

Managing National Assessment Report

Henderson High School

April 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Henderson High School:

- 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, 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 2021* (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
- *Assessment Policy, Henderson High School, 2021*
- *Teachers' Handbooks (General & Pastoral), Henderson High School, 2021*
- *Student Information Booklet, Henderson High School, 2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13
- a sample of departmental course planning documents with attainment analysis.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Fine Arts
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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.

SUMMARY

Henderson High School

14 April 2021

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 identify and respond to most issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years. However, there will be a return visit within one year to confirm the progress that has been made on completing the agreed action items.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2020.

What the school is doing well

Henderson High School has a commendable record of student success in NCEA qualifications at all levels. Of special note is the degree of equity in results across different ethnicities. This is particularly marked when entries and results in STEM subjects are considered. A focus on successful outcomes for all students is evident.

Self-review is an embedded and schoolwide activity that has resulted in innovations to further student engagement and achievement. Courses have been amended, and new standards and subjects introduced as a result. A successful move to parent-teacher-student conferences in recent years has resulted in a significant increase in engagement with parents.

Students' success is celebrated. Students at risk of not achieving their qualification goals are identified through regular analysis of student progress and appropriate support is offered. Senior students provide assistance to other students through an after-school academic support programme.

The school has made a commitment to increased digital assessment and is well placed to expand their involvement in digital exams.

Teachers interviewed appreciated the value that both internal and external moderation provides to improve assessor judgements. Verification practices are occurring in departments.

The experienced Principal's Nominee manages the reporting of results to NZQA and other data processes well.

Areas for improvement

The agreed actions from the 2016 review have not been fully implemented and, until completed, Senior Leaders will not be able to express confidence that teachers are complying with required practice. This could create a risk to the credibility of reported results.

The lack of a single, coherent document that details the school's expectations of teachers with regards to assessment practices for NCEA, moderation, reporting of results and other expected processes means that each department independently decides what is appropriate, which can lead to inconsistent or incorrect practice. This now needs to be addressed urgently. Once this document has been drafted, Senior Leaders will have the basis upon which to ensure that common schoolwide assessment practices are consistent.

A similar document that briefly details similar processes relevant to students is also needed. This will ensure that all students have ready access to the information they need concerning schoolwide assessment practices.

Although teachers interviewed valued moderation procedures, there was significant variation in how these processes occurred across departments. There was no common understanding of a strategic approach to the selection of student work, nor what constituted a sufficient number of items of student work to be selected. This must be clarified, and a schoolwide approach adopted.

Senior leaders need to establish a process to ensure that internal moderation is occurring in accordance with expectations and that actions taken as a result of external moderation reports are completed appropriately. This could occur within the existing structure of line manager meetings with Heads of Department and noted in meeting minutes.

Agreed actions

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

- develop a process for Senior Leaders to follow up with Heads of Department that appropriate actions are taken in response to external moderation outcomes that are not consistent and to monitor their completion
- ensure that a schoolwide approach by teachers to common assessment practices is established, communicated to staff and monitored
- provide staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work so that a consistent schoolwide approach can be adopted
- develop a process for Senior Leaders to monitor internal moderation processes to ensure that they are confident that all reported results are credible
- develop a handbook for teachers (or an appropriate digital document) of expected schoolwide procedures for all NCEA processes
- develop a handbook for students (or an appropriate digital document) that explains NCEA assessment rules that are relevant for students.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

11 June 2021

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 8 September 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

This report detailed three items to be actioned. These were to:

- provide clarification to teachers of what constitutes a sufficient sample of student work for verification with a particular focus on work at grade boundaries
- update the staff handbook to be comprehensive and accurate, and to reflect current practice
- develop a student handbook which lists school-wide expectations for students.

These agreed items have not been fully actioned and this needs to be addressed with urgency. Further details can be found in the Moderation and Communications sections of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes

For Senior Leaders to be confident that concerns raised in moderation reports are addressed in departments, a monitoring process must be introduced. This could form part of an already established regular meeting schedule of Senior Leaders as line managers with Heads of Department.

The Principal's Nominee reads and then distributes external moderation outcome reports to Heads of Department who are expected to take action to resolve any concerns that have been raised by moderators.

However, follow up with Heads of Department of any actions taken in response to moderation reports and monitoring by Senior Leaders to provide assurance of implementation is inconsistent. Some line managers discuss these issues with Heads of Department, but this is not a common and expected practice for all.

Internal review

Evidence for 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)

Self-review is an imbedded practice that is underpinned by the analysis of data, occurs at all levels of the school and is well lead by Senior Leaders. The collection of student voice is viewed as an important component of this process.

Heads of Department are expected to complete a full self-review of the NCEA attainment of students in their courses and to report trends and outcomes to Senior Leaders. This process informs both schoolwide and departmental goal setting for the future. This is a dynamic and well-established process in the school.

Change occurs as a result of this self-review process. The composition of courses is amended if needed, new courses introduced and new schoolwide initiatives launched. Examples in recent years include the introduction of parent-teacher-student conferencing, the extension of digital assessment opportunities and the launch of the YES programme in the school.

The continued good NCEA attainment of students is one source of evidence supporting the effectiveness of the school's self-review in effecting desired change.

