

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Totara College of Accelerated Learning**

**September 2021**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Totara College of Accelerated Learning:

- 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 2021* (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:

- *Staff Information on Internal Moderation Procedures*, Totara College of Accelerated Learning, 2021
- *National Certificate of Educational Achievement – Information for Parents and Students Years 11, 12 and 13*, Totara College of Accelerated Learning, 2021
- *Curriculum Policy Statement*, Totara College of Accelerated Learning, 2021
- a sample of Assessment Statements for Drama, English and Mathematics.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Teachers of:
  - Drama, Dance and Music
  - Literacy
  - Numeracy
- three 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.

## Background

This is Totara College of Accelerated Learning's first Managing National Assessment review since they re-engaged with the assessment of NCEA standards in 2018. Prior to this, they used external providers to assess students in a range of standards. The school now has the capacity to offer teaching and assessment for NCEA numeracy and literacy to their students.

# SUMMARY

## Totara College of Accelerated Learning

28 September 2021

### 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 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions.

### What the school is doing well

Totara College of Accelerated Learning follows the New Zealand Curriculum, assessing students against American Christian Education (ACE) certificates and a small range of NZQA achievement and unit standards. Teachers at the school teach and assess NCEA standards for literacy and numeracy, with the aim of meeting University Entrance requirements and to provide students with vocational pathways.

The school is meeting the needs of students being assessed against standards on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. Quality assurance systems ensure that grades submitted to NZQA are credible. Teachers and students share a sound understanding of assessment expectations such as authenticity and breaches of the rules.

Internal moderation is robust with each stage documented on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* by the assessing teacher. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of internal moderation for each standard assessed before results are submitted to NZQA. External moderation outcomes are generally consistent, and any issues identified by moderator judgements are promptly acted on.

Data is reported to NZQA by the Principal's Nominee, once assessments have been completed. With no entries in external standards, this flexibility suits the school. Teachers meet regularly to discuss progress of each individual student, supporting them to reach their achievement goals and personal aspirations.

### Areas for improvement

Totara College of Accelerated Learning does follow up on external moderation feedback, however, the school needs to document this, recording the actions taken and evaluating how effective the changes have been in addressing the issues identified. This should be included in the staff information for clarity and consistency of approach.

The school's management of resubmissions needs to be reviewed to ensure it reflects the new rules. Students need clear guidelines on the impact on further assessment opportunities.

The school needs to apply for Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) for any students eligible for these entitlements in NCEA assessments. The support for these applications can come from school-based evidence.

While teachers and students are conversant with assessment processes, a review of these would reconcile understanding with actual practice, and reinforce consistency of practice, as needed. Some additions were suggested to help with this.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

### **Agreed actions**

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

- document actions taken to address any issues identified by external moderation and monitor the effectiveness of these
- ensure teachers are following current resubmission requirements
- identify students who would benefit from Special Assessment Conditions and make applications to NZQA as appropriate
- ensure consistent NCEA assessment processes and practices school-wide by reviewing information given to students and teachers.

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22 November 2021

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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 the last Managing National Assessment Report** This is Totara College of Accelerated Learning's first Managing National Assessment review since re-activating its consent to assess.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The outcomes of external moderation provide evidence that the school's internal moderation processes are effective. Teachers outlined the process they use to promptly address any issues identified. The next step is to document changes and to monitor that planned actions have been effective in addressing these issues.

### 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)*

Totara College of Accelerated Learning reviews how they are meeting the needs of students by regularly talking with students and their parents about future goals and aspirations. This determines the assessment standards offered by the school, focusing on meeting NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements for University Entrance. To further meet their needs, students also engage with outside providers in a range of courses to gain generic skills and experience in vocational courses through STAR and Gateway programmes.

The school reviews the assessment standards offered to ensure they align with teaching programmes and learning experiences students may have throughout the year. For example, evidence from involvement in the school drama production is used to assess students against appropriate standards in Drama.

The school is looking at the changing requirements for literacy and numeracy due to the NCEA Change package being introduced from 2023, by engaging with the material supplied by the Ministry of Education through the Accord Teacher Only Days. Teachers are starting to discuss and plan for the implementation of these changes to ensure the courses they offer continue to meet the needs of students, and their goals and aspirations.

### Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- document actions taken to address any issues identified by external moderation and monitor the effectiveness of these.

