

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

**Niue High School**

**May 2024**

# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Niue High School

22-23 May 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 in 2025.

### Actions and considerations

#### Agreed actions

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

Action	Timeframe
<b>Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results</b>	
Strengthen monitoring of internal moderation with more robust checks on the critiquing and verification steps, as outlined in this report.	Immediate and ongoing

#### For consideration

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

- storing all external moderation follow up documentation centrally for ease of monitoring

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6 June 2024

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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 22-26 August 2023 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no actions arising from the 2023 Managing National Assessment review. The school has responded effectively to all of the considerations in the 2023 MNA report.

**External moderation response to outcomes and processes** Contributing factors were fewer Not Consistent and fewer Materials Not Received reports. It is important that the annual moderation plan is checked early in the school year to determine whether teachers will be able to send the standard listed and make a change where required. If a standard on the moderation plan is not received by NZQA, this weakens the school's Overall Moderation Summary. Similarly, if the wrong work is submitted to NZQA moderators, this may result in a Materials Not Received report. Handling errors such as these can often be resolved by contacting the School Relationship Manager, who may be able to manage an intervention on behalf of the school.

The school has clear procedures for following up on external moderation reports that are Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent. However, during this review it was not apparent where this documentation was stored, although individual Heads of Department were able to retrieve their own saved copies. If the school could store this documentation centrally following the annual external moderation round, this would allow better access for quality assurance purposes.

The Principal's Nominees need to review why a standard Consistent in one year is found to be Not Consistent in a subsequent year. It is important that the learning from annual external moderation follow up is retained and informs assessor's assessment practice the next time the standard is assessed. Where a standard has been found Consistent in the past, it would follow that using the same verifier again would increase the likelihood of the standard being found Consistent. Where possible, assessors need to select reliable, successful verifiers within the school, whose past verification has been consistent with NZQA moderators' grade judgements. Where an external verifier is needed, the School Relationship Manager can help the school find a verifier in New Zealand with recent, successful assessment of a standard.

It is important that Heads of Department build up a full suite of assessor support for each standard, including the feedback from external moderation and exemplars which are representative of each grade. These assessor support materials should be reviewed as part of the critiquing step before teaching and assessment commences again for that standard. As advised in the 2023 MNA report, teachers need to access the full range of assessor support available to them on the NZQA website. This is expanded on below in the internal moderation section.

A next step required by NZQA is for the Principal's Nominee to use external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes to determine whether accessing assessor support more thoroughly improves Overall Moderation Consistency.

## 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 to enhance success for all students. Teachers new to the school are well-supported by their Heads of Department, or a senior leader, and are introduced to NCEA assessment through incremental steps. Over the past five years, Niue High School (NHS) has maintained a record of achievement better than schools with a similar Equity Index and preserved the credibility of the NCEA qualification.

In 2023, Niue High School piloted four subjects at Level 1 involving the majority of the Level 1 cohort. Some subjects experienced lower than expected performance where teachers failed to understand the intent of the standard. Consequently, achievement at Level 1 in 2023 dipped significantly compared with the performance of the 2021 and 2022 Level 1 cohorts. Feedback from a NZQA National Assessment Facilitator was shared with one subject area to inform understanding of a new Level 1 standard. Achievement outcomes at other levels remain steady. As a result of this review, the Principal's Nominees have developed a plan of how they can better support their teachers to access available assessor support and intend to build this into their ongoing professional development and support.

**Focus on improved attendance** Attendance is currently tracking at around 80 percent. The principal and other school leaders work with students and their families where there is a with a pattern of poor attendance to improve student attendance and manage the completion of assessment for qualifications.

**Tracking of individual student progress** The principal interviews every senior student to track progress towards their qualification and to review the student's goals. The interview is also key to determining factors that affect each student's attendance and identifying students 'at risk.' Students with special interests and abilities are also identified through this process and invited to participate in programmes with local business, such as, *Daughters of the Deep* with Niue Blue, or the Rugby League training camp. In the future, the school may wish to partner with organisations that are willing to invest in developing students' vocational pathways. There are potential opportunities to sub-contract with suitable organisations in Horticulture, Tourism, Hospitality and Marine Conservation to name a few.

**Review of Vagahau Niue and related assessment standards** During this review, an online meeting was held with NZQA's Qualifications Development Facilitator for Pacific Languages and Culture to seek feedback on the standards the Head of Vagahau Niue assesses and to inform the review process for affected standards. This subject area has used the flexibility of NCEA to personalise and contextualise students' individual programmes to include standards in Pacific Studies, Religious Studies and Technology in response to students' interests, needs and abilities.

