

Managing National Assessment Report

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College

May 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Taupo-nui-a-Tia 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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
- *Taupo-nui-a-Tia College Senior School Handbook 2017* (Student Handbook)
- *2017 Assessment Policy Procedures* (Staff handbook)
- *Taupo-nui-a-Tia College Quality Management System 2017*
- *School Charter, Strategic and Annual Plan for Taupo-nui-a-Tia College 2017 - 2019*
- 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 Faculty for English, Mathematics, Physical Education and Health, Science, Social Science and Technology.

There was a report-back session with the three Deputy Principals 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

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College

3 May 2017

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

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College offers a range of academic and vocational assessment pathways to support students' needs. Students are supported to achieve their goals by a strong whānau structure. In addition to ensuring that students have access to information, the whānau tutors track individual progress and mentor students. Where manageable, students are assessed when ready. Teachers are developing a variety of ways of collecting evidence of achievement and the school is encouraging the use of digital technologies for learning and assessment.

Internal moderation is an embedded culture. The Heads of Faculty oversee a variety of good practices to ensure that credible results are reported. Issues raised in external moderation are followed up by the Heads of Faculty. Staff value both the internal and external moderation processes and use it to for their professional learning as well as to confirm their assessment decisions.

The school engages in ongoing self-review. Senior Managers and the Principal's Nominee regularly review the assessment policies and practice that ensure credible assessment for national qualifications.

NCEA data analysis is used to inform changes in assessment programmes, improve assessment practice and monitor student outcomes against school and individual goals.

A range of communication systems is in place to ensure staff, students and parents understand the NCEA qualification and the school's policy and procedures.

The Principal's Nominee is experienced in the role. She works in partnership with the school's senior managers to oversee the school's credible assessment practice and her common-sense approach is appreciated by the teachers.

Areas for improvement

This review identified that some students are assessed against many more standards than are needed to achieve a qualification. The school agrees that reducing this should be considered to ensure that the assessment programme is manageable for both students and teachers. A strategic assessment programme may also give students a better chance of merit and excellence endorsements.

The school agrees that it will strengthen the process that confirms to managers that there has been a robust quality assurance process for all results. As part of this, they should monitor that Heads of Faculty follow up issues raised in external moderation promptly. While there is no evidence to suggest that Heads of Faculty are not vigilant, including this in the annual meeting between the Principal and Head of Faculty would allow concerns to be identified and effectively addressed in a timely manner.

There were two items in the 2014 report that have not been fully addressed. The school agreed that it would review how assessment deadlines are managed to ensure that teachers are consistent and students understand that everyone is treated fairly. Student comments indicated that there may still be some inconsistencies. As well, some refinements to the course outlines would clarify key information for students.

Agreed action

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

- reviewing the number of credits assessed in courses and in individual student's programmes
- ensuring that the school's guidelines for managing missed deadlines are understood by students and staff and applied consistently
- develop a process so that senior managers can be confident that all faculties are meeting the school's internal moderation requirements
- ensuring there is a timely response to any issues identified in external moderation.

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30 June 2017

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)

Action Items from 1 August 2013 Managing National Assessment Report There were no significant issues identified at the time of the last Managing National Assessment review. While the school has addressed the agreed items from the previous review, some suggestions for further refinements around managing deadlines and providing clear information to students are discussed in the relevant sections of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes NZQA requires schools to address issues raised in external moderation reports before the standard is used again. The Principal's Nominee expects Heads of Faculty to ensure that issues are addressed. They provide the Principal's Nominee with a copy of their reflection and action plan after discussing the outcome with the teachers involved in the assessment. This review identified there can be a delay before actions are completed. A more robust system of follow-up would ensure that planned actions have been completed in a timely manner.

Response to other issues The school aims to embed culturally responsive pedagogy into the classroom and this is a focus of the school's professional learning programme. The 2016 ERO review noted that the school should continue its unrelenting focus on Māori achievement and this is closely tracked during the year. The 2016 roll-based achievement data shows that Māori achievement is still lower than for the school's New Zealand European students at all levels. However, at Levels 1, 2 and 3 the participation-based results for Māori students are trending upwards and are higher than other schools of a similar decile.

Internal review

Evidence found that the school is effectively using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

The school regularly reviews aspects of its assessment practice. Some review is systematic and some in response to issues as they arise.

- The assessment policy and the quality management document are reviewed and updated annually.
- The Principal's Nominee identified that in some places the information in the student and staff handbooks diverged. To address this, the staff document was reviewed and now includes the student information which the Principal's Nominee checks for consistency. This means that there is less opportunity for miscommunication.
- The Principal's Nominee updated the guidelines on authenticity for students and teachers after investigating issues in 2016. The students spoken with understood the expectations and commented that they have been very well informed.

- The school has appointed an E-Learning co-ordinator to help teachers to gather evidence of achievement digitally and prepare the school for online examinations.

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 there is a timely response to any issues identified in external moderation.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- whanau teachers working with students to set achievement goals and help them track their progress towards meeting these goals
- identifying and providing different pathways for students at risk of not completing a qualification without intervention
- linking Year 11 and 12 assessment programmes to Vocational Pathways
- increasing the range of vocational and academic programmes through STAR courses and generic employment programmes
- offering work and study skills numeracy standards for students identified as requiring additional support to meet the numeracy requirements for an NCEA
- applying for special assessment conditions and providing entitled students with appropriate assistance for assessments
- providing differentiated assessment within courses.

