

Managing National Assessment Report

Auckland Grammar School

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Auckland Grammar 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 2019* (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
- BOT Academic Policy
- *2019 Auckland Grammar School Assessment Statement and Procedures* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA instructions for Students* (Student Handbook)
- Copy of relevant *Professional Development Forum* presentations for teachers
- *Secondary Qualifications at Auckland Grammar* (Presentation for parents)
- *Academic Briefing for Students*
- *2019 Assessment Calendar*
- *2019 Auckland Grammar School Course Handbook*
- *2019 Auckland Grammar School Course Handbook (Mandarin version)*
- a sample of course handbooks for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Associate Headmaster Senior School
- Head of Faculty
 - English
- Heads of Department:
 - Health (also Teacher in Charge of Level 3 Physical Education)
 - Spanish
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Accounting
 - Chemistry
- Second in Charge of:
 - Mathematics
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Headmaster, Associate Headmaster Senior School 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

Auckland Grammar School

26 June 2019

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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

What the school is doing well

Auckland Grammar School is effectively meeting student needs through its strong academic focus and shared culture of high expectations. While most students leave the school to undertake tertiary study, the school has introduced courses to cater for a range of aspirations and post-school pathways.

The school has a strong culture of self-review and continually looks to see where improvements can be made. Assessment practice is consistent across all faculties and departments that participated in the review and this was confirmed in student responses to questions.

Internal moderation is managed effectively by the Heads of Faculties and completion is monitored by the Principal's Nominee, who has a commitment to ensuring all results reported are credible. The high agreement rate between teachers and NZQA moderators reflects the robustness of the school's processes. Any issues identified in external moderation are addressed by actions taken by Heads of Faculty or Department. The Principal's Nominee checks that the actions are completed and effective.

Data analysis and use is a strength of the school, informing good practice and self-review by teachers. School management data is effectively used to inform course design and to identify students at risk of not completing qualifications. Entries and the reporting of results is complete and accurate.

NCEA assessment practice is effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee and the Associate Headmaster Senior School. They are supported in their work by the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Faculties.

Areas for improvement

As discussed with the Senior Leadership Team, two assessment practices should be reviewed. These are:

- ensuring that the principles of natural justice are clearly incorporated into the policies and procedures for managing a suspected breach of authenticity, and that these are communicated to staff and students
- including the outcomes of external moderation in the annual department reports.

Some additional next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Kay Wilson
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14 August 2019

NZQA

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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 6 August 2015 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no action items from the 2015 review.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has consistently high agreement between assessors and NZQA's moderators. This reflects the robust internal moderation processes and effective follow up to external moderation feedback when an issue is identified. The teachers use external moderation for professional development to improve their assessor judgements.

Where issues are identified, the Principal's Nominee follows up with the faculty or department. A plan to resolve the issue is documented and the Principal's Nominee checks for evidence that the actions are completed and effectively address the concerns.

The timing of external moderation means that outcomes and the ensuing actions may not be included in a faculty's annual report. It is suggested that a summary be added when it becomes available. This will provide the school's managers with visibility of any issues, the steps that have been taken and the effectiveness of the response. It would also provide a view of areas of good performance.

Response to data issues Over the last two years, three separate subjects have been identified by NZQA as outliers when internal and external results were statistically compared. The school had identified in their own data analysis these statistical variations and provided satisfactory explanations.

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)

The school has a focus on self-review evident both school-wide and within faculties. It is not content to rest on its successes and aims to always strive to do more for its young men. It is evident that the vision to improve is shared by the curriculum leaders. Some recent changes include:

- implementation of a faculty structure, with ten Heads of Faculty overseeing the departments. The school considers that this has led to improved consistency of approach to assessment between departments, better communication, sharing of good practice and building school-wide capacity
- development of an improved results data analysis function on the school's learning management system to track individual and cohort progress and inform course design

- improved processes for managing special assessment conditions. This includes gathering robust evidence to support some applications and ensuring that students who have conditions approved have access to these for all school assessments and examinations
- reviewing its mentoring programme for Māori and Pasifika students to better meet the needs of the students and encourage academic success. This voluntary programme is run in conjunction with community meetings and is intended to provide holistic support. Students work closely with assigned teachers to meet academic goals. At the end of each academic year, participants review the effectiveness of the programme and provide feedback to consider for the following year.

