



Te Kura Tuarua o
Ruawai
COLLEGE

Assessment and Curriculum Staff Handbook

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Our Rationale

At Ruawai College, senior assessment is guided by three core commitments.

Assessment exists to recognise learning, not merely to accumulate credits. Courses and tasks are designed to promote depth, quality, and sustained success.

Assessment follows evidence of readiness. Judgements are based on a weight of evidence gathered through purposeful teaching, rehearsal, and authentic learning opportunities.

Professional judgement operates within a shared framework. Assessment decisions must be fair, valid, and consistent, protecting both student mana and qualification credibility.

These commitments align with national guidance from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

NZQA affirms that evidence may be gathered across a range of authentic contexts:

“For many standards there will be opportunities for teachers to measure student performance against the standard in a range of activities outside the classroom. Observation of an activity or performance such as kapa haka, sports events, drama production, debating, public speaking or music festivals can be used when making an assessment of student performance. Work completed for one subject may also contribute to evidence of achievement in another.” NZQA

NZQA further emphasises that assessment should follow learning rather than fixed calendar points:

“If a student is not making positive progress towards achievement, it is worthwhile refocusing teaching and then providing the opportunity for assessment when the student is ready, enabling assessment judgements to be based upon a weight of evidence rather than one-off activities. In many cases, adopting these strategies can reduce concerns about authenticity and make deadlines less of a burden for teachers and students.” NZQA

Further guidance is available through NZQA publications including *Gathering Evidence of Learner Achievement*, *Assessment Opportunities in Schools*, and *Effective Assessment Practice*.

Further guidance is available through the following NZQA resources:

[Gathering Evidence of Learner Achievement](#)
[Assessment Opportunities in Schools](#)
[Effective Assessment Practice](#)

Our Responsibilities

The Principal's Nominee oversees assessment procedures, maintains the assessment database, and acts as liaison with NZQA.

Heads of Learning and Teachers in Charge collaborate to design programmes aligned with school goals, manage authenticity and further assessment opportunities, and ensure internal and external moderation occurs in line with school guidelines.

Classroom teachers deliver approved assessment programmes, assess students when readiness is evident, and record results accurately and promptly in KAMAR.

Deans support students academically and pastorally and communicate key academic information with whānau.

Non-Negotiable Principles for Senior Assessment and Curriculum Design

All senior assessment and curriculum design at Ruawai College must advance the school's strategic direction and support coherent pathways, a positive and connected school culture, and equitable success for all learners, particularly Māori learners.

Qualification resilience is prioritised. While credit attainment is necessary, success is defined by depth, consistency, and transferability of learning. Assessment design and teaching practice must deliberately create opportunities for Merit and Excellence achievement.

Teaching precedes assessment. Students are assessed when they are ready to demonstrate learning at the required standard. Readiness is evidenced through formative understanding and rehearsal. Where readiness is not evident, the professional response is to strengthen teaching.

Curriculum design must align intentionally to student pathways. Every senior course should contribute coherently to post-school aspirations, including University Entrance, vocational pathways, and alternative

transitions. Literacy, numeracy, and higher-order thinking must be deliberately strengthened across learning areas.

Student agency is central. Learners must understand what quality work looks like, how higher levels of achievement are reached, and how their choices influence outcomes. Course outlines and assessment information must therefore be transparent and aspirational.

Equity is pursued through excellence. Māori success as Māori is a shared academic responsibility and must be visible in assessment design, expectations, and teaching practice.

Consistency and coherence across subjects are essential. While disciplinary differences are respected, senior programmes must reinforce shared expectations about rigour and learner capability so that students experience a connected and predictable learning environment.

Senior assessment practice is reviewed in light of achievement data, student experience, and strategic priorities. Where outcomes do not align with intentions, curriculum and teaching practice are adapted.

These principles are informed by guidance from NZQA, the Ministry of Education, ERO, and NZCER. A full list of reference documents is provided in Appendix A.

Qualification Purpose and Pathways

At Ruawai College, NCEA is a framework for recognising learning that is meaningful, transferable, and connected to longer-term pathways.

From 2025 onwards, NCEA Levels 1, 2, and 3 are each 60-credit qualifications, with literacy and numeracy as a one-off co-requisite. Until 2027, students may meet the co-requisite through either the new standards or a limited list of literacy- and numeracy-rich achievement standards.

Certificate endorsement and course endorsement are important indicators of learning depth and consistency. Teachers and leaders must understand endorsement requirements and design courses that make endorsement attainable through coherent sequencing of teaching and assessment.

Vocational Pathways provide an additional lens for coherence rather than a parallel system. Where appropriate, courses should contribute meaningfully to sector-related pathways without narrowing future options or lowering expectations for quality.

