

Managing National Assessment Report

Ashburton College

April 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Ashburton College

3 April 2025

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

The school agreed that the following two actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are to:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Strengthen the monitoring and documentation of external moderation follow up.	Immediate
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Develop a process for checking that published requirements for managing extensions are carried out consistently.	Immediate

For consideration

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

- reviewing its requirements regarding the provision of medical certificates in staff and student handbooks.

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19 May 2025

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External and internal review

External review

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

Action Items from 8 July 2021 Managing National Assessment Report The college has partially addressed the one agreed action item from the last review, namely, to monitor the effectiveness of follow up to external moderation. The following section of this report provides guidance on how the college can further strengthen a number of steps in its external moderation follow up process to meet NZQA's requirements.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The college has an established process for ensuring that grade judgements that are found to be *Not Consistent* or *Not Yet Consistent* with the standard by external moderators are followed up and the resulting action plans are shared with assessors and verifiers.

However, during this review, it was apparent that the follow up for some reports was verbal and not recorded. Action plans need to be documented and preferably stored online, so that they are available for NZQA quality assurance checks and accessible for future assessors of those standards. The Principal's Nominee stores most of the completed action plans in her office, but copies also need to be stored by faculties where future assessors can easily access them.

The *Response to External Moderation* form used by faculties has a section for evaluating the effectiveness of action plans, but this step is not always completed. A requirement of every school's *Consent to Assess* requirements is to evaluate whether the follow up to external moderation has "*achieved the desired outcomes*" (CAAS Guidelines 3iv). The Principal's Nominee could use her annual faculty visits to complete the evaluation step and close the moderation cycle for affected standards.

The submission of documentation through the External Moderation Application needs to be proactively monitored in order to eliminate *Materials Not Received* reports. Since 2022, the college has had a number of these reports each year for a range of reasons including:

- materials sent not being able to be accessed
- files being rejected because they are too large and not being replaced with a link to enable access by the NZQA Moderator
- teachers leaving without a clean handover of their student work for external moderation.

Online storage protocols should be reviewed to ensure assessment materials are always available to be sent to NZQA upon request.

2022 Exam Centre Quality Assurance Visit The actions arising from this review have been satisfactorily resolved by the college.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

Since the last Managing National Assessment (MNA) review, Ashburton College has appointed a new Principal and Deputy Principal to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), as well as redistributing the roles and responsibilities within the team. An evaluation of the college's leadership, ownership and capability is ongoing and will be more conclusive at the next MNA review. The college is using its own processes of self-review based on data analysis and staff, student and community voice to build teacher capability and implement changes that will continue to improve assessment outcomes and reduce barriers to success for all students.

Since 2022, the college has experienced rapid roll growth, prompting a review of staffing, resourcing and courses to meet the needs of an increasingly ethnically diverse student population. Currently, fewer than 50 percent of Ashburton College students identify as European/Pākehā, whereas in 2022 that figure was closer to 75 percent. The college currently has the largest population of Pacific students in the South Island and has approximately 200 *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL) students. The immediate challenge for the college is to not only find specialist learning spaces for its growing population, but also to integrate the high number of new migrant students into an English medium learning environment, when many of them have little, or no English. As detailed below, the college has exhibited an agile response to meet the needs of this priority group of students by:

- creating an intensive *English Language Learning* (ELL) reception class for students with little or no English, who can transition to mainstream classes when their English reaches the required level
- recruiting teachers from a range of ethnic groups to provide additional support for migrant students and their families
- working closely with agencies in the community to support former refugee students to adjust to college life
- establishing an ESOL Hub where students can congregate in a "safe place" and converse in their native language and practise their English
- piloting a Pasifika learning support group to support Pacific students to complete homework after school.

Strategies for improvement student achievement outcomes The college *Strategic Plan 2025 -2028* aims to raise student achievement by using cultural connections to facilitate successful learning outcomes. Since the last review, the leadership teams, past and present, remain committed to embedding *Culturally Responsive and Relational Pedagogy*, with all staff undertaking *Relationships First* Professional Learning and Development in order to create culturally responsive contexts for learning. In addition, high quality teaching and meaningful tracking of student pathways have been identified as additional strategies for improving achievement outcomes in a more learner centred and future focused learning environment. The college will review the intended outcomes over the following three years

Annual faculty goals co-created with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Each Head of Faculty (HOF) is assigned a member of SLT as a coach, mentor and critical friend. Senior leaders co-construct the Heads' of Faculty annual

goals and act as a critical friend when reviewing faculty assessment and moderation processes and outcomes. Their weekly meetings enable senior leaders to form better connections with middle leaders and to respond more promptly to issues as they arise.

Common Assessment Activities external assessment reviewed The selection of students entered into the literacy and numeracy Common Assessment Activities (CAAs) has changed over time, partly due to the logistics of managing the large number of students in Year 10 and to address the readiness of this cohort. In 2025, to enhance manageability, the college has entered Year 12 - 13 students only in the first CAA Assessment Opportunity and Year 11 students only in the second Assessment Opportunity. Senior leaders believe that the current Year 10 students have not demonstrated the level of readiness required to sit the CAAs in Year 10 and will review the outcomes at the end of the next academic year.

