

Managing National Assessment Report

Aotea College

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Aotea 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
- *Aotea College Board of Trustees Policy 2016, 2017, 2018*
- *Aotea College NZQF/NCEA Procedures for Staff 2019* (staff handbook)
- *Aotea College NZQF/NCEA Student handbook 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Deputy Principal
- Heads of Faculty for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Social Sciences
- Teacher of Science
- 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

Aotea College

12 June 2019

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

What the school is doing well

Aotea College is effectively managing national assessment and has well-embedded processes to continually review procedures that lead to improvement. The Principal's Nominee ably manages all assessment-related matters and is well supported by Senior Leadership. Comprehensive procedures supported by thorough quality assurance requirements are well embedded. Senior Leaders are confident that results submitted to NZQA are credible.

Data analysis strongly informs self-review and is an embedded culture at the school. Teachers engage with data to inform their practice, Curriculum Leaders analyse student achievement and submit annual reports, and Senior Leaders evaluate these analyses and provide a schoolwide strategic focus.

The shared ownership of self-review across the school supports the connection of the processes that occur at various levels. The success of this approach is evident in the school's improved NCEA outcomes. Senior Leaders are confident that any concerns relating to assessment practices will be identified and addressed. Assessment practices are sound and consistently applied.

The school is culturally responsive to student needs. This influences the design of courses and the creation of new ones. Improved processes for the provision of special assessment conditions have increased the number of students now benefitting from these.

Procedures to complete internal and external moderation are robust, well-understood by teachers and consistently followed. Any issues raised in external moderation reports are followed up and monitored to ensure the needed changes are made. Feedback from Curriculum Leaders to teachers about decisions made out of the grade verification process helps to maintain and improve the quality of the assessment judgements. An historically high agreement rate between NZQA moderators and teachers' judgements attests to the robustness of the school's internal moderation system.

Student data is effectively managed, results submitted to NZQA in a timely manner and any issues are identified and efficiently resolved by the Principal's Nominee. Monitoring of student progress towards qualifications is effective and students are well supported through academic interventions to reach their achievement goals.

The school effectively communicates assessment policy and procedures to students, teachers and parents using a range of methods, including online tools.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

26 August 2019

NZQA
0800 697 296
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 5 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report No action items were identified in this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes Heads of Faculty review external moderation reports and develop plans to address any issues that have been raised. This is done in conjunction with a meeting held with the Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal for any curriculum areas where the outcome is other than consistent. The school supports teachers to improve their practice through professional learning and development opportunities. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of action plans and Heads of Faculty use course reviews to evaluate their effectiveness. The Principal's Nominee's longitudinal tracking of external moderation outcomes also assists to evaluate the effectiveness of plans for improvement and to identify any ongoing areas of concern.

This is a comprehensive process and Senior Leaders are confident that concerns raised in external moderation reports are being addressed effectively.

Response to data issues In 2018 NZQA identified a subject as being an outlier when internal and external results were statistically compared with similar schools. The school had identified this through their data analysis, investigated the variations and provided satisfactory explanations. Appropriate steps were taken to address the issue.

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)

Self-review to improve assessment outcomes is a strength of Aotea College. Led by a strong leadership team, staff capacity and capability to analyse, evaluate and use assessment information for improvement has developed. The 2016 ERO review had identified the school needed to continue strengthening this area to better inform their practice and it is evident that they have done so. Effective data analysis is the cornerstone of this process. The school has invested considerable time in professional learning and development during regular staff meetings, including a number of early morning *Techie Brekkies*, to support staff in accessing data smartly and accurately. Teacher ability to analyse and use data has become more nuanced as a result and informs the reviews that occur in departments and faculties and onward to the school-wide reviews undertaken by Senior Leadership. These include:

- developing strategic goals, particularly for Māori and Pacific achievement and the literacy requirement for university entrance, to better ensure assessment programmes will continue to meet students' needs in the future

- incorporating course review, a proposal process for new courses, and student voice to ensure students' future needs are being met through the creation of appropriate new courses
- the Principal's Nominee conducting an annual quality assurance review with each faculty to ensure that required practice meets school and NZQA requirements. Curriculum Leaders use a self-review tool to support this process.

Aotea College's effective self-review processes identifies and then actions improvement in assessment practice.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

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)

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

- using class profiles to identify ability and match students with assessment pathways
- contextualising assessment tasks through cultural responsiveness so that they are more relevant and better engage student interest
- providing support through subject tutorials and an after-school homework club
- building stronger connections with local community organisations, such as New Zealand Police and health professionals, to support qualification pathways in these fields
- introducing an integrated Level 2 English and Social Studies course to improve literacy outcomes through improved student engagement
- extending assessment opportunities for students by engaging with external providers to deliver assessment against individual standards related to career pathways
- making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable using milestones checks and templates.

Aotea College has effective and consistently applied processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- managing resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of assessment rules and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived and emergency grades
- assisting with the management of NZQA external examinations
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Increased access to special assessment conditions for eligible students More students are benefitting from special assessment conditions due to improved processes. The Learning Services department has successfully improved the school's ability to identify eligible students, make applications and support students through use of school evidence. Thorough screening of Year 9 and 10 assessment data underpins this process. The number of students with an entitlement to use special assessment conditions has increased and is now at national expectations.