## 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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- engaging with outside providers to offer vocational and skills-based courses
- collecting evidence using a range of methods including portfolios, digital evidence, oral conferencing and performances
- adapting courses to make use of local contexts
- assessing students when they are ready.

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning has effective processes and procedures for:**

- tracking student progress towards meeting literacy and numeracy requirements for University Entrance
- using a range of strategies, including digital tools, to ensure student work is authentic
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

**Making Special Assessment Condition applications for eligible students** The school needs to apply for Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) for any student who may be eligible for these entitlements to remove barriers to fair assessment in their NCEA assessments. This support can include, but is not limited to, extra time, separate accommodation, computer use, a reader and/or writer and enlarged papers. If a student is using some form of SAC entitlement in NCEA internal assessments, a formal application should be made to NZQA to have this approved. The school can gather school-based evidence to support applications of students identified as possibly being eligible for SAC. Approved SAC conditions stay with the student if they transfer schools and can be used as evidence if the student needs similar support at a tertiary provider in the future.

**Managing resubmissions** The teachers were unaware of the change to resubmission requirements, where only students who have gained Not Achieved can have the opportunity to move their work to an Achieved, if they can identify and correct a minor error. It is suggested this practice is reviewed, using NZQA's *Myth Buster* on resubmissions as a useful resource.

**Assessing when ready** The school tracks student progress to determine when students are ready to complete NCEA assessments. Some students may be immersed in a class offering NCEA assessment but not complete the standards until the following year when they are ready to be assessed.

**Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- identify students who would benefit from Special Assessment Conditions and make applications as appropriate
- ensure teachers are following current resubmission requirements.



## 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 2021 6.4b)*

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- documenting each stage of the moderation process
- monitoring the completion of moderation for all results reported to NZQA.

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- providing samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

**Evidence of effective internal moderation processes** The school understands the purpose and requirements for internal moderation. Assessment material is critiqued prior to use to ensure it is fit for purpose and the school currently has the capacity to effectively verify grades awarded to student work for all standards offered. Completion of all the steps in the moderation process are recorded on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and these were sighted for standards the school has assessed this year.

The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of the moderation process and reports results to NZQA when he has evidence that all steps in the process have been completed.

**Evaluating effectiveness of actions to address issues identified by external moderation feedback** Teachers are encouraged to suggest standards for external moderation where feedback from NZQA moderators identified issues. This will confirm the effectiveness of the actions taken by teachers to address the issues. The school should monitor the expected improvement and provide appropriate support, as needed.

**Selection of student work for verification** Teachers could start purposefully selecting samples of student work at grade boundaries for verification now that they are confident with making assessor judgements. They currently assure the quality of grades awarded for all students due to the small numbers.

Focusing on the grade boundaries has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. As there is no fixed number of pieces of student work for which grades must be verified, sample size can be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, 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:

- monitoring if changes made in response to NZQA moderation feedback have had the intended outcome by suggesting standards for the following year's moderation plan
- encouraging teachers to select samples of student work at grade boundaries for grade verification.

## 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)*

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students 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
- systematically tracking, reporting on and mentoring individual students in their progress toward literacy and numeracy for University Entrance.

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning reports accurate achievement data by:**

- reporting Not Achieved when a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity or withdrawing the standard if they have not.

**Results data managed appropriately** The Principal's Nominee submits entries and results for internal standards after internal assessment takes place. This flexibility is possible as students are not entered into external standards and reflects the design of courses to meet student needs. This also enables the school assess when students are ready.

**Relationships with external providers** The Principal's Nominee should consider reviewing annually the subcontracting arrangements in place with all external providers to help the school have confidence that the courses being delivered are fit for purpose and meeting their students' needs.

### **For consideration**

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

- reviewing annually subcontracting arrangements with external providers to ensure these continue to meet school and student needs.

## **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))*

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive course and assessment details for NCEA literacy and numeracy standards
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to students and parents via the school website
- supporting teachers new to the school to become familiar with assessment practices.

### **Totara College of Accelerated Learning assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking students understand what they need to do to achieve a standard throughout the teaching and assessment process.

**Reviewing NCEA information to ensure clarity and consistency** The information given to students and teachers should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose, and reflects current practice. Further school-wide clarification is needed for the processes for missed or late assessments, applying for extensions, appealing a grade or assessment conditions, and related application forms developed. This will help teachers manage these practices consistently and provide fair outcomes for students.

### **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:

- review and update information given to students and teachers to ensure it clearly outlines NCEA assessment processes and practices to ensure consistency.