

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Tarawera High School

August 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tarawera High School:

- 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 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:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Tarawera High School 2021 Student Handbook*
- *Tarawera High School National Qualifications Procedures 2021 (Staff Handbook)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal
- the Principal's Nominee
- Learning Pathways Coordinator (Deputy Principal)
- Curriculum Leaders for:
  - Mathematics
  - Performing Arts
  - Physical Education
  - Science
  - Visual Arts
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Learning Pathways Coordinator 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

## Tarawera High School

5 August 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 the COVID pandemic.

### What the school is doing well

Tarawera High School uses the flexibility of the NCEA model to provide students with access to a wide range of academic and vocational learning and assessment pathways, to help meet their academic needs and to prepare them to achieve their qualification goals.

Curriculum Leads have started to manage assessment and moderation processes more effectively and are supported by the Principal's Nominee. Teachers understand and follow school assessment requirements. Once the quality assurance processes are fully embedded, the school can be confident in its ability to provide credible assessment opportunities for all students.

The management of assessment data has become more efficient, ensuring results reported to NZQA are complete, timely and accurate. The Principal's Nominee, the Learning Pathways Coordinator and the Senior Academic Advisor each monitor student academic progress. Interventions are initiated where students are identified as being at risk of not meeting qualification requirements. Staff, students and parents are kept well informed of individual progress towards qualifications by the Learning Pathways Coordinator traffic light system and use of the Possible v Probable KAMAR report.

The school reviews how it communicates assessment information to its community. While communication is increasingly digital, it was evident that the Senior Leaders of the school still value and encourage face-to-face meetings. Staff are kept informed of changes to NZQA requirements regularly by the Principal's Nominee.

The students interviewed for the review felt well informed about NCEA and extremely well supported by the teaching staff.

### Areas for improvement

The staff and student handbooks should be reviewed to ensure the information is current, aligns with best practice and is consistent with the NZQA assessment requirements and are written in plain language that reflects the Tarawera High

School context. This will help ensure the school's and NZQA assessment procedures are accessible, understandable and consistently applied.

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

Kay Wilson  
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15<sup>th</sup> September 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 31 August 2017 Managing National Assessment Report** The review identified a significant issue. The school was required to:

- monitor internal moderation systems to ensure that only results that have been subject to the internal moderation process are reported to NZQA (Assessment Rules for school with Consent to Assess 2017, 6.4b)

**Progress on Agreed Actions** The agreed items from the 2017 Managing National Assessment review have been resolved by the Principal's Nominee. Processes have been created to address these actions as ongoing opportunities to improve. The actions taken include:

- a review of the Staff Handbook annually to reflect current practice so that this is available to staff at the beginning of the year
- creating adequate documentation of verification at grade boundaries for internal moderation
- ensuring all results are reported for all internal standards in which students have had an adequate assessment opportunity
- creating a system to reconcile memoranda of understanding with actual practice
- updating the staff handbook.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Moderator feedback shows that the school has a consistent assessor consistency rate. In addition, they have developed effective processes for responding to external moderation. The Principal's Nominee reads each report and annotates changes required. Teachers provide a response to the Principal's Nominee and to their Curriculum Leaders. Where necessary, an action plan is developed, and its completion monitored by the Principal's Nominee and the Learning Pathways Coordinator.

### 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)*

Tarawera High School has developed a culture of self-review. Assessment processes are reviewed regularly by the Principal's Nominee and Curriculum Leaders, and change processes are evaluated. This has led to a variety of improvements. These include:

- the Senior Academic Advisor tracking student progress and ensuring that subject teachers and Senior Leaders are closely monitoring student progress

- the use of the Potential v Probable student results report from KAMAR as an indicator for ongoing student success
- Block weeks – where teachers work across the curricula to provide opportunities for passion projects and the opportunity to assess when ready
- ALEC – an initiative to create Authentic Learning, Engaging Curriculum
- changes to Mathematics and Science courses to make them more inclusive for Māori students.

