submit these promptly, others need several reminders. It is suggested that the senior managers actively support the Principal's Nominee to ensure all faculties meet the school's and NZQA's expectations in a timely manner.
- As agreed in the 2015 review, the Principal's Nominee requires departments to plan their response to external moderation. The next step is to monitor that actions are completed before the standard is used again.
- The school has reviewed aspects of moderation, communication and assessment practice.
- The data issues noted in the 2015 report have been resolved. However, it is good practice for teachers to make the final check on NZQA's provider login as qualifications are awarded based on the data that NZQA holds
- The school has successfully promoted the role of the Principal's Nominee. She now regularly addresses Head of Faculty meetings and staff meetings. It is evident that the teachers respect her leadership.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** To ensure that follow up of issues raised in external moderation is effective, plans of actions should include a finish date and completion must be monitored by the Principal's Nominee or a senior leader, for example. This would more effectively ensure that improvements are made before the standard is used again. Currently, the Principal's Nominee discusses outcomes with the faculty or teachers and produces a summary report for the senior leaders with planned actions for any standards or faculties that have issues. As the external moderator agreed with around 60 percent of assessor decisions in 2018, this indicates that there is room to improve internal moderation practice.

The Principal's Nominee has identified faculties where there are ongoing assessment quality issues. Some suggestions to address these include:

- ensuring that discussions about the reason for an assessment judgement are recorded in a way that will triangulate with external moderator feedback and provide benchmark samples
- changing verifiers where there is poor external moderation agreement and engaging with colleagues in other schools for verification

- querying external moderator reports if the feedback is not sufficient to inform improvement
- requesting a clarification if the standard and NZQA's published material does not provide sufficient information for understanding
- building up a set of annotated exemplars of student work in the school's own contexts to be used as benchmarks for assessment judgements.

When the school has determined how it will make improvements to their quality assurance of assessment, the senior leaders and the Principal's Nominee should decide how it will measure effectiveness and monitor that all learning areas are completing the agreed steps.

### **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)*

A current focus of internal review at Tauhara College is to raise Māori Achievement. Teachers are expected to engage in an inquiry with outcomes shared in professional learning groups. At the time of this review, it was too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives underway.

The school aims to grow its practice around personalisation of learning and the provision of a range of pathways for students to gain meaningful qualifications that prepare them for their future. Students are able to access opportunities through Gateway, Trades Academies and other outside providers.

The Principal's Nominee has worked closely with the Heads of Faculties with a greater emphasis on transparency. This has led teachers to be more comfortable asking for guidance and issues being identified and resolved. In particular, teacher understanding of how to manage further assessment opportunities and resubmissions is now consistent with NZQA expectations.

Heads of Faculty have been provided with self-review documents around assessment practice but there is no expectation that they will be completed. It is suggested that as this could be an area for development with outcomes providing directions for development of assessment, moderation or student achievement.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that the actions planned to address issues raised in external moderation reports are completed in a timely manner
- use the review of outcomes of external moderation to identify required improvements in internal moderation.

### **For consideration**

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

- supporting the Principal's Nominee to ensure that all faculties provide completed evidence of internal moderation promptly
- introducing a programme of faculty reviews
- reminding teachers that the final check for accuracy of entries and results should be made using the school's NZQA provider login.



## 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)*

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

- encouraging teachers to gather evidence of achievement in different ways depending on student preferences
- trialling the use of one context to assess different standards or across more than one subject area
- individualising assessment programmes and providing differentiated assessment within courses
- teachers encouraging them to achieve their academic and career goals
- tracking completion of the literacy and numeracy requirements for an NCEA qualification and aiming for all students to complete these requirements by mid-year.

### **Tauhara College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- investigating appeals and reported breaches of the rules
- ensuring valid evidence is available for derived grades if required
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

**Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The school is motivated to provide programmes that will encourage students to develop an interest in Science and Technology. In 2019, they plan to introduce a STEM class for Year 9 students with a specific aim of inspiring Māori girls to engage with science.

