

Managing National Assessment Report

Tawa College

March 2020

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tawa 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 2020 (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
- *Guidelines and Assessment Procedures for National Qualifications, Tawa College 2020*
- *Procedures for Assessment Toward National Qualifications, Tawa College 2020 (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 Department for:
 - Commerce
 - English
 - Food Technology
 - Technology
- five students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Tawa College

10 March 2020

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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2019.

What the school is doing well

Tawa College has a culture of high expectations to provide equitable assessment opportunities for all students. It has systems for assessment and moderation to ensure it reports credible results. The school is effectively using its self-review to improve assessment practice. The introduction of a new data management system has allowed the school to strengthen processes that had been identified as needing improvement.

Assessment practice at the school is well managed. Staff are consistent in following the school's assessment policy and procedures. A wide range of courses provide opportunities for students to meet their qualification goals. External providers are used to deliver courses and provide further options for vocational pathways.

A robust moderation system assures that results reported to NZQA are credible. The school's moderation practice is well embedded. Staff interviewed demonstrated good practices to ensure their judgements are at the level of the standard. All stages of the moderation process are recorded digitally through the data management system, which enables the Principal's Nominee to monitor that each step of the process is completed before reporting results.

The school has recently focused on developing more effective data management tools. The number of entries without a reported result has decreased by giving all teachers visibility of the data before data submissions are made. A calendar for assessment standards allows the Principal's Nominee to monitor that they are completed in a timely manner and remove entries when appropriate.

The school has improved its data analysis and evaluation processes by having a teacher only day dedicated to reviewing assessment outcomes. Teachers now have the time to drill down into the results, analyse and evaluate them and have robust discussions about next steps with Heads of Department. This will enable them to design courses or adjust existing ones to better meet student assessment needs.

The school has a range of communication systems to inform staff and students about NCEA and school assessment procedures. The school has an experienced Principal's Nominee who staff and students are confident to approach for guidance.

Areas for improvement

The school's process for responding to external moderation requires further strengthening. The completion of response forms and the implementation of action plans should be monitored to ensure teacher judgements remain consistent with assessment standards. Changes made as a result should then be evaluated for effectiveness at a later stage.

The school's staff and student handbooks require updating so that they reflect current practice and ensure consistent assessment practice school-wide.

Some other steps for the school to consider are providing assessment information to students in a timelier manner and annually reviewing assessment practice with staff. These are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

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

- monitor that all response forms for external moderation are completed, action plans implemented and then evaluated for effectiveness.
- update school staff and student handbooks to ensure current assessment practice is consistent school-wide.

Kay Wilson
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June 2020

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

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

External review

Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 6 July 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The agreed action item from the 2016 report has been addressed. The Principal's Nominee has introduced processes to help ensure that entries and results are accurate.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has improved its process for response to external moderation but needs to ensure that senior management monitor and evaluate the completion of action items

Previously, Heads of Department were given moderation reports but not required to provide feedback to senior management on any actions undertaken. In 2018, there was a decrease in the overall agreement rate between teacher and moderator judgements. To address this, the Principal's Nominee implemented a new process requiring Heads of Department to complete an external moderation report reflection form. To strengthen this process the next steps are to monitor that all forms are completed, all required actions for improvement are implemented and then evaluated for effectiveness. Senior leadership have agreed to put this action in place.

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)

Tawa College has used its self-review processes to identify areas for improvement and make changes. The implementation of a new digital data management system has provided the Principal's Nominee with a good overview of assessment and moderation practices within the school. As outlined in the report, this has allowed the school to identify and strengthen assessment processes requiring improvement.

Management of student entries and results is now more effective with greater visibility of entries with no reported results. The number of student entries without a reported result was greatly reduced in 2019. The digital system also creates an assessment calendar that is used to monitor the progress and completion of assessments. The school has an expectation for student work to be returned within three weeks, so that they receive timely feedback. Previously, this expectation was not being met consistently across the school. The calendar has been useful to ensure assessments are completed within the expected timeframe.

The Principal's Nominee reviewed the school's moderation processes with the introduction of the new data management system. The process has been strengthened as a result, as discussed later in this report.

The school has introduced a process to ensure that if an assessment is undertaken before the beginning of a school year it is subject to the school's usual quality

assurance procedures. The Principal's Nominee identified as a potential risk, the lack of oversight that assessment procedures were being followed in this situation, such as the verification of teacher judgements. To maintain the credibility of results, this assessment opportunity must now be approved by the Principal's Nominee who also monitors that grades reported are quality assured.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior leadership agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review, Senior management undertakes to:

- monitor that all response forms for external moderation are completed, action plans implemented and then evaluated for effectiveness.

