**External assessment reconsideration policy**

Two years ago NZQA changed its reconsideration policy. Now, only students have the right to send in their work for reconsideration (not schools) and the price has gone up to $20.40 per standard pus the cost of post or courier ($15.00) to and from NZQA. This was done to minimise the rate of spurious and speculative applications, particularly in exam subjects.

However this change in policy has had the following disadvantageous side effects for Graphics students:

There is inconsistency and variations in the marking system and as such as HOD I am obliged to I examine each portfolio to check the grades and record what I consider incorrectly marked. I have approximate 65-75 L1 students (varies from year to year), checking these amounts to a significant workload.

The students don't know if their grade is unfairly marked or not. They are guided by their teacher during the year, but generally accept their grade. Most teachers advise their students that their expected external grade is based on the teacher’s opinion, but they shouldn’t be surprised if there is some variation. As a result most students don't challenge their results without teacher guidance.

Only the students are allowed to download the reconsideration paper work. This is done via the web where the student logs on to the NZQA web-site and registering their standards that they want reconsidered, pays digitally (the student has to provide credit card details the provision for cash and cheque is no longer available!) before the website will allow the print-out of the appropriate form. This form is then included with the portfolio and posted or couriered to NZQA. This effectively stops the reconsideration being done by teachers as well as discouraging students from doing so without teacher encouragement. It is also disadvantageous for Pacifica and Māori students whose cultural respect for the "system" means they are less likely to challenge their result on their own.

Reconsiderations are part of the assessment system and shouldn't be charged for on top of the original entry fee. Reconsiderations contribute to the quality control and efficacy of the assessment system; this shouldn't be an extra cost to the students. While the cost is refunded if the grade is changed the effect of the charge is to discourage students from reconsideration whether the grade would change or not.

The price of reconsideration has risen to $20.40 per standard. This is discouraging for students particularly those from lower socio-economic, Pacifica and Māori backgrounds.

This change in the system was made without feedback from schools. The decision was made to assist the bureaucracy of the system and not for the benefit of the students. The assessment system is there for the students.

The reconsideration system in its new guise undermines the professional role of the teacher. While the assessment system is not obliged to provide Professional Development it presumes that this occurs. NZQA does not provide PD (except for exemplars on the web for external assessment.). Analysis of students’ grades is an example of PD. Teachers are required by their schools to analyse their results with an inevitable accountability and a push for improvement. Teachers provide the teaching and learning opportunities for their students and if results are not what is expected then there are questions raised but with no culpability from NZQA.