## 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)*

**Response to NCEA Changes** The school prepared for the implementation of the new Level Achievement Standards by participating in the piloting of English, Mathematics, Science and Vagahau Niue. However, where assessors failed to access all NZQA's available assessor support, combined with a lack of clarity by some teachers regarding the intent of some of the standards, this resulted in lower than expected achievement outcomes for Level 1 in 2023.

**NCEA Co-requisite a barrier for many students** Senior leaders have identified that approximately 40 percent of their students have not yet demonstrated they are ready to be assessed for the NCEA Co-requisite. For many NHS students, their level of English proficiency is understandably at a lower level than that of a native speaker's. The school uses translated papers for the Numeracy Common Assessment Activity (CAA) to assist students to overcome the language barriers associated with this assessment.

In 2024, the school has opted to assess students in the September assessment event to allow time to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. In order to avoid failure fatigue, the school is using e-asTTle benchmarks to gauge student readiness and will be more selective with entries into the CAAs. Teachers will need to implement explicit literacy strategies in all subjects in the run up to the September assessment event. There is a need for better data on literacy and numeracy from the feeder school.

**Special Assessment Conditions encouraged for eligible students** In the past, very few Niue High School students have ever applied for Special Assessment Conditions (SAC). However, the school now has a higher number of neuro-diverse students on its roll and is encouraged to use school-based evidence to provision eligible students with the supports they need. Valuable guidance is available on the NZQA website regarding the type of SACs available and the eligibility criteria.

The school is at liberty to provide Year 9 and 10 students with the SAC support they need without making an application to NZQA if the only assessments the students are undertaking are for the NCEA Co-requisite. For other students requiring SAC, the school can determine need based on the school's own evidence and submit an application to NZQA. An application using the SAC Approvals Gateway can be submitted if there is any uncertainty about eligibility, otherwise the SAC Notifications Gateway may be used. In either case, the school must retain the evidence used to determine the student's eligibility for SAC.

**Extensions and resubmissions well-managed** The new staff and student handbooks clearly outline the requirements for the granting of extensions and resubmissions, which the review confirmed are consistently applied and well understood by both staff and students.

## 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)*

**Strengthen Monitoring of Internal Moderation** In 2023, External Moderation outcomes improved significantly, which points to the effectiveness of the school's assessment practice and Internal Moderation quality assurance procedures. Despite the school's Internal Moderation Cover Sheets being complete, the External Moderation reports for Not Consistent and Not Yet Consistent standards all mention that clarifications, exemplars and tutorials on Pūtake need to be used prior to assessment. If they had been checked thoroughly, a number of errors and flawed grade judgements could have been avoided.

The Principal's Nominees are advised to share the workload for monitoring this pre-moderation/critiquing step by conducting an annual audit of a group of subjects and checking that the assessor supports have been used, shared with the verifiers and stored for future use.

**Prioritise access to NZQA's assessor support prior to assessment** A common thread in the 2023 Not Consistent and Not Yet Consistent external moderation reports was that assessors need to access all of NZQA's assessor support in the critiquing phase of Internal Moderation prior to teaching and assessment. This includes checking:

- 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 and National Moderator's reports on the Subject Resources page of the NZQA website; essential viewing as part of the critiquing process prior to assessment
- previous feedback on student work from External Moderation
- Pūtake (NZQA's Learning Management System) for further guidance and support for internally assessed standards.

**Utilise assessor support in Pūtake** NZQA's learning management system, Pūtake, offers over 150 easy-to-access courses, materials and products. These are designed to support teachers as assessors to improve their assessment of NCEA standards.

Online, subject-specific, bite-sized learning modules and short courses are now available to complement the traditional face-to-face workshops that NZQA offers.

In addition, the platform has a tutorial for Teachers Brand New to NCEA standards-based assessment, which is essential for teachers new to NCEA assessment. These online courses can be accessed using the Education Sector Logon (ESL).

The Assessor Practice Tool (APT) in Pūtake will be used to support assessors with the new NCEA standards from 2024 onwards. The purpose of the APT is to allow assessors to practise making assessment judgements and immediately receive feedback on their judgements from a moderation panel. The APT will initially have material for most existing Level 3 standards, with moderated samples for the new Level 1 NCEA standard subjects being added as material becomes available.

Material for the new Level 2 and Level 3 standards will be added over time, and all material for the old NCEA standards will be archived.

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.



## **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
- 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
- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

**Niue High School 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
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

## **Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality**

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

- 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.

**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.

## **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
- 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 families about assessment**

### **Niue High School 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.

### **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 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 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:**

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- Niue High School *Teacher Staff NCEA Policy Handbook 2024* (Staff Handbook).
- Niue High School *Student and Parent NCEA Handbook 2024* (Student Handbook).

### **The School Relationship Manager met with:**

- The Principal
- Two assistant Principal's Nominees
- Thirteen subject leaders and teachers covering all NCEA course options
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, an assistant Principal's Nominee and the Director of Education 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

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.