The school should also consider how to increase participation and success for their older students who have missed this opportunity. The involvement with the Tūwharetoa Cultural Project may be a useful resource for this.

**Management of special assessment applications** Schools can gather evidence to support applications for students to use special assessment conditions. This can remove any financial barrier for students or reduce the cost to the school who have, on occasion, paid for psychometric testing by an assessor to provide evidence of eligibility. The school's rate of making successful applications for students to use special assessment conditions is similar to that of other schools. However, none of the applications over the last three years used school-based evidence. The school agrees that this will be reviewed. The recently appointed Special Needs Coordinator should be supported to manage this process.

**Engage with digital external assessment** It is suggested the school investigates how it can be equipped to engage with the increasing number of examinations that will be available to sit online from 2019. The school has had no students sit trials or pilots of digital examinations. It is recommended that they identify, and support teachers keen to prepare students to participate.

**Review course design** A reduced assessment programme can reduce teacher and student workload as well as providing students with a better opportunity to achieve merit and excellence grades. Some courses at Tauhara College have a heavy assessment load. The school has discussed reducing the number of credits in courses, however there has been no directive. As a result, students are assessed against many more credits than needed to gain an NCEA certificate.

### **Agreed action**

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

- review course design to ensure that students have a manageable assessment load.

### **For consideration**

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

- gathering and using school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions
- engaging with digital external assessment.

## 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)*

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, both within the school and externally, to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- requiring teachers to document the completion of all the steps of the process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- monitoring the completion of the process by collecting the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* and cross checking these against the course outlines.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored.

**Low rate of digital submission for external moderation** Advantages of submitting work digitally for external moderation include less work for teachers and the Principal's Nominee, minimised risk of work being misplaced, easier access to appeals and queries and generally a faster response.

It is recommended that school practice is reviewed with the aim of expecting that teachers submit work digitally for external moderation if it is produced digitally. Many students at Tauhara College are completing work using Google Docs or other online applications. However, the school has a very low rate of digital submission of work for external moderation.

**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 a sample of marked student work. While most faculties assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements, some faculties verify more than this or carry out an additional process to demonstrate compliance after they have carried out robust practice.

### **For consideration**

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

- encouraging teachers to submit student work for external moderation digitally if it has been produced digitally
- provide further guidance on strategic selection of student work for verification.

## 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)*

### Tauhara College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - tracking progress towards qualifications and providing additional support for students at risk of not completing an NCEA qualification
  - actively encouraging students to use their student login to monitor their progress.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - checking the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
  - ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations
  - reconciling reported results from external providers with a current Memorandum of Understanding.

**Investigate non-participation rates** Over the last three years, Tauhara College has a number of students who have not been entered for enough credits to gain a qualification. Some, but not all, of the non-participants are in the school's Special Needs Unit. This could be area for review to ensure that students are given an opportunity to complete a qualification if appropriate.

**Low rate of financial assistance applications** Tauhara College has a low rate of applications for financial assistance for NCEA fees compared with similar schools. This, coupled with a slightly lower rate of students paying fees, indicates that the school could review processes that ensure that eligible students have access to information about financial assistance and expectations. While information is available on the school's website and given to students, the school could investigate that the message is being effectively conveyed.

### 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:

- review the programmes of students who are not participants in a qualification.

### For consideration

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

- investigating that messages about financial assistance for NCEA fees are effectively conveyed.

## 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))*

### **Tauhara College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure.

### **Tauhara College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- providing students with information in a range of ways to understand what they need to do to gain a qualification.

**Review communication** The Principal's Nominee regularly reviews the staff and student handbooks. It is suggested that for the next edition the following changes are made:

- correct the information about special assessment conditions so that families know that they do not need to have a report from an independent assessor
- remove the reference to submitting optional teacher selected evidence for moderator feedback in the staff manual
- add details to the staff manual encouraging digital submission for external moderation.

### **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:

- make the suggested changes to the staff and student handbooks.