# Managing National Assessment Report

# Aurora College

# September 2024

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Aurora College

## 5 September 2024

## 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.
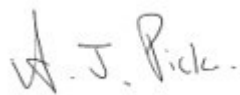
## Actions and considerations

### Agreed actions

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

| Action | Timeframe |
|---|---|
| **External and internal review** | |
| Strengthen Learning Area reviews of internal and external moderation in the annual effectiveness reports to the Senior Leadership Team | Following completion of moderation for the current year |
| **Credible assessment practice to meet ākonga needs** | |
| Develop a coordinated programme to engage ākonga with assessment information | For the start of 2025 |

### For consideration

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

- tracking literacy and numeracy in the senior school and matching interventions to ākonga need

- sharing assessment information electronically with staff, ākonga and whānau

- updating assessment information as outlined in the report.

Amanda Picken
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Support

21 November 2024

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**www.nzqa.govt.nz**

# 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 7 July 2021 Managing National Assessment Report**   The action point from the last Managing National Assessment review has been addressed. The Principal's Nominee has introduced a system using an application in the school's Student Management System for subject leaders to document all steps for internal moderation for each standard they assess. This is monitored by Learning Area Leaders and the Principal's Nominee. Senior leadership can be confident that all results reported are quality assured.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes**   Aurora College's consistency rates declined in 2022 and again in 2023. In the past two years, the school's agreement rate has been lower than 60%, highlighting the importance of the Principal's Nominee working collaboratively with middle leaders to develop action plans and actively monitoring their completion with regular check-ins.

The Principal's Nominee has provided targeted support for Learning Areas where there has been a trend of Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent outcomes. To achieve improvement in the subjects with a pattern of variable consistency rates, the Principal's Nominee supports teachers with further professional learning. This includes collaboration with subject experts in other schools, use of subject associations and the addition of the Assessor Practice Tool available in NZQA's Learning Management System, Pūtake.

The Principal's Nominee reviews all moderation reports and then uses these to inform discussions with Learning Area Leaders and develop a response to moderation. Teachers are encouraged to query and appeal external moderation outcomes to clarify the standard. Actions and outcomes of requests for further clarification are recorded in the internal moderation tool.

## 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)*

**Developing effective self-review processes**   Aurora College's Senior Leadership Team is leading the development of effective self-review processes through collaboration with Learning Area Leaders. There are regular meetings of the Senior Leadership Team and Learning Area Leaders. This group is the driving force behind school review and the development of new initiatives. In 2023, it targeted inconsistent internal moderation practice as a concern and worked with the newly appointed Principal's Nominee to introduce school-wide systems to support improving moderation outcomes. Evaluation of moderation outcomes for 2024 will feed into Aurora College's on-going improvement of its internal moderation.

The next step would be for Learning Area Leaders to complete a review of the year's assessment and internal and external moderation for their subjects, supported by achievement data analysis. This will contribute to Learning Area annual reports and effectiveness reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees and

give school leadership confidence that any identified issues with moderation have been addressed for subsequent ākonga assessment.

Another development has been the 2024 appointment of an Academic Dean for Year 12 and 13 ākonga. The combined leadership group now includes the Academic Dean and Gateway lead teacher so that academic achievement and career pathways are included in all decision-making. Analysis of the school's achievement data will show the effectiveness of their review process and support the school's development of courses to meet ākonga needs.

In Learning Areas, teachers contribute to the review of teaching, learning and assessment programmes to ensure they meet the pathway and qualifications aspirations of ākonga. It is within Learning Areas that teachers new to NCEA are supported in developing their assessment capability for standards-based assessment in their subject areas. The Principal's Nominee supplements this facilitated professional development to support teachers to be innovative in matching assessment to ākonga interest and needs.

**Review of Literacy and Numeracy**  Aurora College aims for every ākonga leaving after Year 12 to have achieved NCEA Level 2. The goal for Year 11 ākonga is the achievement of literacy and numeracy through the co-requisite standards rather than gaining NCEA Level 1. There has been a reduction in the number of credits in Level 1 and 2 courses, with most Year 11 subjects assessing one standard. Some ākonga may choose to be assessed for further standards where this meets their needs and aspirations.

At Aurora College, the Assistant Principal (Junior school) is responsible for the coordination of literacy and numeracy for Year 7 to 10 ākonga. As ākonga progress into Year 11, senior leadership has recognised the importance of gaining the NCEA co-requisite to gain the revised NCEA qualifications. From 2024, the school provisioned classes for Year 11 ākonga identified as requiring additional literacy and numeracy support. To ensure no ākonga are overlooked, the school could consider a formal process for tracking progress in the senior school and aligning interventions with the needs and stages of its ākonga.

All ākonga have been provided with digital devices, with the current Year 10 ākonga demonstrate confidence in engaging with digital and are choosing to engage in digital online assessment for the NCEA co-requisite. The school will monitor the success of this to determine how best to support those ākonga that do not achieve literacy or numeracy in this way.

**Review of Year 11 to 13 Programmes**  The school continually reviews its programmes to ensure that each ākonga has choice in their course design. The two-year course comprising of Level 1 and 2 standards for combined classes of Year 11 and 12 ākonga, is based around ākonga readiness. The school has a Service Academy designed to support ākonga considering the Armed Forces as a career. Careful consideration of the course for each ākonga in the academy means they have access to other subjects appropriate to their chosen pathway and there are catch-up sessions for work missed following camps. The Service Academy and comprehensive work experience opportunities support personal growth for ākonga.