Agreed action

NZQA and Senior Leaders agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review Senior Leaders undertake to:

- develop a process for Senior Leaders to follow up with Heads of Department that appropriate actions are taken in response to external moderation outcomes that are not consistent and to monitor their completion.

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 2020 5.5)

Henderson High School 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 a rigorous curriculum in the junior school to prepare students for NCEA (e.g. the Alpha programme)
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- extending assessment opportunities by offering trade-based courses, new subjects (such as Chinese currently in the junior school) and the YES programme
- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and supporting students at risk of not achieving their qualification goals by providing targeted interventions
- providing subject tutorials and an after-school programme supported by senior students
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements and providing these resources for internal assessment where appropriate.

Equity outcomes are notable Achievement at all levels of NCEA is equitably spread across ethnicities and the percentage of students taking STEM subjects in year 13 shows a similar high degree of equity.

These results are notable and commendable. The school is providing pathways for all students to achieve success in NCEA in general and in STEM subjects in particular. Barriers that could preclude certain students from progressing (such as pre-requisites) are sensibly negotiated, students are encouraged to succeed and some new subjects have been introduced (e.g. Earth and Space Science).

Senior Leaders were unable to point to specific initiatives that could explain these outcomes. Self-reflection should be encouraged to ensure that the root causes of this success are both understood and can be expanded.

Common approach to assessment practices must be introduced The school must ensure that a schoolwide approach by teachers to common assessment practices is established, communicated to staff and monitored. The role of staff and student handbooks to assist this process is described in the Communications section of this report.

Teachers interviewed displayed a varying understanding and application of assessment practices that should be common across the school. This includes the procedures for managing late assessments, handling appeals from students of grades awarded and under what circumstances a Not Achieved result should be awarded rather than an entry withdrawn.

Teachers were neither aware whether common practices exist nor where this information could be accessed. Students interviewed were also unclear although they were confident that they could ask teachers about appropriate procedures.

Agreed action

NZQA and Senior Leaders agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior Leaders undertake to:

- ensure that a schoolwide approach by teachers to common assessment practices is established, communicated to staff and monitored.

For consideration

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

- reviewing the positive equity outcomes for students so that these are both understood and can be expanded.

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 2020 6.4b)

Henderson High School has processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify grades on a selected sample of student work
- where appropriate, using verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the process using *internal moderation coversheets*
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions.

Henderson High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Consistent schoolwide practice for verification must be confirmed The school must provide staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work. Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

Teachers interviewed displayed an inconsistent understanding of the requirements for the selection of verification samples. Many selected eight samples by default and a number used random selection for internal moderation. Only some Heads of Department focussed on work at grade boundaries.

The lack of accessible instructions for teachers about schoolwide expectations regarding moderation contributes to this inconsistency.

Teachers valued internal and moderation practices as worthwhile tools to improve assessor judgements.

Monitoring of internal moderation processes must be strengthened. A system must be introduced for Senior Leaders to both monitor these internal moderation processes and to record the outcomes. This will provide confidence to Senior Leaders of the robustness of internal moderation practices in departments.

There is currently no schoolwide process for Senior Leaders to systematically monitor that internal moderation is occurring according to expectations. One Head of Department reported that the monitoring of internal moderation processes does occur during his regular meetings with the Senior Leader who is his line manager. This could act as a model to be adopted by all Senior Leaders to ensure effective monitoring occurs and is documented.

Agreed action

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

- provide staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work so that a consistent schoolwide approach can be adopted
- develop a process for Senior Leaders to monitor internal moderation processes to ensure that they are confident that all reported results are credible.

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)*

Henderson High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- using data to monitor and track student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals and informing changes to standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses, inform changes to programmes, contexts and standards
- annually reviewing course assessments to modify teaching and learning programmes as necessary
- annually report to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Henderson High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that datafiles are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
- checking reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any errors
- ensuring low levels of late external entries and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with which the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

No action required

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

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))

Henderson High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including the running of three-way conferencing which has improved contact with parents
- celebrating students' success, including the holding of parent gatherings.

Henderson High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways.

The staff handbook must be further developed The school must develop a handbook for teachers (or an appropriate digital document) of expected schoolwide procedures for all NCEA processes. This will provide clarity for teachers that is currently lacking.

The current staff handbook does not contain direct information about NCEA procedures nor expected schoolwide assessment procedures, moderation requirements and the recording of students' results. Some of this information is contained in the assessment policy but this information appears to be mainly aimed at students and is not readily available.

A student handbook must be developed The school must develop a handbook for students (or an appropriate digital document) that explains NCEA assessment rules that are relevant for students (such as how to appeal a result, how to apply for an extension, etc.). This will ensure that a source of consistent information is readily accessible to students, supporting their understanding of NCEA assessment practices and the requirements to complete qualifications

The current assessment policy provides some NCEA information for students, but it is incomplete, unnecessarily wordy and not easily accessible. It's effectiveness in informing students is questionable.

Agreed action

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

- develop a handbook for teachers (or an appropriate digital document) of expected schoolwide procedures for all NCEA processes
- develop a handbook for students (or an appropriate digital document) that explains NCEA assessment rules that are relevant for student.