Information about eligible students and their entitlements has been presented to staff at staff meetings to ensure teachers are aware of individual needs. The school also works with whānau and students to eliminate any perceived stigma associated with special assessment conditions so that students will accept help. Three students were interviewed about their experience using special assessment conditions and reported that the school's processes were effective.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3 To improve outcomes for Māori and Pacific students Aotea College has invested strongly in professional development to support culturally responsive pedagogy. The result of this investment is evident in the closing gap in achievement outcomes in STEM subjects when they are compared with other students.

Teacher cultural responsiveness has improved student participation and achievement outcomes in STEM subjects. Expectations are high for teachers and students so that both have a 'we can do this' attitude towards participation and achievement. This means that students are not unnecessarily deferred into other subject areas when selecting course options and they are instilled with a belief that they will achieve. Teachers also review their assessment practice with a culturally responsive lens to ensure that the context and tasks offered are appropriate and students are engaged in the assessment.

Strategies to increase the number of Māori and Pacific students participating in STEM begins in the junior school. A range of programmes is offered in the Science and Technology faculties to engage junior students, for example coding and robotics. This encourages continued participation in these curriculum areas for NCEA.

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 2019 6.4b)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- staff reviewing standard clarifications, and using NZQA and school exemplars to improve assessor judgements
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- documenting the internal moderation process by using an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- requiring Heads of Faculty to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for standards assessed prior to reporting results to NZQA
- thoroughly reviewing departmental moderation processes during the faculty review cycle.

Aotea 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 by being adequately stored
- actively encouraging digital submission of moderation material
- valuing external moderation feedback for:
 - clarifying grade boundaries
 - assisting with understanding of the standard
 - confirming the robustness of the school's internal moderation
- encouraging teachers to request appropriate standards for inclusion in the moderation plan.

Internal moderation processes strengthened The school has continued to strengthen its robust and embedded internal moderation system by addressing processes it has identified as requiring improvement. The quality of comments being recorded and the professional discussions around moderation decisions is now effectively monitored.

Curriculum Leaders monitor the internal moderation process and sign-off all moderation forms to ensure the process is completed correctly. They review the quality of the discussion comments recorded during the verifying steps and provide feedback to teachers on these.

Transitioning the moderation system into a digital process has helped to develop a shared ownership of the quality assurance process by making it more transparent. Student evidence of achievement and internal moderation documentation are held centrally and are visible to teachers, Curriculum and Senior Leaders.

The Principal's Nominee conducts random checks of standards that have been reported to reconcile the reported results and documentation held online. Faculties complete an annual self-review of their quality assurance processes, which attests that moderation processes are being followed and completed. This is then discussed in a meeting between the Principal's Nominee and the Head of Faculty.

Senior Leadership are assured that results reported to NZQA have been subject to a very robust moderation process and are confident that assessor judgements are improving through the professional discussions undertaken. Historically high external moderation agreement rates confirm this.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work. Teachers use subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work, including those at grade boundaries. However most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

For consideration

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

- providing further guidance to staff on the requirements for sufficient verification through the strategic selection of student work.

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)

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

- staff annually reviewing course outcomes to inform teaching inquiry and modify teaching and learning programmes as necessary
- identifying and supporting students at risk of not achieving a qualification or meeting the literacy or numeracy requirements of NCEA and University Entrance by providing targeted support, including offering additional assessment opportunities
- using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results to inform decisions about future course content and design
- Curriculum Leaders reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement in the Curriculum Area Annual Report, to inform strategic goals and actions.

Aotea College reports accurate achievement data by:

- reconciling results from external providers with whom they hold a current memorandum of understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider code
- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and their NZQA Learner Login
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
- students, teachers and the Principal's Nominee using sign-off checks of entries and recorded results.

Effective monitoring processes and support for student achievement

Curriculum and pastoral leaders effectively use assessment-related data to support and improve the assessment outcomes of students. The school begins collecting data on achievement and progress towards achievement early in Term 1. The Deputy Principal analyses this data to identify the progress of each student and determine the level of support needed. This information is shared with Whānau Leaders, Curriculum Leaders and Hui Ako teachers who then use this data on student progress to respond with timely and appropriate support.

The school has a range of strategies to support students to set and reach their goals, including:

- learning conversations with Hui Ako teachers to set goals and provide mentoring to achieve them
- a regular homework club to assist students in a range subject areas

- offering appropriate further assessment opportunities during the examination period
- developing individualised assessment plans to respond to student needs
- conferencing with students and whānau as an early intervention for those at risk of not achieving their goals and modifying them to suit individual circumstances.

Aotea College's effective data analysis and evaluation processes, along with its monitoring and support of student progress, have been instrumental in the school's increasing NCEA and University Entrance achievement rates.

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))

Aotea College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system
- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through:
 - staff and student handbooks
 - the school website
 - the Year 10 subject selection evening
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Aotea College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- improving parental understanding of NCEA and assessment procedures through a targeted evening meeting
- holding assemblies for students in Term 1 before commencing a NCEA programme
- informing teachers in staff meetings about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes and expectations
- Heads of Faculty and Curriculum Leaders meeting regularly to discuss assessment related issues.

No action required

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.