

# **MANAGING NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

## **Araura College**

**April 2016**

### **Managing National Assessment Review**

**The purpose of reviewing the management of national assessment is:**

- 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 2016* (Assessment Rules); and
- 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.

**The review has three components:**

- The annual external moderation of assessment materials and of teacher grade judgements for student work selected by the school's random-selection process.
- A random sampling of aspects of assessment systems and data for review or audit on an annual basis.
- A visit to review each school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

### **Managing National Assessment Report**

**This report summarises NZQA's evaluation of how effectively the school:**

- has addressed issues identified through the three components of 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
- manages and makes use of assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

In preparing this report, the School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and teachers of Careers, Geography and Science, Hospitality and Tourism, Information and Communication Technology, and Physical Education.

The school also provided pre-review information and the following documents:

- *Araura College Policy on Assessment 2014*
- *Araura College Assessment for Learning: NCEA Qualifications Handbook for staff*
- *Araura College Assessment for Learning: NCEA Qualifications Handbook for students*
- a sample course assessment outline.

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 and next steps and to agree on any action required.

# **BACKGROUND**

## **Araura College**

Araura College is the secondary school for Aitutaki in the Cook Islands. It annually assesses students for New Zealand national qualifications at Level 1, 2 and 3. At the end of Year 12 some students transfer to Tereora College on Rarotonga to continue with their education. For students who stay at the college for Year 13, the school endeavours to offer sufficient courses for them to achieve NCEA Level 3. This enables them to remain on Aitutaki while they complete their secondary education.

The range of subjects offered at all levels can change markedly from year to year depending on staff capability and student interests. For example, in 2016 Carpentry and Tourism are no longer offered, and Environmental Education and hospitality have been introduced.

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

Annually in November, the school is an examination centre for its students entered in 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.

# OVERVIEW

## Araura College

**12 April 2016**

Araura College has processes in place to ensure credible assessment for national qualifications and to meet the academic and vocational needs of individual students.

**Progress since the last review** The school has completed the actions agreed from the April 2014 review. It has also undertaken effective review of a number of self-identified issues. The school is now in a good position to consider expanding its own self-review to help it identify areas of risk and decide where improvements in other areas of assessment practice can be made.

**Assessment practice** Araura College staff have a good understanding of the procedures the school has in place around assessing students. There is, however, confusion about withdrawing a student's entry for a standard if they have not been provided with an adequate assessment opportunity. This will be clarified with staff and in the school's documentation.

The school could help to collect data to support school-based evidence applications for special assessment conditions. Management have agreed to work with Cook Islands Ministry of Education staff to facilitate this type of applications for Araura College students

**Internal and external moderation** Staff fully engage with internal moderation processes, and this is reflected in the improved agreement rate between teachers and NZQA moderators on grades awarded. Management effectively monitor both internal and external moderation processes. The improved internet access now available will help management support staff to digitally submit work for verification and external moderation.

**Managing data** In 2015, the school did not report results for 15 percent of all entries made. When students leave school during the year, or assessment does not happen, entries should be withdrawn. Management have agreed to ensure that assessment data is reported accurately by due dates.

The majority of staff do not have access to the school's NZQA Provider Login, and the resources available through it. The school will liaise with the Cook Islands Ministry of Education to get this access, as it will enable staff to obtain the full range of assessment material and statistical information available through the login.

**Communication with stakeholders** Araura College has effective processes to communicate assessment information to staff, students and parents. Handbooks provide clear, consistent information on processes, and the school uses local media to help keep parents up-to-date with specific NCEA items.

## Next Steps

**No significant issues** This review did not identify any significant issues that would prevent the school from meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

**Agreed action** However, NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to further refine assessment practices. Senior management undertakes 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.

**Next Managing National Assessment review** 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.

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# FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

## Response to External and Internal Reviews

### Previous external reviews

*Evidence was sought that external review recommendations and findings have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 3v)*

### Managing National Assessment review 7-8 April 2014

The school's progress on the agreed items from the review is summarised below.

**Teachers' assessment practice** Management have encouraged staff to use non-written methods to collect evidence of achievement, where allowed by the standard. Staff interviewed discussed students presenting evidence in a variety of ways, including through oral presentations, video and photographs, but agreed that the majority of evidence is still collected in written form.

During assessment staff are encouraged to collect evidence in whichever language works best for the student; Cook Islands Maori or English. How evidence collected in Cook Islands Maori for other subjects can credibly be made available for verification or external moderation, is still being considered.

