

# Managing National Assessment Report

**De La Salle  
College**

**June 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively De La Salle College:

- 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
- *De La Salle College Student Achievement Policy*
- *De La Salle College Junior Certificate handbook*
- *De La Salle College Assessment Policies and Procedures 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *De La Salle College Year 11, 12 and 13 Assessment Handbooks 2019* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Careers Advisor
- Heads of Faculty for
  - English
  - Health and Physical Education
  - Mathematics
  - Social Sciences and Business Studies
  - Visual Arts
- a teacher of:
  - Mathematics
- three students.

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, next steps and to agree on any action required.

# SUMMARY

## De La Salle College

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

### What the school is doing well

De La Salle College's values of faith, service, community and excellence are integral to the school's philosophy and special character. They are encapsulated in the motto "Fight the Good Fight". These values support high expectations within a faith-based community and a drive for credible assessment outcomes for students.

A growing range of differentiated assessment programmes is offered through optional standards within courses, multi-level assessment, extensions to the school's Consent to Assess and engagement with external providers to facilitate academic and vocational pathways, as well as the addition of subjects that validate cultural skills and knowledge.

Students' interests and career aspirations are established through the school's Academic Mentoring and Counselling programme run by homeroom teachers and supported by deans and the Careers Advisor. This network supports understanding of assessment practice and helps students to set effective assessment targets and goals and to monitor their progress towards achieving these.

Faculties moderate a purposefully-selected sample of student work at grade boundaries and provide an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to the Data Administrator for centralised checking. The school has effective external moderation processes and the Principal's Nominee develops documented and monitored action plans to address any issues identified.

The Data Administrator submits regular files to NZQA. Heads of Faculty complete a comprehensive data report that analyses comparative and longitudinal patterns of NCEA achievement, including against school goals. Achievement for each student is tracked to check those at risk of not achieving their qualifications goal. Students data summaries are actively monitored by their homeroom teacher and deans to ensure that appropriate interventions are provided.

Assessment and moderation practice is clearly communicated and understood through the provision of accessible written and digital communication and a structure of regular meetings to discuss NCEA. The school consults effectively with its mainly Pacific Peoples community. Teachers and students interviewed expressed confidence in the Principal's Nominee's provision of advice and guidance around assessment and moderation practice.

## **Areas for improvement**

Internal moderation monitoring processes undertaken by senior management need to be strengthened by reconciling completed documentation with samples of student work. This could be completed through an audit process. The process should be documented to provide senior management with confidence that credible results have been reported.

The school has a higher number of late entries for externals than schools of a similar type. This needs to be addressed through teacher data checks on external entries, by 1 September each year, to ensure accurate external entries and minimise late entries. Accurate entries will ensure students' external papers are personalised and will minimise the risk of any lost papers or results.

The school has made partial progress towards removing entries for internally assessed standards for which no results will be reported and students have not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. Continued attention to ensuring all subject areas meet this requirement will strengthen the accuracy of school's data reporting and enable students to track their progress towards attainment of a qualification.

## **Agreed action**

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

- strengthen the monitoring process for the completion of internal moderation by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide confidence to senior management that all results reported are credible
- use data checking processes to minimise late entries for external examinations
- remove any internal entries where no results will be reported, and students have not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, across all subjects.

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1 August 2019

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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 May 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has actioned three of the five items from its last Managing National Assessment review. Heads of Faculty now check that all steps of the internal moderation are complete before random selection occurs. The random selection process has been documented and is administered by the Principal's Nominee. Staff and student handbooks have been updated as suggested.

The school has made progress and has partially completed the remaining two action items by:

- improving teacher understanding of borderline grades and purposeful selection of samples for internal moderation through delivering professional development, and introducing a centralised system of data checking of *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* by the Data Manager to assure the Principal's Nominee that the process is complete
- ensuring that staff understand the dates for withdrawal of entries where no result will be reported, and, where students have not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, requesting that staff make appropriate withdrawals.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Response to external moderation is effectively monitored by the Principal's Nominee. Staff review feedback from their external moderation. Where there is a low agreement rate between assessor and NZQA moderator, teachers meet with the Principal's Nominee and develop a documented action plan. Progress on these plans is discussed at regular middle management/senior management meetings. The Principal's Nominee checks that each planned strategy has been completed and that changes to understanding of the standard or refinements to assessment materials are embedded as practice. A next step is to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.