No action required

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

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- including in the annual department reports the outcomes of external moderation and actions planned to address any issues.

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 2019 5.5)

Auckland Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- implementing strategies to address inequality in STEM subjects including:
 - setting a school wide goal to improve the attainment of Māori and Pacific students in Mathematics
 - actively recruiting Māori and Pacific Mathematics teachers
 - reviewing junior science courses to ensure they are culturally appropriate
 - providing a range of courses to ensure there are pathways into senior science courses for all students
- applying for special assessment conditions
- planning to offer a small group of students in one course the opportunity to complete an online external examination
- extending the range of options available for students to include pathways to a range of careers.

Auckland Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring consistent assessment conditions over multiple classes
- ensuring that resubmission processes comply with NZQA's expectations
- managing missed and late assessment
- ensuring that students understand what constitutes their own work and using a range of strategies to ensure a submission is authentic
- investigating appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring valid, pre-existing evidence is available for derived grades.

Ensure that principles of natural justice are met when managing possible breaches of the rules The school's published process for dealing with suspected breaches of the rules should be reviewed to ensure that the principles of natural justice are included. In particular, the process should make it clear that students will be given a fair chance to explain their actions before a judgment is made. The school has agreed to review the communications. However, there is no evidence that students have been treated unfairly to date.

For consideration

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

- reviewing the process for managing breaches of the school's assessment rules.

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 2019 6.4b)

Auckland Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify grades for a sample of student work
- documenting and monitoring the completion of all steps of a robust process.

Auckland Grammar 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
- inviting faculties to select standards to be included in the moderation plan
- encouraging teachers to submit work digitally.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency While some faculties currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements, some departments interviewed verify more samples of student work than this.

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. The school will provide staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work. This has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

No action required

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

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)*

Auckland Grammar School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an in-depth analysis of NCEA achievement
- tracking and analysing individual, cohort and department data to identify strategies for improvement.

Auckland Grammar School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA in a timely manner
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- checking the accuracy of external entries to ensure minimal late entries.

Improved analytics help teachers and students track progress towards achievement The school has developed significantly improved data analysis functions on their learning management system. This provides the Leadership Team, Heads of Faculties and Departments, Deans, Counsellors and individual teachers with easy access to detailed, real-time assessment and results data in a clear and useful format.

The improved functionality has given staff the ability to track results data for cohorts, subjects, courses, specific classes and individual students and identify areas for improvement. Students and their families can track progress using the reporting function on the school's student management system, which has been developed in 2019. Students follow up directly with teachers who have not entered results in a timely manner.

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))

Auckland Grammar School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive information about their courses in written and digital form, with the information reinforced regularly
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to teachers in meetings, by PowerPoint presentations and the staff handbook
- providing an induction process to support teachers new to the school
- reviewing communications annually to ensure the language is appropriate, the content is fit for purpose and the information is current.

Auckland Grammar School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- briefing the students on expectations in year level meetings and having a copy of the briefing available to all students on the school's intranet
- checking whether teachers and students are following processes
- providing information to parents including:
 - having an option selection evening and NCEA information evening for Māori and Pacific students
 - providing a copy of the course handbook in Mandarin
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- providing students with a variety of means so they can understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Effective communications promote shared understanding The Principal's Nominee and Associate Headmaster actively promote a shared understanding of expectations among students and teachers. Comprehensive handbooks, presentations available in a variety of formats, and clear communication enable the NCEA processes to be consistent school-wide. The Learning Management system, GrammarNet, provides a structured forum for School leaders, teachers and students to interact online.

Suggestions to improve course outlines The current course outlines at Auckland Grammar School follow a variety of formats and it is suggested that this is reviewed. As well, the rules and procedures on the outlines could be replaced by a reference to the student handbook to maintain version control. Having course outlines in a consistent format and with standardised information helps students to easily access information.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing the course outlines.