**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 2020 5.5)*

### **Tarawera High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- using co-construction to create programmes that have context to the students being assessed
- using appropriate local and contemporary contexts for assessment to engage students
- using checkpoints to provide effective feedback and feedforward to support students to present their best evidence during an assessment event
- assessing when ready through flexible timeframes
- providing differentiated assessment within courses
- offering access to a wide range of vocational, trade and pre-employment courses.

### **Tarawera High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- using a range of strategies to ensure student work submitted is authentic
- ensuring credible and consistent school-wide assessment practice, regarding missed and late assessments, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020* by ensuring student results remain private and permission is sought to use or share student work.

### **Culturally responsive approach enhances student achievement success**

Tarawera High School continues to provide student focused assessment opportunities. The teachers know their students well and work with the Senior Academic Advisor to further develop courses relevant to the context of the students they teach.

As part of their ongoing culturally responsive approach, Tarawera High School is piloting the new Level 1 Te Ao Haka standards.

### **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 2020 6.4b)*

### **Tarawera High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using external subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- teachers using NZQA clarifications and exemplars to inform their grade judgement decisions during marking
- requiring teachers to document the steps of their moderation processes, including noting verification discussion and decisions, on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

### **Tarawera High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- keeping benchmark exemplars of student work to assist with future judgements
- using feedback to support the development of future assessment plans
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

### **Focus on reducing workload by considering sufficiency for grade verification**

The school should provide staff with further guidance on how they can strategically select student work to ensure their grade verification sample is sufficient to confirm that grades awarded are at the standard. Strategic selection can 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. Considering factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed, will help to determine sample size.

### **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 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)*

### **Tarawera High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- Curriculum Leaders analysing NCEA data to report annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees, mapping trends in student achievement and identifying areas for development
- Curriculum Leaders and staff in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team analysing previous years' achievement data to inform current year courses or programme design
- using a traffic light system for student predicted assessment outcomes to further support students to reach their individual achievement goals

### **Tarawera High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- checking for, and correcting where necessary, data submission errors shown on the Key Indicators and data file submission reports from NZQA
- students checking results and personal details held in the school's student management system and reporting any inaccuracies to the Principal's Nominee
- removing, where appropriate, internal entries of students who have left or changed assessment programmes, to ensure all entries have a reported result
- only reporting results for standards for which the school has consent to assess, or against the provider codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

**Close monitoring assists students to achieve qualification goals** Monitoring students' progress throughout the year helps Tarawera High School identify and support students to achieve their qualification goals. Close monitoring of academic progress by teachers, the Senior Academic Advisor and Senior Management ensure that all students can achieve at a level appropriate to their ability.

**Encourage students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login** The school should consider how it can assist students to register for their Learner Login and provide them with advice on its use.

In 2020 only 33 per cent of senior students registered for their NZQA Learner Login. While students can see their results through the online portal to the school's student management system, it is only through their Learner Login that they can:

- check the accuracy of their results reported to NZQA
- order copies of their qualification certificates
- request reviews or reconsiderations of external examination papers
- print an official copy of parts, or all, of their Record of Achievement.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

**For consideration**

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

- assisting students to register and use their Learner Login.

## 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))*

### **Tarawera High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive appropriate information to help them understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification
- reporting on student progress towards qualifications by providing all key stakeholders with regular updates in a variety of mediums
- supporting teachers new to the school to understand school assessment procedures and to use the student management system.

### **Tarawera High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking whether teachers, students and parents are following processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Student handbook requires review** The student handbook contains relevant information. However, after discussion with the Principal's Nominee and Senior Leadership Team it was agreed that it should be reviewed to ensure that the level of detail and language of the document is reflective of Tarawera High School's students and community.

**Staff handbook requires review** The Principal's Nominee and Senior Leadership Team agreed that the staff documentation required a review to ensure that the language and detail reflects Tarawera High School's context.

### **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 the staff handbook to ensure the context reflects Tarawera High School
- review the student handbook to ensure it is written in plain language and reflects the Tarawera High School context.