

Managing National Assessment Report

Araura College

August 2024

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Araura College

20-21 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 two years.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

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

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Following up external moderation feedback in a timely manner	Within a term of receiving each moderator's report.
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Ensuring there is a common understanding of the rules for resubmission of student work	Immediately
Ensuring grades from practice exams are quality assured so they can be used for derived grades	For the 2024 practice exams and ongoing
Update staff and student handbooks to maintain currency as outlined in this report	Before the beginning of assessments in 2025

For consideration

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

- exploring the use of cloud-based documents to support efficient internal and external moderation processes.

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30 October 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 16 August 2022 Managing National Assessment Report

The action item from this report has been partially addressed. The school was required to develop a process to submit grades to NZQA which could potentially be used for derived grades. In 2023, practice exams were sourced from Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, to ensure authenticity, and sat under exam conditions. However, the marked papers were not subjected to a quality assurance process, such as verification of grades, and possible grades were not submitted to NZQA. These aspects of the process remain an action item. The school must implement a process to quality assure the grades. Assistance from the Cook Islands Ministry of Education could be sourced to support this. The school understands that only quality assured grades can be submitted to NZQA and the importance of completing this process.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school's process to respond to external moderation outcomes requires strengthening. A follow-up process for uncompleted response forms is needed, so that the school can ensure that any actions needed to address external moderation are implemented. The Principal's Nominee discusses each report with the individual teacher who is then to complete a response form with the changes or actions to be implemented. Currently, teachers are inconsistently meeting the expectation to complete the response form. Responding to external moderation outcomes helps to ensure teachers develop a good understanding of the standards and make accurate assessor judgements. This is especially important with the introduction of the new Level 1 achievement standards in 2024.

The school should also consider sharing external moderation outcomes that are Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent with subject advisors from the Cook Islands Ministry of Education. This will help the advisors to identify issues that schools are having in the different subject areas and to lend appropriate support to them.

To further develop teacher understanding of the new standards and to help maintain the accuracy of their assessment judgements, the school is encouraged to promote the use of NZQA's Learning Management System – Pūtake. Pūtake has modules to help teachers gain a better understanding of achievement standards in the subjects they are assessing. The Assessment Practice Tool allows teachers to test their judgements against student evidence, which will improve their assessing accuracy and strengthen their confidence. Some teachers are familiar with using Pūtake and could provide staff with training on its use.

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)

Developing effective self-review processes Araura College has developed effective self-review processes and school structures to identify and take action on areas for improvement. The last report noted that senior leaders were engaged in a mostly informal review process. The school now has clear processes for undertaking review. At the completion of each standard teachers are required to complete a *Story*

behind the Stats review. The delivery of the teaching and assessment is evaluated on what worked and/or did not work well including an analysis of the results. Together with feedback from internal and external moderation, teachers make appropriate changes to the delivery of the assessment to better meet student needs and improve outcomes. This review also helps to identify students who may require extra support to achieve their qualification goals. Staff meetings are held on a regular cycle in which staff share best practice stemming from their reviews, and to plan support for the students who have been identified. Senior management meets regularly to discuss the tracking of assessment progress, identify any standards with overdue assessment dates that will need following-up, and any issues arising from staff meetings. Heads of Department write an end-of-year report that includes an analysis of results. This is reported to the Principal and included in the school report for the Ministry of Education but is not shared with the senior management team. Sharing these reports with senior managers could assist with identifying potential issues and areas for improvement across the school and strengthening school review and strategic planning.

Preparing for digital assessments The school review of student digital fluency identified that students required further support to strengthen their digital capability. Digital Technologies is now introduced at Year 7 to build student experience and skills and ensure they are well-prepared to use digital devices. Developing this capability early will help to build student confidence and familiarity when attempting digital assessments for NCEA, including the common assessment activities, in the senior years.

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)

Reminding staff about resubmission rules The school needs to remind staff about best practice and the rules for the resubmission of student work. Students interviewed for this report described inconsistent assessor practice for resubmissions. In some cases, students are possibly provided with too much feedback and guidance that would make their work inauthentic. Teachers must ensure that the student's work is authentic, by only giving non-specific feedback and taking care not to over-direct them. *Myth 4 Resubmission*, available on the NZQA website is a useful resource for the school to use for reminding staff.

Updating information for staff and students The staff and student handbooks require updating to maintain currency. The student handbook is missing aspects of assessment policy and procedures that need to be available to students, so that they are aware of their rights and entitlements, these include:

- the missed and late assessment policy
- breaches of assessment and the investigation process
- appeals process to include any aspect of the assessment process
- special assessment conditions entitlements.

The school's authenticity policy, which is a separate document, should be included in the staff handbook, as it contains useful information about best practice. The process for investigating potential breaches of assessment rules needs to be included in the staff handbook.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible result

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)

Extending internal moderation processes to improve student outcomes

Extending the school's internal moderation process into the junior school has strengthened teacher assessment practice and improved feedback on student progress. The senior management review of assessment practice in the junior school found that this was inconsistent across the school. Some tasks were inappropriate for the assessment and marking, at times, did not follow the assessment schedule. This created invalid assessment results that could lead to inaccurate tracking of student progress. Teachers of junior classes are now expected to use the same internal moderation procedures as senior classes, especially pre-critiquing of assessment tasks to ensure they are appropriate and valid, and verifying grades to check the accuracy of the judgement. This embeds good assessment practice and verification processes which will support those required for teachers assessing NCEA. This will provide the school with better feedback on student progress leading up to NCEA assessments and on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning programmes.

Developing a cloud-based system Using a cloud-based digital platform for all assessments processes could improve the efficiency of the school's moderation system. The benefits of using a digital platform for moderation are that student evidence can be securely stored, it allows teachers to easily share links to student work with verifiers rather than sending files via email or flash drive, and the links can be uploaded for external moderation into the external moderation application without the limiting issue of file size. A system using shared folders would also strengthen the Principal's Nominee's monitoring of assessment and moderation by having greater visibility across the school. Some teachers have begun using Google products in their course assessments. The school could consider developing a school-wide approach to the use of such products.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Araura College 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
- 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
- expanding 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.

Araura College has effective processes and procedures for:

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

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Araura College 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.

Araura College 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.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Araura College 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.

Araura College 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

Araura College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- celebrating students' success.

Araura College 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 Araura College:

- 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 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
- *NCEA Staff Handbook, Araura College, 2024*
- *NCEA Student Handbook, Araura College, 2024.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Hospitality
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
- five 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.

Background

Araura College provides secondary education for students on the island of Aitutaki in the Cook Islands. The school annually assesses students for New Zealand national qualifications mainly at Level 1.

For Year 12 and Year 13 students, the school endeavours to offer sufficient courses to enable them to remain on Aitutaki while they complete their secondary education. Some students have the option to continue their secondary education at Tereora College on Rarotonga. For most students, English is their second language.

All students in Year 11 are assessed against a core group of subjects including Cook Islands Māori, English and Mathematics in addition to Science, Hospitality and Digital Technology.

The school is an examination centre for students entered in standards externally assessed by written examination.

Managing National Assessment external reviews are normally undertaken in all Cook Islands schools in alternate years. The time that elapses between reviews is, therefore, not necessarily an indicator of the effectiveness of the school's management of assessment for national qualifications.