NCEA Qualification Requirements

To gain an NCEA qualification, students must achieve:

60 credits at the level of the qualification or above

Literacy or Te Reo Matatini – 10 credits from approved standards

Numeracy or Pāngarau – 10 credits from approved standards

University Entrance

University Entrance is the minimum requirement for entry to a New Zealand university. To be awarded University Entrance, students must achieve:

NCEA Level 3

14 credits at Level 3 in each of three approved subjects

Literacy – 10 credits at Level 2 or above, including 5 reading and 5 writing credits

Numeracy – 10 credits at Level 1 or above from approved standards

NCEA Certificate Endorsements

Certificate endorsements appear on the Record of Achievement and are calculated annually following the release of external results.

Excellence endorsement requires 50 credits at Excellence at the level of the certificate or above.

Merit endorsement requires 50 credits at Merit or Excellence at the level of the certificate or above.

NCEA Course Endorsements

Course endorsement recognises achievement within an individual course.

Students gain a course endorsement if, within a single school year, they achieve:

14 or more credits at Achieved, Merit, or Excellence

At least 3 credits from externally assessed standards and 3 credits from internally assessed standards. This requirement does not apply to Physical Education, Religious Studies, or Level 3 Visual Arts.

A course endorsement may be awarded even if the qualification at that level is not achieved.

NZ Scholarship

New Zealand Scholarship assessments provide opportunity for highly able students to demonstrate advanced critical thinking, abstraction, synthesis, and application of knowledge in complex contexts.

Scholarship is assessed externally by examination or by submission of work produced throughout the year. Students considering Scholarship should discuss entries with their subject teacher and Dean.

Curriculum and Course Design

Curriculum intent shapes assessment decisions. Teaching and learning are planned first; assessment opportunities arise from evidence of readiness.

Courses must be sequenced to allow students to build understanding, practise skills, and engage with the cognitive demands of Merit and Excellence. While courses should normally offer more than the minimum credit requirement, assessment load must remain balanced. Excessive assessment distorts learning and increases pressure. Departments are responsible for monitoring assessment load across courses and year levels.

Departments should enter students only for standards they intend to assess during the year. Care must be taken when withdrawing students from standards, as this may affect course endorsement eligibility. Unassigned standards do not count towards course endorsement.

There are no restrictions on entry into a course, although some subjects may be challenging without prior study. Consultation with the relevant Head of Faculty or Department is recommended in such cases.

Course Overviews

A [Course Overview](#) or Assessment Statement must be written for every course in KAMAR. All students must be issued with the course overview, including those who join later in the year. Students must be shown how to access this information electronically. There should be no surprises. Students must be clearly informed of assessment requirements, expectations, responsibilities, and the standards for which they are entered.

Course Design Targets

Departments must ensure that students attain at least 14 credits per student.

School-wide targets include:

- 10% improvement on 2024 Merit and Excellence credit totals
- 85% attainment rate for University Entrance Literacy at Level 2 or Level 3
- 10% improvement on 2024 junior literacy and numeracy achievement
- 10% improvement on 2024 regular attendance

These targets inform course design, monitoring, and review.

Internal Assessment at Ruawai College

Ruawai College works in partnership with NZQA to manage national assessment. All internal assessment must result in credible outcomes based on fair, valid, and consistent processes that are understood, followed, and monitored for improvement. Our systems protect both student mana and the integrity of national qualifications.

Consent to Assess

Ruawai College may only assess standards for which it holds consent to assess.

Before offering a standard, Heads of Learning must confirm that Ruawai College holds current consent through the NZQA website. If consent is held by another provider, an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding must be established before results can be reported. The Principal's Nominee will support this process.

Version Control and Standard Accuracy

Teachers must ensure that the correct version of a standard is being used. KAMAR provides access to current and previous versions; however, responsibility rests with the learning area to confirm accuracy.

If a version number changes, assessment tasks and schedules must be reviewed and amended accordingly before use.

Assessment Task Design and Critiquing

Heads of Learning are responsible for ensuring that all internal assessment tasks:

- align fully with the national standard
- assess all required aspects of the standard

- include schedules that clearly define expected responses
- provide clear boundaries for professional judgement

Tasks must be critiqued before use. Unless a task is an exact copy of previously moderated material, the writing and moderation process must involve collaborative discussion within the learning area.

Evidence of this process must be documented in KAMAR.

Authenticity of Student Work

Assessment must provide confidence that the submitted work is the student's own.

Students are entitled to learn from others and gather information from a range of sources. However, teachers must ensure that assessment evidence has been processed and produced by the student.

Learning areas must establish consistent strategies to support authenticity. These may include:

- structured checkpoints and draft monitoring
- supervised in-class components
- oral questioning to confirm understanding
- submission of plans and supporting materials
- plagiarism checking
- student authenticity declarations

If a teacher suspects a breach of authenticity, the matter must be referred immediately to the Head of Learning and the Principal's Nominee with supporting evidence.

Possible consequences of a breach are determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with NZQA regulations. Parents and caregivers will be informed where appropriate.

