

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Araura College**

**May 2018**

## 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.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

## Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (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 2018* (Assessment Rules).

## What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- 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 to consider 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 four 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
- *Araura College Policies on Assessment, 2018*
- *Araura College Assessment for Learning: NCEA Qualifications Handbook for Staff*
- *Araura College Assessment for Learning: NCEA Qualifications Handbook for Students*
- a sample of course outlines.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and teachers of Cook Islands Maori, Digital Technology, English, Hospitality, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Tourism and Visual Arts, and the teacher responsible for supervising students who are studying by correspondence through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu.

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 is the secondary school for Aitutaki in the Cook Islands. It assesses students for New Zealand qualifications at Levels 1, 2 and 3. At the end of Year 12, some students transfer to Tereora College on Rarotonga to continue with their education. The school is endeavouring to offer a pathway for Level 3 students by extending the number of subjects being offered through correspondence and delivered by Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu.

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

While most standards are assessed internally, the school is an examination centre for externally assessed standards.

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

# SUMMARY

## Araura College

10 May 2018

### Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to respond to most identified issues.

By agreement with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education, Managing National Assessment external reviews are currently undertaken in all Cook Islands schools on a one or two-year cycle. Based on the outcome of this assessment systems check, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within two years.

### What the school is doing well

Araura College continues to provide programmes of study that are responsive to the achievement needs of students. The Level 3 programme has been expanded with additional correspondence subjects and new achievement standards-based courses in Visual Arts and Technology having been introduced. The school has expanded the support for students who are following more vocationally-based studies by extending the Kaveinga class to Level Two.

Teachers of NCEA subjects meet regularly to reflect on good practice and to discuss any concerns about student progress. The Principal's Nominee ably leads these meetings and is confident in her role. Teachers have a good understanding of requirements of to ensure credible assessment and are following these.

Evidence for assessment purposes is gathered in a number of ways and, wherever possible, teachers strive to assess students when they are ready. Procedures for managing missed or late assessments, appeals and breaches are applied consistently across the school.

Most verification is completed by teachers on Rarotonga, in accordance with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education policy. Samples of work for verification are appropriately selected. Teachers are required to follow up any concerns raised through external moderation and this is monitored by the Principal's Nominee.

Results data is reported to NZQA in a timely way and any data issues are mostly identified and efficiently resolved by the school. Communication about assessment practice to parents, students and teachers is comprehensive.

### Areas for improvement

The school continues to report a number of internal standard entries without results to NZQA. This must be addressed to ensure that entries are either withdrawn or a result submitted as appropriate.

The school has not identified any students for whom applications for special assessment conditions would be needed. A system to identify and screen potential candidates needs to be developed so that applications can be submitted and barriers to assessment for these students can be removed.

The return of samples of student work sent to Rarotonga for verification has been delayed in some cases. This means that results cannot be reported to students nor submitted to NZQA in a timely manner. Most teachers do not have access to the NZQA provider login and training needs to be provided for the school to be able to use some digital tools. The school should work with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to address these concerns.

Although the staff and student handbooks are both comprehensive, their usefulness may be compromised by the inclusion of information of peripheral importance. A review should be undertaken to consider the effectiveness of these publications.

### **Agreed action**

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are to:

- develop a system to monitor the submission of entries to NZQA to ensure that all entries have a result reported or are withdrawn as appropriate.
- establish a process to identify potential candidates for special assessment conditions and to gather evidence for applications
- review the effectiveness of the staff and student handbooks and make amendments as appropriate.

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11 July 2018

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

### External review

*Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)*

**Action Items from 12 April 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** This report listed five actions that the school agreed would refine assessment practice. The school has completed three of these agreed actions but has further work to do to complete two. The agreed actions were to:

- clarify for staff, and in the documentation, the situations when a Not Achieved grade will be awarded
- work with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to gather school-based evidence to make applications for students to use special assessment conditions
- support staff to digitally submit work for external verification or NZQA moderation
- ensure all entries have a reported result by the end-of-year data file submission
- liaise with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to give staff access to the school's NZQA Provider login.

Clarification has been provided regarding when a Not Achieved grade will be awarded, work is being digitally submitted for verification (when appropriate) and for external moderation, and the school has made a request to the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to provide access for teachers to the NZQA Provider login.

However, some entries continue to have unreported results and little progress has been made regarding special assessment conditions applications. These areas require ongoing action.

The Principal's Nominee has agreed to initiate contact with the school's student management system provider to gain advice on how to determine which internal entries do not have a result reported in the student management system. This will enable the Principal's Nominee to take the appropriate action before a data file is submitted to NZQA. This is particularly important in November, just prior to the final data file of the year and should eliminate the concern of entries being submitted without results. It will also ensure that the data reflects the true results status for each student.

Although the school is of the opinion that there is currently no student for whom an application for special assessment conditions is warranted, there is no process in place to identify potential candidates. Screening of students in the junior classes will enable the school to trial special assessment conditions prior to Level 1 and also to gather evidence for applications. Categories for entitlement include vision and hearing loss, medical and physical conditions, and learning disorders.

The number of applications will be small (probably up to 5% of the total number of students enrolled for an NCEA qualification). However, senior management can only

be confident of the number of students who may require special assessment conditions if a screening process is in place. The Cook Islands Ministry of Education is in a position to advise on this process, if needed.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** External moderation reports are provided to teachers by the Principal's Nominee. Plans to address any issues raised in the reports are prepared by teachers and submitted to the Principal's Nominee who monitors that these actions have been completed. This is a thorough process that provides confidence to senior management that issues relating to any assessment judgments of teachers are being resolved.

