

Managing National Assessment Report

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery

August 2024

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery

1 August 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.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions

Agreed actions

The school agreed that an action will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. This is:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Strengthen external moderation to ensure responses effectively address identified issues.	Following the feedback report from the external moderation team.
Credible Assessment practices to meet student needs	
Ensure that quality assured grades based on standard specific evidence are reported to NZQA for use as derived grades	Before the end of year examination period

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Macklin', followed by two small vertical strokes.

Andrew Macklin
Acting Manager
School Quality Assurance and Support

4 September 2024

NZQA

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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 31 July 2019 Managing National Assessment Report The actions identified in the previous MNA report have been effectively addressed. The communication around assessment practices including resubmissions and further assessment opportunities is clear and understood by both teachers and students. They also have clear understanding of the expectations around extensions, deadlines, missed and late work. Assessment practices and processes are outlined by the Principal's Nominee to staff in curriculum meetings and students by their homebase learning advisor. These are also discussed with students at the start of each assessment by the learning advisor with some aspects detailed on the course outline and assessment task. This ensures all students have access to fair and consistent assessment practice.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school's response to external moderation outcomes must be strengthened to ensure that actions taken address the issues identified by external moderators.

The Principal's Nominee monitors the progression and effectiveness of actions taken. He works closely with teachers to develop actions that address the issues identified. This has resulted in improved consistency rates across many subjects. To achieve improvement in the subjects with a pattern of variable consistency rates, the Principal's Nominee needs to continue to support these teachers with further professional learning. This includes collaboration with other subject experts in other schools, use of subject associations and will now also suggest using the Assessor Practice Tool available in NZQA's Learning Management System Pūtake.

The Principal's Nominee reviews all moderation reports prior to giving them to teachers. They then discuss the external moderation feedback to assist with the understanding of the standard and to inform changes to assessment tasks and grade decisions. They document the actions taken to resolve identified issues. Where appropriate, teachers are encouraged to query and appeal external moderation outcomes to clarify the standard.

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)

Review is an embedded practice at Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery. All teachers are responsible for the teaching, learning and development of programmes within their subject expertise. Teachers review and adapt their teaching, learning and assessment programmes to suit the interests as well as the academic goals of the students in their classes. They use student voice to determine what courses and assessments to offer, to engage students and to meet their interests.

With no Heads of Department at the school, teachers' collaboration leads to school-wide consistent and effective assessment practice and quality assurance processes to meet school expectations and NZQA requirements. All teachers contributing to this review spoke of how well supported they were by the Principal's Nominee and how

communication and sharing of knowledge between the teachers and the Principal's Nominee had enabled them to understand, implement and take ownership of assessment processes within their classes. The collaborative approach has enabled the school to be confident in their understanding of the delivery and assessment of the new level 1 standards. The school has given a greater time allocation to the Principal's Nominee to reflect the growing aspects of the role and to ensure these are implemented, for example the administration of the co-requisite assessments and the new Level one digital submissions.

Review of Literacy and Numeracy The school has provided staff with professional learning in the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, provided specialist classes and support with programmes driven by the teachers of literacy and numeracy. Data from the co-requisites in 2023 show that many students have achieved positive outcomes. This has enabled the school to develop plans and programmes to further support student achievement in the Common Assessment Activities for literacy and numeracy. Review of assessment for the co-requisites has shown that provision of Special Assessment Conditions for the large number of eligible students is a priority. The review found that the support for students with Special Assessment Conditions was well received but the logistics of rooming and the assessment not being timebound was problematic. The review recommended strategies to alleviate these problems which will further support the school to manage these assessments. The review also highlighted how the school needs to support students in Year 12 who do not want to be put in classes with younger students to continue their learning for these assessments. These strategies have supported students to attain the co-requisite requirement of the changed qualification.