Special Assessment Conditions

Special Assessment Conditions are available for students who meet NZQA criteria and whose performance in assessment situations does not accurately reflect their capability.

Conditions may include reader or writer assistance, computer use, separate accommodation, extra time, rest breaks, or specialised formats.

Identification may occur through:

- teacher referral supported by evidence
- Learning Support and RTLB processes
- student self-referral

Applications are coordinated through Learning Support and the Principal's Nominee.

Further Assessment Opportunities and Resubmission

A resubmission allows a student to correct minor errors or omissions to reach Achieved, provided this can occur without further teaching and before class-wide feedback is given.

A further assessment opportunity may be offered where it is practicable. If offered, it must be available to all students entered for the standard and must reflect conditions consistent with the original opportunity. Students may achieve Achieved, Merit, or Excellence in a further opportunity.

The decision to offer further opportunities rests with the Head of Learning and must consider manageability, time, and cost.

Students must be informed of learning area policies regarding further opportunities in course overviews.

Missed or Late Assessments

Students are expected to attend assessment events and submit work by the due date.

Where a legitimate reason exists, such as illness or bereavement, documentation must be provided to the Dean. The subject teacher may then:

- grant an extension
- provide an alternative opportunity
- award a grade based on authentic evidence
- record Not Achieved

All decisions must maintain fairness and alignment with NZQA guidance.

Results Recording, Privacy, and Appeals

Student results are private and must be handled in accordance with privacy requirements. Public display of identifiable results is not permitted.

Learning areas must ensure:

- results are recorded promptly and accurately in KAMAR
- marked work is retained as an independent record
- students are given opportunity to sight marked work
- marking decisions are explained clearly

Before results are published, students must have had a reasonable opportunity to query marking decisions.

Students have the right to appeal a grade or a breach decision. The appeal process is:

1. Discussion with the classroom teacher
2. Formal appeal to the Head of Learning
3. Referral to the Principal's Nominee if unresolved
4. Independent review if required

Decisions are documented and communicated clearly.

Internal Moderation and Verification

Internal moderation ensures that assessment decisions at Ruawai College are valid, consistent, and aligned with the national standard.

Moderation occurs at two stages.

Pre-assessment moderation ensures tasks and schedules are fit for purpose before use.

Post-assessment verification ensures marking decisions are consistent with the standard before grades are released to students.

A sufficient sample of student work must be verified. If discrepancies are identified, they must be resolved, and marking may require adjustment.

Students receive grades only after verification has been completed.

All Heads of Learning must complete and sign an Internal Moderation Affirmation Sheet annually to confirm that systems are clear, robust, and verifiable.

External Moderation

External moderation is conducted by NZQA.

Student work selected for moderation must reflect a representative range of grades and be submitted promptly following assessment.

Moderation reports are reviewed by the Head of Learning and relevant senior leadership. Where action is required, a documented improvement plan must be implemented and monitored.

Records of moderation, responses, and learning area discussions must be retained for Managing National Assessment audit purposes.

Retention of Student Work

Student work must be retained for at least one year following assessment to meet moderation and audit requirements.

Work must be stored securely and remain accessible to learning area staff and the Principal's Nominee.

External Assessment

Derived Grades

Derived grades may be granted where a student's performance in external examinations is impaired or where the student is unable to attend.

Derived grades must be based on whole-standard, authenticated practice assessments, typically school examinations, recorded in KAMAR.

Derived grades are not available for Scholarship.

Withdrawal from External Standards

Students may be withdrawn from external standards following consultation. Withdrawals must comply with NZQA timelines published annually.

Reviews and Reconsiderations

Students may request:

- A Review, to confirm marks have been recorded and transferred correctly.
- A Reconsideration, which is a re-mark of the assessment.

These processes are student-initiated and follow NZQA procedures.

Data Integrity and Enrolment Changes

When students enrol mid-year or change courses, Heads of Learning and classroom teachers must review standard entries carefully.

KAMAR prompts must be actioned promptly to ensure accurate reporting. Failure to confirm entries may result in incorrect data submission.

Appendix A

Supporting national documents:

Ministry of Education, *NCEA Change Programme*

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/changes-in-education/ncea-changes/>

Ministry of Education, *Te Ara Mātauranga: Pathways and Transitions*

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/changes-in-education/te-ara-matauranga/>

Ministry of Education, *Ka Hikitia Ka Hāpaitia*

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/strategies-policies-and-programmes/ka-hikitia-ka-hapaitia/>

New Zealand Qualifications Authority, *Understanding NCEA*

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/understanding-ncea/>

New Zealand Qualifications Authority, *Assessment Rules*

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/assessment-rules/>

New Zealand Qualifications Authority, *Moderation*

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation/>

Education Review Office, *School Evaluation Indicators*

<https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/school-evaluation-indicators>

New Zealand Council for Educational Research, *Directions for Assessment in New Zealand*

<https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/directions-assessment-new-zealand>