### **Internal review**

*Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)*

The school has developed self-review processes to respond to the assessment and qualification needs of students. Student assessment data is used to guide decision-making. Teachers who offer NCEA courses meet regularly to review progress and to discuss future development.

Initiatives introduced as a result of this self-review include:

- the further development of the NCEA Level 3 programme in response to the needs of students who do not want to travel to Rarotonga complete their NCEA studies
- the introduction of a number of new courses, including achievement standards in Visual Arts and Technology, and further Level 3 courses offered through correspondence studies
- a focus on careers education and informing students about vocational pathways
- the extension of the Kaveinga class into Level 2 to further support students who are following a more vocational pathway
- the sending of letters informing parents when students have been awarded a Not Achieved grade in an assessment.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- develop a system to monitor the submission of entries to NZQA to ensure that all entries have a result reported or are withdrawn as appropriate
- establish a process to identify potential candidates for special assessment conditions and to gather evidence for applications.

## How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

*Evidence for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2018 5.5)*

### **Araura College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- designing programmes of learning that are focussed on their interests, needs and abilities
- offering varied opportunities for the collection of evidence towards assessment
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready.
- extending assessment opportunities by offering vocational courses
- offering a programme of unit standards in which students can achieve their literacy and numeracy requirements for an NCEA qualification, as appropriate for some students
- extending the school's available standards through the submission to NZQA of an application for extension to its consent to assess
- using student feedback to help determine their readiness for assessment

### **Araura College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring grades awarded are valid, authentic and verified
- providing one further opportunity for assessment when appropriate
- providing suitable opportunities for resubmissions
- investigating appeals by students of assessment decisions
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted.

**A policy on practice examinations should be considered** Practice examinations can help students prepare for the external examinations as well as providing evidence for derived grades. The school does not currently have a policy on whether or how practice examinations should be offered each year.

This may disadvantage students, and the school should consider whether to offer practice examinations and how this will occur. If practice examinations are not to be held, consideration should be given as to how evidence for derived grades can be gathered.

**Involvement in digital trials should be considered** NZQA has signalled a move to more digital external examinations in the future but the school has not yet participated in any digital external examination trials or pilots.

By participating in a digital trial, the school will be able to test the capacity of their network to run a digital examination, and students will gain experience in this new type of assessment opportunity. This should be considered.



**No action required**

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

**For consideration**

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

- whether practice examinations should be held to prepare students for external examinations and to collect evidence to be used for derived grades
- becoming involved in digital trials to test the capacity of the school's network and to allow students to gain experience in this new type of assessment opportunity.

## How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

*Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2018 6.4b)*

### **Araura College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using the Cook Islands Ministry of Education National Verification System to ensure work for all standards is appropriately verified
- documenting the process using an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

### **Araura College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- suggesting appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation
- ensuring samples of student work are adequately stored so that they can be provided for external moderation
- submitting materials for moderation digitally through the external moderation application.

**Verification processes are sometimes delayed** The school sends most student work for verification purposes to Rarotonga in accordance with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education policy. In some cases, there has been a long delay before the verification outcomes are returned to the school.

These delays can hold up the issuing of confirmed results to students and their submission to NZQA. The school should work with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to resolve this.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

### **For consideration**

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- working with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to resolve the late return of verification outcomes for some standards.

## How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

*Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### **Araura College effectively:**

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - considering the appropriate balance of internal and external standards
  - tracking student achievement to identify students at risk of not achieving their chosen qualification pathway.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - ensuring that datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner if possible
  - checking reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any errors
  - supporting students to use their NZQA Learner login and their login to the school's student management system to track their NCEA progress and identify errors
  - ensuring that students sign a results slip to confirm the accuracy of the grades they have been awarded.

**Training in the use of digital tool is needed** The school must access the training required to make effective use of digital tools available to them through the Cook Islands Ministry of Education. For example, the Ministry has provided the facility for the school to access One Drive. This digital tool has the potential to improve efficiencies in submitting work for verification and external moderation. However, teachers currently lack the training to set up and use this tool.

**Teachers should be granted access to the NZQA Provider login** The school should also work with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to ensure all teachers have access to the NZQA Provider login. The required documentation has been submitted to the Ministry but, at the time of this review, this has not yet been actioned.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

### **For consideration**

To extend school practice in the management and use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to:

- work with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to
  - ensure teachers have access to the NZQA Provider login
  - obtain training for staff in the use of digital tools.

## **How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?**

*Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))*

### **Araura College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring all course assessment outlines and other related materials use the same template to provide consistent information for students
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and parents.

### **Araura College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- publishing a staff handbook and a student handbook containing assessment procedures.
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes through regular, timetabled meetings.

**Staff and student handbooks should be reviewed** The school should review the effectiveness of the staff and student handbooks and make amendments to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

These publications are very comprehensive. However, the school agrees that they may not be useful working reference documents as they contain a lot of material which, although accurate, is only of peripheral importance. Also, the writing style of the student handbook may not be at a level that is easily accessible for students.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- review the effectiveness of the staff and student handbooks and make amendments as appropriate.