### 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)*

Senior Managers and teachers continue to strengthen self-review of assessment practice and data analysis at De La Salle College. Senior Managers drive the school's high expectations reflecting the school's special character. Middle Managers report annually against schoolwide goals around student attainment. Student progress is tracked at regular senior and middle management meetings. Shared findings of teacher inquiry from Professional Learning Groups effectively support new teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

Review takes place in three broad categories:

- developing assessment practice to support student achievement and meet student needs
- using effective data analysis to change assessment practice and meet student needs
- fostering the use of digital tools for communication in modern learning contexts.

Self-review has resulted in a number of initiatives to develop appropriate courses to meet student needs. These include:

- reducing credits in courses to address workload and better enable students to meet their assessment goals
- engaging all teachers in Professional Learning Groups focusing on improving assessment practice
- entering students for digital external examinations to better align with the way they are learning in a Bring Your Own Devices school
- mentoring that supports student engagement
- co-constructing understanding of achievement criteria in standards to support students to gain merit and excellence and improve endorsement of subjects and certificates
- ensuring advanced planning of assessment statements and course outlines during term 4 to meet student needs 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.

## 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)*

### **De La Salle College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- developing Individual Assessment Plans for students at risk of not achieving a qualification or with identified health concerns, sensory, physical or learning needs as appropriate
- using links with the local community and a range of outside providers to offer vocational and trade-based assessment opportunities to meet students' career aspirations including transitioning to work
- providing multi-level courses and assessment of optional standards
- supporting students to prepare for assessment in Years 11-13 through the De La Salle Years 7-10 Certificate by providing assessments in a format that is similar to NCEA
- collecting evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways including portfolio, digital and verbal
- monitoring and supporting Level 1 literacy and numeracy achievement to ensure all students meet these requirements
- collecting school-based evidence to support applications for students identified as needing special assessment conditions and providing appropriate support.

### **De la Salle College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed and late assessments and appeals
- providing consistent schoolwide management of resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- providing information to students about derived grades and gathering standard-specific evidence of student achievement to support applications
- clarifying authenticity expectations and strategies with staff and students
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Implementing strategies to address equity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The school has considered its 2018 STEM statistics through the lens of equity of access for its largely Māori and Pacific student population. The school is engaged in strategies to improve foundations for access to these senior school subjects by:

- partnering with Auckland University and Auckland Pasifika Vice Chancellor's mentoring programme in Mathematics to support Years 12 and 13 students
- redesigning courses in Mathematics and Science to reduce barriers to access to university courses



- offering Trades Academies to Level 3 to develop meaningful vocational pathways.

**Meeting student needs through addition of new courses** The school identified a need to broaden student access to vocational and culturally relevant courses to meet student need. A greater number of external providers are being engaged to broaden the choice of vocational pathways the school would not otherwise have the capacity to offer. In addition, they have introduced several new courses, including extending the Health Science Academy from years 10-13, and forging links with Middlemore Hospital to establish career pathways for students. The school has also added a range of Trades Academies.

To offer more culturally appropriate courses the school has introduced Pacific Language options. These include Samoan and Lea Faka-Tonga. Cultural learning is also validated through assessment of groups at Polyfest, Spoken Word and Young Enterprise. These courses are effectively providing learning and assessment in culturally relevant contexts.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

## 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)*

### **De La Salle College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- providing teachers with clear expectations on internal moderation through a step-by-step, documented internal moderation process guide
- critiquing new and amended assessment activities before use
- supporting teachers to network with subject specialists from within or outside the school to benchmark and verify grades a purposefully selected sample of student work
- conducting a Faculty Managers' check on internal moderation and submitting the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to the Data Manager to indicate that internal moderation is complete.

