

Managing National Assessment Report

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education)

August 2022

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education)

11 August 2022

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 2021*.

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 2021.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

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

Action	Timeframe
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
Develop a monitoring process by Senior Management to ensure that all results reported have been verified and are therefore credible.	End of 2022.



Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

9 November 2022

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 Managing National Assessment Report AGE School was established in 2018 and was granted consent to assess in 2019. This is the school's first Managing National Assessment review report.

External moderation processes and response to outcomes Covid disruption has meant the school has had only two standards externally moderated since 2019. For both standards the NZQA moderator reported that teacher judgements were consistent with the standards assessed.

After external moderation is returned, Learning Coaches fill out the moderation review documentation, which explains the actions taken where modification is required including action plans to address issues. These are passed to the Principal Nominee who monitors their completion.

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)

Within its special character, the school is developing its capacity to deliver credible assessment to a small but growing number of NCEA students. In 2020 three students were assessed against standards, increasing to sixteen students in 2022.

Developing opportunities for digital assessment Senior management has identified that the NCEA Change Programme will necessitate their students engaging in more digital external assessment opportunities when completing a full course of study in a subject.

In 2021, the school gained satellite examination centre designation and delivered digital practice and end of year examinations. This mode of assessment engages the students and reduces barriers for those requiring Special Assessment Conditions. The school is investigating piloting the new Literacy and Numeracy standards in 2023.

Responsive to student well-being The main focus of the school is supporting the well-being of students, who in many cases have not succeeded in mainstream schools and have anxiety issues involved with learning and assessment. Students interviewed during the review all identified this positive aspect of the school's supportive delivery of assessment opportunities, which was building their confidence to engage and meet their qualification aspirations.

Personalised assessment opportunities On enrolment, all students are placed on an Individual Learning Plan co-constructed and monitored by their Learning Coach who takes ownership for providing them with the support and resources to experience success with the assessment of standards for the NCEA qualification and

in some cases the University Entrance Award. Learning Coaches inform the review of student programmes and identify required changes to assessment design to facilitate their student's success. Students are not assessed until ready.

Developing staff capability School leadership has identified that finding a sufficient range of specialist subject teachers is its most pressing challenge. Professional relationships with other external providers have helped to overcome some of these challenges and as the roll increases will be further alleviated. Effective communication between students, Learning Coaches, families, and the school management allow robust problem solving to find resources or expertise for students to pursue a range of pathways. To provide students with more authentic learning experiences the school is increasingly using community facilities and the wider environment to develop assessment opportunities including the local library, swimming pool, beach, park, and their farm.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of 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)

Credible assessment practice The school has effective processes for ensuring credible assessment practice school-wide. Learning Coaches and students interviewed were consistent in their understanding of assessment practice in the context of a differentiated personalised learning environment.

Students are assessed when ready and resubmissions are only used for students who have received a not achieved grade, in line with NZQA rules. The missed and late assessment policy in the context of personalised learning and the use of milestones and checkpoints removes the need for further assessment opportunities. Students understand that evidence gathered for assessment purposes needs to be authentic and appreciate the extensive use of formative assessment opportunities to provide them with the confidence to complete the summative assessment.

Meeting student needs Assessment opportunities are offered in a cross – curricular environment and the assessments are aligned with the student's pathway. Within the project-based model, assessment opportunities are flexible to engage students and allow them to effectively demonstrate their understanding.

Within its context, through strong leadership the school is developing capacity to provide assessment opportunities to engage students to complete qualifications. Learning Coaches are taking ownership of the changes in assessment practice to meet their students' needs and provide them with confidence to succeed.

In 2021, 40 percent of NCEA students were granted entitlement to Special Assessment Conditions, using school-based evidence to support their application. Learning Coaches expressed concern about the application of these conditions to the future Literacy/Numeracy external assessment opportunities without the development of assistive technologies and the subsequent impact on the confidence and motivation of their students. The NCEA Change Package states that the Review of Achievement Standards (RAS) will deliver standards which are more accessible and,

as a result, the need for SAC will decline. Accessibility will be available by design wherever possible rather than as an add-on provided through an application process. Assessment for standards included in the NCEA Review Pilots 2022 provides an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which greater accessibility by design has been realised.

Effective Communication Information sharing between Learning Coaches, students and caregivers is transparent and constructive. Frequent contact with caregivers is maintained through an online tool called HERO. This provides dynamic information on each student's achievement progress in the context of their learning and assessment goals. Student progress is communicated by results but also photographs and videos of their participation in assessment opportunities. This information is then used at regular student led progress conferences with teachers and caregivers.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021 6.4.

Strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation processes To strengthen the internal moderation process and provide senior management with confidence that reported results are credible, a check that this process has been completed for all standards, where results are reported should, be documented. This will provide visibility of teacher adherence to the internal moderation process given the increasing number of standards being assessed using the school's provider code. From 2020 to 2021 the number of internal results reported by the school under their provider code increased from seven to 62.

The samples of student work for reported results are stored digitally and centrally by the Principal's Nominee. School documentation requires an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to be attached to each standard moderated, recording the Learning Coach's name, the verifier and discussion of the assessor decisions made. These discussions confirm verification occurred. They are important to inform future grade decisions and can be referred to when evaluating external moderation outcomes.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their 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 to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- 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 Learning Coaches 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.

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- 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 and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding a student's privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) 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.

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) 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
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) 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.

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) 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

- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

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

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) 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.

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding meetings for parents and NCEA briefings 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 AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education):

- 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 2021* (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 2022* (Assessment Rules).

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 *Assessment Aromatawai, Learning Coach's Handbook* (Staff Handbook)
- *Assessment Aromatawai, Student, Parent and Caregivers Handbook, 2022* (Student Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- two Learning Coaches delivering standards across curriculum areas.
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal 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

AGE School (Academy for Gifted Education) is a small school, currently with 16 NCEA students, all on personalised programmes of study. These programmes are developed to reflect each student's passions, strengths and pathway aspirations. A focus of the school is on supporting student well-being with a number of students experiencing anxiety from their learning and assessment experiences in mainstream schooling. The size of the school presents a challenge to find Learning Coaches to deliver a wide range of standards across a number of curriculum areas. The school as a consequence engages with a number of external providers.