The school has reviewed where practice examinations material is sourced. Staff are aware that the material for these examinations must allow students to present valid, standard-specific evidence so that it can be used, if required, for a derived grade.

**Moderation processes** Teachers now purposefully select the work to be verified from around grade boundaries. The amount of material sent for verification meets the requirements specified by the Cook Islands Ministry of Education.

Verified work is stored with the other student work for that standard. Random selection of work, using a process that meets NZQA requirements, occurs post verification for those standards selected for external moderation by NZQA.

The school has worked to provide staff with the ability to submit materials for verification electronically. Improved transfer speeds organised by the school, and the provision of an unlimited data cap for all Cook Islands schools negotiated by the Ministry of Education, now make digital submission more realistic. Staff preparedness for this is discussed in the moderation section of this report.

**Data management** The school now only reports results from one external provider, Te Aho o Te Kura Ponamu (Te Kura). Results from Te Kura are posted online for the school to download, making these easier to report by due dates.

The Principal and Principal's Nominee are more familiar with the range of statistical data available through the school's Provider Login, including the Principal's Report. Staff are provided with statistical information by the Principal's Nominee to review the effectiveness of the externally-assessed standards in their courses.

**Communication** Staff are now provided with a handbook that provides clearly set out information on most assessment and moderation processes. Course outlines, which are produced by the school's student management system contain information on whether standards contribute to meeting NCEA and University Entrance numeracy and literacy requirements.

## **Internal review**

*Evidence was sought that the school was 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)*

**Review of internally assessed standards** Staff solicit student feedback once a standard has been assessed. This is used, together with student achievement data, to review standards for future use.

**Effective self-review** The school has used self-review effectively to take action on a number of issues they have identified. Some examples are listed below.

**Review of vocational courses** A lack of vocational courses, previously available through an outside provider, has led the school to review what they could provide themselves for their less academically-focused students. The *Kaveinga Ora* class has been introduced at Level 1 for students likely to leave and go into employment. This course has proved effective, with the school reporting that most students in the class met their literacy and numeracy requirements and many left school with their Level 1 NCEA certificate.

**Review of school internet functionality** The Principal reviewed the internet needs of staff and students and as a consequence the school now has the fastest data transfer speeds available. This has improved the use of the internet for teaching and learning, acquiring assessment resources and the management of NCEA data.

**Review of communication with parents** Low parent turnout at NCEA information evenings out in the village has led the school to review the way it communicates with parents. Information evenings at the beginning of the year have been reintroduced at the school and weekly announcements on the local radio station help keep parents up-to-date with specific NCEA items.

These examples provide evidence of an improving capacity on the part of the school to undertake its own review of the effectiveness of its assessment practice. The school can now consider further reviews to identify areas of risk, and to decide where improvements in assessment practice can be made. A range of tools to assist with review is available through the Principal's Nominee page of the NZQA website.

## **No action required**

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

## Assessment Practice

*How does the school's assessment practice allow for the effective management of assessment for national qualifications? (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6, 3)*

### **Araura College is developing effective processes and procedures for:**

- assisting students to present valid, authentic work for assessments in a variety of formats
- managing missed and late assessments
- investigating suspected breaches of the assessment rules and resolving appeals of assessment-related decisions
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- assisting with Examination Centre management.

**Students provided with a wider range of assessment opportunities** With students now staying on beyond Year 12, the school has reviewed the assessment programmes for these students. Year 11 and Year 12 programmes are set up to help students progress to further study at Tereora College on Rarotonga. The Year 13 courses have no such limitation and the school has been able to extend the opportunities it offers to these students, within the constraints of staff expertise. Increased use has been made of Te Aho oTe Kura Pounamu to further extend the range of assessment available.

The *Kaveinga Ora* class has been introduced in Year 11, with students offered the chance to meet NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements through the use of the Work and Study Skills unit standards. Students are also provided with assessment opportunities on core skills such as filling in forms and producing a curriculum vitae. Students take other courses, suited to their interests and ability to ensure they have the opportunity to meet the credit requirements for Level 1 NCEA. The success of the class is demonstrated by two thirds of the students achieving their Level 1 NCEA in 2015, with many returning to further study at the college this year.

**Clarification required of when a Not Achieved should be awarded** Staff all understand that a Not Achieved grade should be awarded when students provide insufficient evidence to meet the Achieved criteria for a standard, or when a student is proven to have breached the assessment rules. What they are not clear about is under what circumstances an entry should be withdrawn because a student has not been provided with an "adequate assessment opportunity" (Assessment Rule 6.7g). Management have agreed to clarify this for staff and in the documentation.

