

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Te Aute College

June 2018

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Te Aute 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 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
- *Te Aute College, National Qualifications Procedures, Staff Handbook - NCEA, 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *Understanding NCEA, A guide for students, parents and communities* (Online NZQA publication).

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal, six students, and Heads of Department for Art, English, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science and Te Reo Māori, and subsequently, conducted a 90-minute phone interview with the Principal's Nominee on Friday 29 June.

There was a report-back session with the Deputy Principal at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

# SUMMARY

## Te Aute College

19 and 29 June 2018

### Significant issues found

This review found significant issues that the school must address to meet the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

The next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within two years to check that these issues are being addressed and that quality management of assessment for qualifications has improved.

### The issues are that:

- external review recommendations have not been embedded in practice, which means the significant issue raised in the 2016 review still exists
- there is a disconnect between school policies and procedures and actual assessment and moderation practice
- the school's internal review systems have not been effective in identifying inconsistent practices

### Actions required to address significant issues

In order to address these issues, the school must:

- follow-up external review recommendations and findings (*CAAS Guidelines 3v*)
- use its self-review and evaluation processes to confirm that policies and procedures (as set out in the Quality Management System documentation) are current, consistently applied and are effective in achieving desired outcomes. (*CAAS Guidelines 3iv*)

### Agreed action

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

- develop guidelines around purposeful selection for verification in the NCEA staff guide
- provide professional development to reinforce the school's protocols for publishing results to NZQA and monitor their effectiveness
- involve staff in developing a dedicated NCEA student handbook to enhance understanding of assessment practice
- involve all NCEA staff in reviewing and updating the NCEA staff guides and promote consistent practice through regular 'NCEA Information' slots at staff meetings
- provide a common course outline template.

## **What the school is doing well**

Te Aute College has very good qualification achievement rates across all three levels of NCEA. The teachers are committed to providing assessment programmes that meet the negotiated needs of students and a year-level advisory structure encourages close monitoring and mentoring of all NCEA candidates.

The use of technology allows evidence to be gathered in a variety of ways to supplement individualised and integrated assessment practices. Many of the boys have their assessment needs met through work-specific training opportunities such as Trade Training at the Eastern Institute of Technology.

All assessment tasks are critiqued prior to assessment and all teacher grades are verified by subject experts. All teachers use an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* which enhances assessment quality.

A range of communication structures is in place such as scheduled meetings with parents and students to engage families and appropriately inform them about assessment for national qualifications and to discuss achievement.

The Principal's Nominee is respected by the Principal and senior school staff for her experience and knowledge of assessment procedures for national qualifications.

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9 January 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 being appropriately and effectively addressed.  
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)*

### Action Items from 9 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

Te Aute College was required to “ensure that school assessment documentation is current and appropriate (CAAS Guidelines 2.6i)”, with a follow-up review, within 12 months, to evaluate progress towards addressing this significant issue.

During the follow-up review in 2017, the school provided copies of staff and student handbooks and documentation detailing actions taken since the review. The review concluded that senior managers were confident that, “teacher assessment practice within the school is understood and consistent.”

### This Managing National Assessment review found there is still inconsistent practice including:

- the use of different versions of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* across courses
- a range of course outline templates containing varied amounts of the information specifically required in them as set out in the staff handbook
- misunderstandings about purposeful selection of student work for internal verification
- a lack of clarity around the school’s protocols for publishing results to NZQA.

### These inconsistencies may be due to:

- the 2018 NCEA staff handbook only recently being handed out to teachers
- the lack of a dedicated 2018 NCEA student handbook
- the lack of an induction process for teachers new to the school.

**Inconsistencies can be resolved and embedded** These inconsistencies can be easily resolved through senior managers using their self-review and evaluation processes to confirm that assessment and moderation policies and procedures are current, consistently applied and effective in achieving desired outcomes. Agreed action items to improve practice and encourage consistency have been included in the communication section of this report. Once best practice has been embedded, the school can be confident that on-going improvement occurs and that it continues to meet its assessment and moderation requirements.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Te Aute College has a system for responding to external moderation outcomes that is practised and effectively monitored by the Principal’s Nominee. Where poor outcomes occur, action plans are developed and carried out with responses that may include finding new verifiers, using documentation such as clarification documents and moderation reports to support assessor judgements and participating in suitable professional development

opportunities. This approach enables staff to develop their own understanding of the standard and helps to ensure credible results are reported to NZQA.

