

Managing National Assessment Report

Niue High School

August 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Niue High School

22-26 August 2023

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 in 2024 according to the terms of the joint agreement between the Niuean Ministry of Education and NZQA.

Considerations

For consideration

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

- revising its extension policy to provide greater consistency and clarity for staff, students and families
- strengthening reporting results expectations to ensure a more consistent turnaround time for the completion of internal assessment
- refreshing the Staff and Student Handbooks and sharing the Student Handbook with all NCEA students and their families
- having Subject Leaders monitor Resubmissions to ensure they are appropriate
- monitoring internal moderation to remove potential over-verification
- ensuring teachers new to NCEA assessment are aware of the full range of existing assessor supports available
- encouraging students' use of text to speech assistive technology where available in digital online Common Assessment Activities, as appropriate.

No action required

The school has no action items relating to the quality of their assessment systems.

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26 September 2023

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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 4 - 7 October 2022 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no action items relating to the quality of the school's assessment systems.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes All teachers respond to their external moderation reports including where external moderation outcomes are consistent with NZQA moderators' judgements. This good practice encourages a process of internal self-review and exemplifies the school's effective Quality Assurance processes for internal assessment.

A number of subject areas with external moderation outcomes that have not been consistent with the standard, resubmit the same standard the following year to test the effectiveness of their action plans and close the moderation cycle. In all cases, the resubmitted standards had consistent outcomes.

As a result of this review, some subject leaders are now more aware of how to access NZQA's existing assessor support for those new to assessing NCEA Achievement Standards and/or teaching a standard for the first time, as detailed in the following paragraph.

Encourage access to NZQA's assessor support prior to assessment Teachers may benefit from more regular reminders of the assessor support currently available to them, especially where they are the sole teacher of a subject, a beginning teacher, or do not have access to a subject cluster. Feedback commonly cited in the school's external moderation reports reminds assessors to check:

- the annotated exemplars provided for most standards on the Subject resources page of the NZQA website, which illustrate the various grade boundaries
- the clarifications documents on the Subject Resources page of the NZQA website; essential viewing as part of the critiquing process prior to assessment
- further guidance and support available for a growing number of standards on NZQA's Learning Management System – Pūtake.

Most teachers have been given access to NZQA's Learning Management System, Pūtake. It is here that teachers can find support for internal assessment by subject, and NZQA's new modules on authenticity, and digital assessment using Assessment Master. Teachers should also be reminded that if they require clarification of a standard, they can use the *Request clarification of an internally assessed standard* form available on the Subject Resources pages of the NZQA website to seek clarification from the moderator of that subject.

Quality assurance check of the examination centre As part of this review a discussion was held with the 2023 Exam Centre Manager to clarify some issues and determine what further support NZQA could provide. The ECM agreed to:

- employ a Digital Supervisor

The School Relationship Manager will investigate ways to improve the means by which exam papers are sent to NZQA for marking.

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)

Niue High School uses its own process of self-review, based on effective data analysis and staff/student voice to modify courses and implement changes that reduce barriers to success for all students. Student achievement outcomes across levels one to three have been generally steady over the past five years, often matching or exceeding rates for New Zealand nationally. University Entrance rates are variable reflecting the small numbers and varied characteristics of the Year 13 cohort each year.

Engagement in Digital Assessment Niue High School is well-prepared for digital first assessment rolling out from Level 1 in 2024. School leaders continue to support and enable students' readiness for a digital first approach to assessment, despite a less than ideal Wi-Fi infrastructure and a lack of personal devices. Four subject areas engaged in Level 1 RAS pilots in 2023 and a number of students identified as working at Level 5 of the New Zealand Curriculum, attempted the Numeracy Co-requisite standards.

Students completing the Numeracy Co-Requisite standards are encouraged to use Polly, the text-to-speech function, where their grasp of English may impede their chances of success. Numeracy teachers have identified their students need more practice formulating effective explanations of numeric calculations in English.

The school allowed 60 minutes for students to complete the recent numeracy CAA. However, it is common for students in New Zealand to have 90 minutes or more to work through the Numeracy and Writing Common Assessment Activities. The school can allow more time for its students to complete the CAAs as the conditions of assessment allow for this flexibility.

Review of School Curriculum As discussed in the 2022 Managing National Assessment report, the school's curriculum review is still a work in progress. School annual plans are integrated with, and implemented through, the plans of individual subject areas. The school leadership is still gathering feedback from subject leaders regarding the number of standards they will offer in Level 1 courses next year. It is anticipated that the flexibility of NCEA will be utilised to personalise programmes to meet individual students' needs, interests and abilities. Some subject areas are exploring an extension to their consent to meet the needs of students on vocational pathways. However, there are constraints in terms of the resources required to meet industry standards, for example, in Hospitality.

Provisioning Special Assessment Conditions The school has identified two students at junior level who would benefit from a SAC entitlement. Upcoming changes such as digital online assessment with inbuilt assistive technologies and the new SAC notification system will enable those students to benefit from SAC entitlements in a discreet manner.