The college effectively tracks students at risk of not completing their NCEA co-requisite and offers this priority group additional standards to meet the NCEA co-requisite requirement. In 2025, the college is working with other agencies to monitor, manage and report on the number of senior students gaining the NCEA co-requisite, with a focus on improving outcomes for Year 12 students. This intervention includes regular Professional Learning and Development to improve the capability of teachers leading literacy and numeracy initiatives across the college.

Innovation approach extended to all Year 9 and 10 classes Through its annual review process, and following positive feedback from staff and students, the college has extended its cross curricular *Innovation Class* concept to include all Year 9 and 10 classes. Teachers from different subject areas collaborate in *Innovation* classes, to deliver relevant, locally contextualised, project-based learning at one or more points during the year. The number of assessments based on collaborative learning projects has reduced from when the concept was first introduced, which reflects the changing student demographic and more teaching time being devoted to raising literacy and numeracy levels in Years 9 and 10.

Pathways Department review Ashburton College caters well for the large number of its students pursuing vocational pathways and is fortunate to be able to offer a wide range of vocational opportunities on campus. The college offers a Primary Industry Trades Academy catering for students seeking employment in the rural sector, as well as offering automotive Trades courses for Years 12 and 13 on site. It is hopeful of establishing a Building Academy in 2026 to meet the needs of students interested in a building and construction pathway. Following a review in 2024, the Transition Department was renamed *Pathways* and aims to improve students' understanding of the opportunities available to them for their chosen pathway.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

Academic integrity and authenticity of student work strengthened In response to an increase in the number of breaches of authenticity being detected by teachers over the past few years, the college has invested in a secure platform for online exams and assessments. This upgrade has enabled the college to detect plagiarism and breaches of authenticity with more confidence and to mirror conditions for digital external examinations for the purpose of generating derived grades.

Staff and student handbooks have been updated to reflect the challenge that generative Artificial Intelligence tools present for all teachers. Students are aware of the consequences if they plagiarise the work of others and the college has a clear process for staff and students to follow when investigating alleged breaches and managing appeals. Recent developments to improve academic integrity ensure that results for internal assessment are credible.

Māori Innovation and Āko classes improve student attendance and engagement Although NCEA attainment for Māori students is not yet on an upward trajectory, the senior leadership is pleased with the improved engagement, attendance and retention of Māori students participating in its wholly Māori *Āko* and *Innovation* classes. As mentioned in the 2021 MNA report, this initiative provides an authentic te ao Māori teaching and learning context and an ongoing focus of this initiative is to improve achievement outcomes for Māori students.

Ensure practice for managing extensions is consistent Although the college staff and student handbooks describe a clear process for managing extensions, it was apparent during the review that the process is not always followed. This exposes the assessment of some standards to risk regarding the validity and authenticity of the assessment undertaken. The Principal's Nominee has rightly devolved responsibility for managing extensions to Heads of Faculty. However, there needs to be a process for checking that the college's published requirements for managing extensions are carried out consistently and that where required, a different assessment is used by students undertaking an assessment at an earlier, or later time than the published date. The college should consider reviewing its requirements for students to provide medical certificates to cover absence from assessment, as at times this can be cost prohibitive and neither practical, nor possible.

Moderation to ensure assessment quality

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

Internal moderation is managed and monitored well by the current Principal's Nominee. NZQA's requirements are clearly communicated through a range of different channels, and she has used faculty/department quality assurance visits to ensure that cover sheets mirror actual practice. Teachers have a checklist for these visits and HOFs receive regular updates through the Middle Leaders Team (MLT) meetings.

All internal moderation is carried out using the tool in the Student Management System. This ensures compliance with NZQA's requirements regarding strategic selection and sufficiency. The faculties interviewed described robust processes for checking assessment schedules, ensuring the standards were adequately critiqued and carrying out panel style moderation during department meetings. All teachers interviewed have Pūtake access and are aware of the need to check both the NZQA and Ministry of Education websites to access all of the available assessor support, particularly for the new Level 1 Achievement Standards.

As indicated earlier in this report, there are some improvements to be made with the documentation of external moderation follow up and ensuring that moderation is stored online, so that it can be sent to NZQA upon request.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Ashburton College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Ashburton College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

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

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

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

- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

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

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Ashburton College reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families about assessment

Ashburton College has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success through events conferring reward and/or recognition.

Ashburton College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Ashburton 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.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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:

- a sample of faculty reports to the Board of Trustees
- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *NCEA Staff Handbook 2025* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA Student Handbook 2025* (Student Handbook).
- *Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028*.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Deputy Principal/Principal's Nominee
- the NZQA Administrator
- Heads of Faculty/Department for:
 - Arts
 - English
 - Languages (absent)
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- two students.

There was a report-back session with the Deputy Principal/Principal's Nominee and NZQA Administrator 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.