### **Internal review**

*Evidence for the school 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)*

Strong internal review processes are necessary when significant changes occur, such as to the way assessment is managed. Three years ago, the school introduced a 'Big Picture' approach to their assessment programme which was quite a shift from the traditional approach of previous years. It was supported through the creation of daily vertical advisories where teacher mentors worked with their multi-level student groups to support individualised assessment. Senior managers made minor adjustments to the system at the beginning of 2018, which include:

- a change from vertical advisories to horizontal advisories to simplify processes for the mentors, enabling them to develop their understanding of a single NCEA Level and provide more expert support
- the establishment of junior whānau classes with a project-based learning and assessment focus, similar to the 'Big Picture' model, with a view to further development as they progress through to NCEA studies.

These examples demonstrate that Te Aute College has the capacity to implement change, review the effect, and respond appropriately.

### **Required action**

The following action is required to ensure effective response to external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. The school must:

- follow-up external review recommendations and findings (*CAAS Guidelines 3v*)
- use its self-review and evaluation processes to confirm that policies and procedures (as set out in the Quality Management System documentation) are current, consistently applied and are effective in achieving desired outcomes. (*CAAS Guidelines 3iv*)

## 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 2017 5.5)

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

- offering Vocational Pathways, Trade Training at the Eastern Institute of Technology and workplace assessment opportunities
- providing differentiated assessment within some courses, where standards from more than one subject are assessed using a common context and developing this practice in the junior school through a project-based approach
- assessing when ready as appropriate and negotiating assessment deadlines to reduce the need for further assessment opportunities
- providing intensive subject-specific wananga to catch up on project and practical assessments before they are submitted for marking
- promoting digital assessment opportunities to complement developing pedagogies
- ensuring literacy and numeracy achievement is tracked.

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

- managing missed and late assessment
- encouraging staff to belong to local subject associations to broaden subject specific knowledge and enhance understanding of the national standard
- ensuring student evidence of achievement is authentic through a range of strategies including regular checkpoints with assignments and project work
- investigating appeals
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Digital assessment aligns with emerging pedagogies and complements individualised assessment** Te Aute College is developing strategies for gathering evidence of student achievement by using a variety of digital tools. This evolving practice complements the use of individualised assessment with increasing amounts of digital evidence collected across the senior school in 2018. It will also allow the school to better engage with NZQA's digital assessment and moderation work streams while ensuring that students can be assessed in ways that better suit emerging digital pedagogies.

### **No action required**

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



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

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

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- ensuring bench-mark exemplars and external moderation reports are stored to assist with making future assessment decisions
- developing wider networks of subject experts to verify student work.

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

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring sufficient samples of student work are adequately stored should they be required for external moderation
- ensuring all requested assessment material is available and submitted to NZQA on time.

**Standardised *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to enhance consistency** This review identified that teachers are using different versions of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* published by NZQA. Teachers at Te Aute College all use a cover sheet for documenting that all steps in the school's quality assurance process have been completed. The Principal's Nominee uses the cover sheets to ensure teachers are completing all internal moderation requirements.

The school is encouraged to use the most current template across all courses. This will validate teacher practice, ensure quality assurance processes are consistent and assist the Principal's Nominee to monitor completion through a consistent framework.

**Purposefully selected student work to be verified** Sufficient pieces of student work, which are purposefully selected at grade boundaries, need to be verified as part of the internal moderation process. Some teachers interviewed, were not aware of the requirement to purposefully select student work for verification. Purposeful selection enables teachers to hone in on judgements they are not sure of and to clarify grade boundaries, which enhances the credibility of their internally assessed results. Purposeful selection of student work for verification also reduces teacher and verifier workload.

To help ensure teachers adhere to the school's expectations around verification of student work, the college has agreed to develop guidelines around purposeful selection for verification in the NCEA staff guide.