**School-based special assessment condition applications could be made** The school could potentially collect all of the data that would be needed for school-based applications for those students who might be entitled to special assessment conditions. Special assessment conditions applications are made for students by the Cook Islands Ministry of Education. School management have agreed to work with Ministry staff to collect the data necessary to make school-based applications for students.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes 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.

## Moderation

*How effectively does school internal and external moderation assure assessment quality? (CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 3)*

**Internal moderation** At a professional development session prior to, and in interviews during the review, staff demonstrated a thorough understanding of the internal moderation process. Where necessary, assessment tasks are modified appropriately to ensure students are able to provide authentic work, and then critiqued by colleagues. The effectiveness of this process is demonstrated by the fact that in the 2015 external moderation round, NZQA moderators identified only one task as requiring some additions to the assessment schedule before being used again.

Verifiers appointed by the Cook Islands Ministry of Education now review selected samples of work for all standards assessed, with the exception of Education for Sustainability standards which are verified by the Science teacher. The Principal's Nominee effectively monitors this process by examining the reports returned with the verified material. No results are reported until verification is completed, ensuring the school meets NZQA requirements (Assessment Rule 5.6b).

**Support staff to send work digitally for verification** Staff are enthusiastic about the potential offered by the digital submission of work for verification or external moderation. While only a small amount of student evidence is presently collected digitally, the school has the facility to scan written work and save it in this format. If material can be emailed or otherwise digitally shared with the verifier, this would reduce the time it takes to get feedback on teacher decisions and confirm student grades. Staff also saw the advantage of verifiers being able to retain a copy of the student work in case there is a need for discussion. Management agreed to support staff with digital submission for external verification or moderation.

**External moderation** The improved 2015 external moderation agreement rate reflects the improved robustness of the school's internal moderation processes. External moderation is effectively monitored by the Principal's Nominee. Teachers with identified issues are expected to provide a response, and develop action plans. These are monitored for completion. Where issues are signalled by moderators, staff are provided with support. For example, the teacher of Business Studies has been provided with training on Rarotonga this year after issues were identified in the 2015 moderation.

### Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- support staff to digitally submit work for external verification or NZQA moderation.

## Data Quality and Use

*How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?*  
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 2.7, 3)

### **Araura College effectively:**

- **manages assessment-related data by:**
  - the Principal's Nominee only entering grades into the student management system after receiving a copy of the verification report for a standard
  - the timely reporting of results to NZQA
  - regularly checking for, and correcting, errors identified in the Key Indicators
  - assisting students to register to use their Learner Login so they can check their results against those held by NZQA.
- **uses assessment-related data to:**
  - annually review course assessment programmes
  - track student progress towards meeting qualification requirements
  - mentor students during Academic Class time.

Approximately 15 per cent of all entries in 2015 did not have a result. The school was able to identify that this was mainly due to entries not being withdrawn when students left school during the year, or when assessment did not happen. It is important that student achievement data be reported accurately and regularly to NZQA. The Principal's Nominee is now aware of a report that can be run within the student management system to identify these "orphaned entries" so they can be appropriately withdrawn before the end-of-year data file submission.

Students are well supported to register to use their Learner Login. Getting students to check for and report entries with no result provides another way for the school to reduce the number of these.

**Access to the school's NZQA Provider Login** Presently only the Principal's Nominee and the Principal can access the school's NZQA Provider Login. Following changes in NZQA protocols, access is now managed by the Cook Islands Ministry of Education. The school will liaise with the Ministry to ensure all staff that assess for qualifications are provided with access to the general security area of the Provider Login. This will allow more effective use of the material available there, such as statistical and verification reports, moderation plans and past NZQA examinations containing third-party copyright material.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- 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.

## Communication

*How effectively does the school maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, and students and their families?*  
(CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6, 2.7ii, 3)

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

- maintaining the currency of assessment policy and procedures
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families, including weekly announcements on the local radio station
- providing students with consistent course assessment statements by using a common template from the school's student management system.

**Handbooks provide clear, consistent information on most processes** The staff and student handbooks are well written and provide consistent information on most assessment and moderation processes. The information on when a Not Achieved grade should be awarded will be clarified in both handbooks, as agreed, when they are reviewed at the end of the year.

### **No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.