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 2020 5.5)

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

- using school-based testing to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions and making applications appropriately
- ensuring that staff are well informed about students with approved special assessment conditions, that appropriate assistance is readily available when required, and reviewing whether the assistance is effective
- scaffolding and contextualising assessment tasks so that they are more accessible for all learners, more relevant to their needs and better engage student interest
- making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable using milestones checks and templates
- encouraging teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly through the use of digital technology
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways.

Tawa College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived and emergency grades
- efficiently supporting the management of NZQA external examinations
- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act, 1993 when handling students' assessment information.

Reaffirming assessment practice with staff To help maintain a consistent school-wide practice the school should consider providing regular professional development and learning for all staff to reaffirm and remind them of the school's assessment policy and NCEA guidelines. Heads of Department are kept updated through regular meetings and information updates. However, those interviewed for this report commented that their staff are, at times, unsure if they are following correct procedures and/or practices. Aspects of assessment practice that would be useful to cover include the policy for missed and late assessments, resubmissions and the use of exemplars found on the NZQA website.

No action required

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

For consideration

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

- annually reviewing school assessment practices and NCEA updates with staff to maintain a consistent school-wide practice.

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 2020 6.4b)

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

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- staff reviewing standard clarifications, and using NZQA and school exemplars to improve assessor judgements
- documenting the internal moderation process online
- requiring Heads of Department to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented on the data management system for all standards assessed in their faculty prior to reporting results to NZQA
- keeping benchmark exemplars and referring to verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- using subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- adequately storing samples of student work to ensure material is available for external moderation
- valuing external moderation feedback for the clarification of grade boundaries, assistance with understanding of the standard and to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation.

Moderation system strengthened The school's robust moderation system assures that results reported to NZQA are credible. Spot checks are made on subject areas to ensure processes are followed and expectations met.

The school uses a digital process to record and monitor that moderation is happening within the school. Senior management have made expectations for moderation clear, with teachers interviewed for the review demonstrating a good understanding of the process. Each step of the moderation process is recorded online, which allows the Principal's Nominee to monitor that every step is completed before results are reported. The process also helps to ensure that staff are meeting the school's expectation of a three week turn-around for returning student work. The Principal's Nominee follows up on standards for which assessment has not begun as per the assessment schedule and for those that have not completed verification within three weeks.

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)

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

- annually reviewing course assessments to inform teaching inquiry and modify teaching and learning programmes as necessary
- monitoring student academic progress to identify learners at risk of not achieving their goals
- identifying Year 9 students who need additional literacy and numeracy support to access Level 1 when in Year 11
- enabling Deans to track, monitor and mentor student in their progress toward NCEA qualification and personal goals
- annually report to the Principal an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions.

Tawa College reports accurate achievement data by:

- reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system, the 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.

Achievement data review process strengthened The introduction of two teacher only days to analyse and evaluate student achievement has strengthened the ability of all teachers to effectively monitor and reflect on student achievement outcomes. This analysis allows teachers to design or make changes to programmes and courses before commencing them. Heads of Department interviewed commented that taking a day to review results meant that staff had the time to drill down into the data, make evaluations and have richer conversations about meeting student needs and improving outcomes.

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))

Tawa College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all course they undertake
- supporting teachers new to the school
- 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.

Tawa College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- holding student assemblies to ensure students understand school assessment policies and procedures
- communicating NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through:
 - staff and student handbooks
 - the school website
- providing an information evening to parents and Year 10 students on NZQA and school assessment related processes before they commence a full NCEA programme
- publishing to staff and students a timeline of key NZQA and school assessment related dates in an online calendar.

School assessment handbooks require updating Staff and student handbooks require updating to maintain currency with school and NZQA practice. The student handbook should include the following information:

- strategies for producing authentic evidence for assessment
- the process for further assessment opportunities and resubmissions
- special assessment conditions and how to apply for them
- the school's process for appeals including that all aspects of the assessment process can be appealed.

The staff handbook should include:

- the quality assurance processes that can be used to justify student evidence, so that they can be used for derived and unexpected event grades
- the school's process and expectation for responding to external moderation reports.

Including a review of school communications as an aspect of routine self-review will help to maintain currency of the handbooks.

Providing timely information to students Students should be informed about assessment policy and procedures before they begin NCEA assessments. The school could review the timeliness of when students are informed about its assessment policy and procedures. Year 11 students were still to receive this information at the time of the review. It is important that they have this information before assessments begin, so that they are aware of their rights, responsibilities and how to access support, such as special assessment conditions, if required.

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:

- update school staff and student handbooks to ensure current assessment practice is consistent school-wide.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- providing students information about NCEA and the school's assessment policy and procedures in a timelier manner.