**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 guidelines around purposeful selection for verification in the NCEA staff guide.

**For consideration**

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

- using the most current template of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* for all courses.

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

*Evidence for data management use supporting student achievement outcomes.  
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### **Te Aute College effectively:**

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - ensuring all NZQA fees are paid on time
  - identifying their academic strengths to support the development of appropriate assessment programmes
  - tracking progress towards gaining qualifications through daily advisory mentoring
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - submitting all data file information in a timely manner
  - withdrawing internal entries when and as appropriate
  - checking Key Indicators to ensure only results for standards for which the school has consent are reported.

### **Results data published in error before quality assurance processes completed**

It was found that a new teacher had mistakenly published results to NZQA before the Principal's Nominee had checked the school's quality assurance processes had been completed. The school's monitoring processes did not identify this.

Senior managers have agreed to reinforce the school's protocols for publishing results to NZQA with all NCEA staff and monitor their effectiveness. This will give greater assurance that all reported results have been through a robust quality assurance process, ensuring they are valid and credible.

**External examinations not compulsory** Not attending or attempting external examinations limits the chances of students achieving course and or certificate endorsements. In 2017, 52 percent of all external examinations for which Te Aute candidates were entered, were either not attempted or the candidate was absent. Te Aute College achieved 13.9 percent fewer certificate endorsements across all three levels of NCEA, when compared to other similar decile schools.

Interviewed staff commented that external examinations are not compulsory for their students. While senior managers are pleased with overall student achievement, greater emphasis on the importance of external assessment for course endorsements could support higher quality achievement. This will provide students with greater challenge and increase work and study options beyond school, particularly for top scholars.

### **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:

- provide professional development to reinforce the school's protocols for publishing results to NZQA and monitor their effectiveness.

**For consideration**

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

- promoting the importance of external examinations to all students and the possible influence they may have on future pathways.

## How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

*Evidence for school communication promoting understanding about assessment.  
(CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))*

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

- providing students and families on-line access to results data
- presenting student achievement to families at end of term hui
- providing hard-copy and online assessment documents
- communicating assessment requirements with students

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

- supporting students through one-on-one mentoring during daily year-level advisories.

**Better communication of the school's assessment and moderation expectations required for all NCEA staff** The review section of this report highlighted the need for senior managers to better communicate the school's assessment and moderation expectations to all NCEA staff. Inconsistent or ineffective assessment and moderation practices identified during this review include:

- the use of different versions of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* across courses
- a range of course outline templates containing varied amounts of the information specifically required in them as set out in the staff handbook
- the 2018 NCEA staff handbook having been only recently handed out to teachers
- the lack of a dedicated 2018 NCEA student handbook
- misunderstandings about purposeful selection of student work for internal verification
- lack of clarity around the school's protocols for publishing results to NZQA
- the lack of an induction for new teachers to the school.

**Staff to be involved in updating NCEA documentation** To ensure teacher understanding and encourage shared ownership of the assessment and moderation processes of the school, senior managers are encouraged to involve all NCEA staff in reviewing and updating the NCEA staff and student guides. This is particularly important as most interviewed staff are new to the school.

A follow-up-visit to the school in 2017 found that key assessment and moderation best practice had been socialised through staff professional development and that a regular 'NCEA Information' slot had been included in staff meetings. Recommending these practices is recommended so they become embedded in the assessment and moderation culture of the school.

**NCEA student guide and common course outline template required** A current NCEA student guide was not provided as part of this review and there was not a common course outline template. Although interviewed students expressed confidence in their mentors' and the Principal's Nominee's ability to provide advice and guidance as required, it is important that students have ready access to their own information. This gives the students greater ownership of their assessment-related responsibilities and has the potential to reinforce best practice in the classroom. Senior managers have agreed to develop a dedicated NCEA student handbook and provide common course outline templates to enhance understanding of assessment practice.

### **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:

- involve all NCEA staff in reviewing and updating the NCEA staff guides and promote consistent practice through regular 'NCEA Information' slots at staff meetings
- involve staff in developing a dedicated NCEA student handbook to enhance understanding of assessment practice
- provide a common course outline template.