Review of the Level 2 and 3 programmes The school constantly reviews their programmes to ensure students are engaged and they are meeting their learning needs but also being aware of the philosophy and the special character of the school. They want to inspire their learners by providing excitement and a thirst for learning. The school is looking at developing project-based learning for Level 2 and 3 programmes. An example is 'Menglish' which is a mix of Media and English standards. The school is aware many of their learner's graduate from the school with University Entrance at Year 12 and sees this as an opportunity for these learners to stay at school to extend their interests in other fields. To date the school has no data on the effectiveness of these new programmes but will monitor it over time.

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 2024)

Effective support and guidance for all students All students receive comprehensive guidance and mentoring on goal setting, career pathways, subject choices, and the tracking of their achievement progress. Support is provided by their Homepage Learning Advisor who meets with the student on a one-to-one basis every week. Students and whānau also have one compulsory meeting per term where the Homepage Learning Advisor and the student meet to discuss the students' progress. The school has a no surprises policy, and the Homepage Learning Advisor is an integral part of the student's growth and development but also in keeping whānau informed. The students spoke about the importance of this relationship and the wrap around support they are given. The Homepage Learning Advisor assists students to have their teaching and assessment needs met and supports them to attain personal and academic goals.

Extending assessment opportunities Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery continues to provide a variety of academic and vocational assessment opportunities for their students. This includes Gateway and STAR opportunities, and the school has *Memoranda of Understanding* with a large number of external providers. Students are encouraged to make the most of the opportunities available to them to broaden their learning and assessment experiences as well as to keep them engaged with learning and being at school. It has also enabled students to look at future career pathways. The school uses opportunities for learning and assessment provided by Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, so all students are able to follow their chosen pathways when the school is unable to provide the required subject option.

Students are not limited to age or school year level but are encouraged to follow their passion and interests. Students are encouraged to try out courses offered within the school. If the student is interested in a subject offered at a different year level, they are welcome to try the course. This has allowed junior students to explore more senior subjects and, if ready, to attempt the assessments available.

Reporting of Derived Grades to NZQA The school reports lower levels of quality assured derived grades to NZQA. Students often do not engage in assessments where evidence for derived grades is collected. The school must review how best to collect standard specific evidence for use as derived grades and ensure these are reported to NZQA prior to the external examinations at the end of the year.

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)

Robust internal moderation processes assure credible reporting of results Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery's internal moderation processes are embedded in its quality assurance practice. Monitoring by the Principal's Nominee helps ensure all results reported to NZQA are verified and credible. Teachers are working with subject specialists from other schools and subject associations to support the management of the quality assurance of the new Level 1 standards.

Teachers are using the school's SMS moderation tool which has helped the school's monitoring of their internal moderation process. Checks include the critiquing of the task, purposeful and strategic selection of student work for grade verification, the grade verification process and storage of student work. This helps ensure that all internal results reported to NZQA have been verified as being at the standard.

Staff use a variety of methods to verify grades awarded to samples of student work. Verification is undertaken by a subject specialist within the school or by verifiers obtained through subject associations, or colleagues at other schools where they often have a reciprocal arrangement. The school sees this as valuable professional learning as well as a supporting teacher to grow their expertise in assessor judgements.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery 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
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- 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
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery 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.

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student 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

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery 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 Director and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery 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 whānau about assessment

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery 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.

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery 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 Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery:

- 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 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
- *NZQA Staff Handbook 2024*
- *NZQA Student Handbook 2024*
- *Curriculum Delivery Policy*
- *Curriculum Management Document*
- *Student Achievement Information*
- *Improve Education Outcomes for Māori Students.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Senior Leader Curriculum
- Teachers of:
 - Architecture, Art History, History
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Media, Art – Design
 - Science, Mathematics, Literacy/Numeracy
 - Social Sciences, Literacy/Numeracy
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal's Nominee and the Senior Leader Curriculum as well as an online report with the Director 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

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery is a school of special character which focuses on the holistic development of all its students where NCEA and gaining a qualification is not a compulsory pathway. There are no compulsory classes and students can study at a level suited to their ability and interests rather than age. The school states that the child is central in directing their own learning, ensuring that enthusiasm and a love for learning is retained.