# Credible assessment practice to meet ākonga 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 2024)*

**Effective support and guidance for all ākonga**   All ākonga are supported in identifying what is needed for their pathways and keeping them on track towards their career goals. An Academic Dean has been appointed and tracks Year 12 and 13 ākonga with achievement data. There are one-on-one interviews with each ākonga during the year to monitor progress and liaison with the Te Kura coordinator if extra standards the school cannot offer are required. This is supplemented by careers interviews for all Year 12 ākonga, which the school intends to extend to other year levels. The third part of this support is the Home Base class where teachers build learning relationships and use assessment data provided by the Academic Dean to support at-risk ākonga and their whānau.

With senior ākonga at Aurora College engaged in multi-level studies and individualised programmes, this three-pronged support is key for providing and adapting courses that offer ākonga opportunities to experience success in assessments. The school has developed career pathways for ākonga using unit standards through an extension of the school's consent to assess and partnering with external providers. Keeping whānau informed about their child's pathway aspirations is part of this process.

Aurora College has a strong focus on supporting all learners, including those with identified needs. The school identifies learners who will benefit from the use of Special Assessment Conditions and advocates for and supports their use. Using school-based evidence to support applications addresses financial barriers for ākonga and their whānau.

**Clearly communicating assessment information**   Ākonga interviewed expressed inconsistent understanding of assessment for national qualifications and school assessment processes. The school should develop a structured programme to engage ākonga with assessment information and support them in identifying what they need to achieve to gain NCEA and University Entrance qualifications. This should include ākonga regularly accessing their assessment data through the MyNZQA portal and gaining familiarity with digital practice assessments. The programme could be coordinated through the Home Base pastoral programme that links with careers and the Academic Dean. This would lead to consistent messaging about assessment from staff across all learning areas.

The Principal's Nominee revisits staff and ākonga handbooks to add or amend information to reflect current NZQA advice. Learning Area Leaders reported that the school's assessment information is supportive for teachers in carrying out assessment processes. The Principal's Nominee will update the staff handbook to make clear the responsibilities for teachers using industry standards and management of assessment and results for Aurora College ākonga who learn and are assessed through other organisations.

The school could consider using the school website and learning management system to electronically share assessment handbooks with staff, ākonga and whānau. This would allow for easier updating of the documents, which could be accessed in Home Base classes to support the planned communication of assessment information.

# Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

*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 2024)*

**Improved monitoring of internal moderation**   Following the appointment of the new Principal's Nominee, a more systematic process has been introduced for assessors to complete internal moderation. This gives the Principal's Nominee and Learning Area Leaders oversight of moderation in real time, leading to more effective monitoring, and gives senior leadership confidence that quality assurance processes are being followed across all learning areas and that all results reported to NZQA have been verified and are credible.

The Principal's Nominee and Learning Area Leaders support teachers, especially those new to NCEA, to use the school's Student Management System's moderation tool and are helping to develop their understanding of the internal moderation process. Checks include the critiquing of the task, purposeful and strategic selection of ākonga work for grade verification, the grade verification process and storage of ākonga work. Verification is undertaken by a subject specialist within the school or by colleagues at other schools, often through a reciprocal arrangement.

For subjects with end-of-year examinations, teachers collect derived grade evidence using assessments from reputable sources. Information about the school's derived grade assessment process including the process for verification or justification of assessor judgements, could be included in the assessment handbooks.

# Appendix 1: Effective Practice

## Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of ākonga

**Aurora College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its ākonga by:**

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on ākonga 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 ākonga can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement

- assessing ākonga when they are ready

- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet ākonga needs

- ensuring teachers are aware of individual ākonga with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support

- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams.

**Aurora College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed or late assessment

- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment

- investigating ākonga appeals of assessment decisions

- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules

- monitoring the authenticity of ākonga work using a range of strategies

- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where ākonga have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work

- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades

- safeguarding ākonga privacy in the issuing of ākonga results.

# Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

**Aurora 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 ākonga 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.

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

- ensuring samples of ākonga work are available for submission by being adequately stored

- selecting sufficient samples of ākonga work to NZQA requirements

- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate

- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback

# Effective management and use of assessment-related data

**Aurora College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for ākonga by:**

- monitoring and tracking ākonga progress

- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow ākonga to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered

- gathering ākonga voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards.

**Aurora 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 ākonga and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year

- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

## Effective communication to inform staff, and ākonga and their whānau about assessment

**Aurora College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring ākonga receive outlines for courses they undertake

- supporting ākonga to monitor their achievement

- reporting on ākonga 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 ākonga success.

**Aurora College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing ākonga about suitable learning pathways.

# Appendix 2: Overview

## What this report is about

**This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Aurora 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, ākonga and whānau.

## 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 2024.*

## 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:**

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Managing National Assessment Guide, Aurora College 2024* (Staff Handbook)
- *National Qualifications Guide Year 11-13, Aurora College 2024* (Ākonga Handbook).

**The School Relationship Manager met with:**

- the Principal's Nominee and Assistant Principal
- Assistant Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Learning Area Leaders for:
    - English
    - Mathematics
    - Physical Education & Sport
    - Social Sciences (Acting)
- three ākonga.

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.