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, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Reporting achievement results in a timely manner In order to track student progress effectively, teachers need to be aware that results should be reported in a timely manner. Feedback to students is also more effective the closer it is to the timing of the assessment event. A consideration for the school is to revise the Staff Handbook and stipulate the required turnaround time for marking assessments, and practice exams, so that the students receive meaningful, timely feedback, and senior leaders have up-to-date student achievement data to track and report on student progress.

Strengthen extension policy A strengthened extension policy, communicated to parents, students and teachers is needed to provide everyone with greater clarity regarding the repercussions for a student who is unexpectedly absent from a planned internal assessment.

Teachers reported that events such as, required family trips to New Zealand, funerals and cultural days create tension with planned assessment events and due dates. Students reported experiencing stress when planned assessment is delayed and too many assessments converge at once.

Suitable solutions are a Not Achieved grade for unsubstantiated or repeated absence from planned assessment, with a Further Assessment Opportunity up to the discretion of the Subject Leader and Principal's Nominee. Students who are at risk of not gaining a qualification through missed and late assessment, have the option of using time at the end of the year to catch up any required credits. Extensions should be managed and monitored by the Principal's Nominee, so there's a record of each student's time management each school year.

Resubmissions best suited to time bound assessment The school's use of resubmissions is generally appropriate. However, there is value in continuing to remind teachers that NZQA's Resubmission Mythbuster states that "effective use of checkpoints and feedback/feedforward will usually remove the need for resubmission where evidence is gathered by portfolio, or over an extended period." For consideration, any decision to offer a resubmission should be confirmed by the Subject Leader to ensure that it is has been managed appropriately.

Refresh the Student Handbook A student handbook should be available and shared with all families to ensure they and all students undertaking NCEA are aware of their obligations and entitlements. This should include updating the expectations regarding resubmissions, extensions and student privacy. Under the Privacy Act 2020, students' grades must remain confidential to students and their caregivers; and may not to be displayed publicly. The student handbook could also be uploaded to online portals that the school community uses regularly, including a future school website.

Consider mandatory milestone checks for internal assessment over an extended period The use of mandatory milestone checkpoints for internal assessment carried out over an extended period is an effective assessment practice that can help minimise the number of incomplete assessments and negate the need for resubmission. In addition, mandatory milestone checks would help inform the Principal's Nominee whether to grant an extension for missed or late assessment. If

a student fails to submit the required evidence for a milestone check, this could help determine whether an extension request will be granted or declined.

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, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Monitoring internal moderation The Principal's Nominee's responsibility for monitoring the overall quality of moderation can be shared with subject leaders by having them provide the first pair of eyes and monitoring their internal moderation to ensure:

- that verification discussions are recorded on the internal moderation cover sheet to inform future assessment of the standard
- that the verifier's grade and final grade are recorded on the cover sheet.

The Principal's Nominee then provides the second pair of eyes before confirming that grades can be sent to NZQA.

New Moderation Tool in school's Student Management System The school will trial the new moderation tool in the Student Management System. This can give the Principal's Nominee and school leaders improved visibility for monitoring the end to end process of internal moderation. The tool can lighten teacher workload for internal moderation, as well as improving quality assurance practice.

Over-verification in evidence Interviews with Subject Leaders revealed some evidence of over-verification in relation to the number of pieces of student work sent for verification. Monitoring the number of pieces sent for verification is a means of better managing the workload of verifiers. There is no prescribed number of pieces of student work required, at a minimum, one piece could be sufficient. However, the sample size should reflect the assessor's familiarity, confidence and experience with the standard.

Where assessors are experienced and have a good moderation history, fewer pieces are required, and these should be purposefully selected from around a grade boundary. Where assessors are new to a standard, or new to standards-based assessment, more pieces may be required for grade verification to provide confidence the assessor judgements are accurate. The Principal's Nominee can advise Subject Leaders as to the number of pieces that are sufficient for individual assessors.

Where more pieces of work are verified than would normally be required, there should be a valid reason for doing so, such as, the professional learning component.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Niue High School 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
- 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 expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing targeted 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.

Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for:

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

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Niue High School 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
- 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.

Niue High School 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

Niue High School 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 Director of Education an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Niue High School 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.

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

Niue High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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.

Niue High School 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 Niue 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.

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 Candidates 2023*.

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 every year.

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:

- a range of subject areas' long-term plans
- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- Niue High School *Teacher Staff NCEA Policy Handbook 2023* (Staff Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Director of Education
- the Exam Centre Manager
- nineteen subject leaders and teachers covering all NCEA course options
- 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 and a presentation to staff on matters arising from the review.

Background

Niue High School is the only secondary school on Niue Island.

The Niuean Ministry of Education is responsible for the governance of the school.

A Managing National Assessment review is undertaken in Niue High School annually under a joint agreement between the Niuean Ministry of Education and NZQA to ensure the school is undertaking credible assessment and its practices are current. The school offers sufficient courses for Year 13 students to achieve NCEA Level 3 and University Entrance.

The recent upgrade of ICT infrastructure and internet capability has allowed the school to engage in digital assessment through accessing NZQA's Assessment Master platform. This increased capability also provides opportunities for establishing relationships with external providers to increase student option choices

For the majority of students, English is their second language.