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College has effective processes and procedures for:

- investigating appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is gathered using valid standard specific practice assessments as agreed in the last review
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Review the number of credits in a course Assessing students against a large number of credits has an impact on both student and teacher workloads. As well, for students, more assessment can be at the expense of the deeper learning needed for merit and excellence results.

In 2016, approximately 30 percent of the Year 11 cohort achieved 120 credits or more. While the proportion of students achieving a merit endorsement was around the same as in other similar schools, the proportion of excellence endorsements at Level 1 was lower. Heads of Faculty are given guidelines for the number of credits in a course, but the Principal's Nominee commented that some are reluctant to consider how they might reduce the assessment programme. The school agreed with the suggestion that the number of credits in a course, and for individual students, should be reviewed.

Managing assessment deadlines It is suggested that the school continues to check and ensure that the tension between assessing students when they are ready and treating all students fairly is appropriately managed. The staff and student handbooks have information about managing missed and late assessments, however, the students commented that some teachers allowed deadlines to creep and this could be frustrating if they had worked hard to meet the due date. While

there was insufficient evidence to suggest that this is a widespread issue, this was identified as an issue in the last review and may not have been fully addressed.

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 the number of credits assessed in courses and in individual student's programmes
- ensure that the school's guidelines for managing missed deadlines are understood by students and staff and applied consistently.

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Evidence found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, both from within the school and colleagues from other schools, to verify grades awarded for a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the completion of all the steps of internal moderation
- expecting Heads of Faculty monitor that all results from their faculty have been moderated before they are sent to NZQA

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- engaging with NZQA's external moderation application to request standards to be included for external moderation
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored either physically or digitally
- requiring Heads of Department to respond to external moderation feedback by planning actions to address any issues identified by the moderators.

Monitoring completion of internal moderation The assurance to the school's senior managers that all the internal moderation processes are completed for every standard should be more robust. The responsibility is appropriately devolved to Heads of Faculty but the monitoring by the senior managers is informal.

Currently, the Principal and Deputy Principal in charge of curriculum meet annually with each Head of Faculty to discuss achievement and the outcomes of external moderation. Including internal moderation in this meeting would provide an opportunity for the school's managers to check that NZQA's expectations are being met. Heads of Faculty could then be supported or commended as appropriate.

The good practice in different faculties that facilitates grades being consistent with the standard includes panel marking, marking meetings where work at grade borderlines is discussed, check marking, working with teachers in other schools and engaging with a subject cluster.

Verification discussions enable professional learning To ensure the ongoing benefit to the faculty of the internal moderation process, it is suggested all teachers be encouraged to record discussions on grade judgements for future reference as currently happens in some faculties. Having these annotated benchmarks samples of student work with the notes of the reasons for the judgments can reduce workload the next time the standard is used

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- develop a process so that senior managers can be confident that all faculties are meeting the school's internal moderation requirements.

For consideration

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

- encouraging all teachers to briefly note the reasons for grade decisions during the verification process.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College effectively:

- uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:
 - providing printouts of individual student progress for the whānau tutors to follow up with each student
 - evaluating individual student progress monthly to enable identification and targeted support for students at risk of not achieving a qualification
 - evaluating the outcomes of each course and planning how to improve student achievement.
- reports accurate achievement data by:
 - regularly submitting a data file and using the key indicators to identify and resolve any errors or anomalies
 - effectively encouraging students to track their own progress either by using the school's student management system or by logging on to their NZQA learner login.

Effective data management The school has good processes to manage data. The Principal's Nominee appreciates the administrative support that the school provides and considers this reduces the opportunity for errors. In 2016, there were only a very few late entries, all with genuine reasons.

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 found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake. These include the standards that will be assessed and approximate dates. The outlines are published on the student management system portal and so are easily available to parents as well as students
- communicating assessment procedures by:
 - using Google Docs to share information with students and teachers
 - including information about Vocational Pathways in the subject selection booklet and the course outlines. The teachers have been given additional information about Vocational Pathways so that they can help students plan how to complete a pathway
 - ensuring that whānau tutors are given information in a form so that it can be easily shared with students
 - providing information to parents in an NCEA evening organised by the school's PTA
 - passing subject-specific information from NZQA only to affected teachers.
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Taupo-nui-a-Tia College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing Heads of Faculty about assessment best practice in regular meetings with Senior Management. This also provides opportunities to discuss changes to school expectations and share general information from NZQA. The Heads of Faculty then share the information within their faculty
- ensuring that students have access to information from their whānau tutors, on paper and in a digital form so they know what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Recommendation for course outlines Some course outlines still contain statements that may mislead students into thinking that if they don't complete the work despite an adequate opportunity, the entry will be withdrawn. This should be reviewed to meet NZQA rules. The Principal's Nominee produced an appendix to the staff handbook after identifying that some teachers were not confident to decide whether a student had an adequate opportunity, leading to the potential for misunderstanding and this has resolved any confusion. The Heads of Faculty spoken with confirmed that they understand when a not achieved grade should be reported or an entry withdrawn.

A generic statement makes version control easier to manage. The course outlines sighted generally direct students to the *Senior School Handbook* for further information. However, as mentioned above, there is an inconsistency in the information about the school's expectations on withdrawing entries. To ensure consistency, it is suggested that outlines contain a common generic statement and

only include additional information that applies to the particular course. This might cover things such as any further assessment opportunities or subject-specific requirements for managing authenticity.

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:

- ensure that teachers and students have consistent information about when an entry will be withdrawn and when a not achieved grade will be reported to NZQA
- review the information in course outlines to ensure consistency.