### **De La Salle College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- encouraging staff to select standards for which they would like external moderation feedback through NZQA's online external moderation application
- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to meet NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work selected for external moderation can be provided by adequately storing them
- using external moderation feedback to modify tasks and clarify understanding of standards.

**Supporting assessment judgements** The school noted that some faculties and individual teachers needed support in critiquing materials and making assessment judgements, particularly at Level 3, and with adjusting assessment contexts. This has resulted in:

- intentional appointments of new staff to develop capacity to deliver standards leading to better delivery of standards
- enrolment of teachers in NZQA online Best Practice workshops to improve their understanding of the standards they assess and make valid assessment judgements
- encouragement for teachers to join local clusters and subject associations.

**Continue to embed strategic selection considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Learning areas currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries for grade verification. However, most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than is required to ensure the reporting of credible results.

The school has discussed with staff the strategic selection of samples of student work for internal moderation. 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. Staff should be aware that this practice has potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

While senior leaders and faculty managers understand that there is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified, this practice is yet to be fully embedded.

**Strengthened internal moderation monitoring required** The Principal's Nominee has agreed to strengthen internal moderation by introducing a documented and annual monitoring process so that senior management can have confidence that all results reported are credible.

Currently the Data Manager checks internal moderation processes are complete through teacher submission of *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets*. She advises the Principal's Nominee so that random selection for external moderation can occur. The Principal's Nominee also checks assessment processes as part of staff annual appraisal. To strengthen this process the Principal's Nominee has agreed to make an annual visit to the Head of Faculty, to document discussions with teachers and triangulate the paperwork with the physical evidence of moderation having taken place. He will also double check the information recorded on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to ensure it is complete. The introduction of this system will provide senior management with confidence that internal moderation processes are occurring consistently for all standards each year.

#### **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:

- strengthen the monitoring process for the completion of internal moderation by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide confidence to senior management that all results reported 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)*

### **De La Salle College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- identifying and tracking learners at-risk of not achieving a NCEA qualification and providing appropriate support
- using data to inform course design
- providing students with access to their current progress data through the student/parent portal of the student management system
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees a comparative and longitudinal analysis of NCEA achievement, including against school goals.

### **De la Salle College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- regular submission of data files to NZQA
- reconciling Memoranda of Understanding held with external providers with actual results reported and ensuring the correct provider code is used.

**Identifying target groups to improve qualifications outcomes** Data is used to identify groups of students who may require specific interventions to reach their SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely). Specific focus is currently on students who:

- are predicted to gain University Entrance
- may require individualised extension programmes
- have low attendance rates
- who are not involved in the wider school activities where this might impact on their qualification outcomes.

Interventions can include extra tutorials, development of a study plan and attendance at a homework group, mentoring, or changes to the standards being assessed. Deans and the Careers teacher meet regularly with homeroom teachers to discuss student progress.

**Ensure entries into external examinations are timely and accurate** Last year the school had a higher number of late entries for external examinations than schools of a similar type and compared with the school's own entries from previous years. The Principal's Nominee has agreed there is a need to remind staff of the processes around making timely entries for external assessments to provide greater security for students through ensuring their papers are personalised.

### **Continue to embed data checking for appropriate withdrawal of entries**

The school's last Managing National Assessment review noted that there were a number of internal entries made for which no results were reported. The school must ensure that in all subject areas, internal entries to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn if no assessment has taken place. While progress has been made on reducing these entries, there are still several subject areas that need to withdraw

results before 1 December to ensure that the school's data provides an accurate reflection of student attainment.

**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:

- use data checking processes to minimise late entries for external examinations
- remove any internal entries where no results will be reported, and for which students have not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed, across all subjects.

## **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))*

### **De La Salle College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring consistent information is provided to students using a common course template
- providing plain English student and staff handbooks, and options booklets both digitally and on paper
- regular and timely reporting to whānau on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system through the parent portal
- celebrating student academic success and endorsements through awards, badging and assemblies.

### **De La Salle College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification through the school's Academic Mentoring and Counselling programme run by homeroom teachers, deans and the Careers Advisor
- running extended reports afternoons for parents and whānau.

**Greater engagement with the Pacific community** The community's understanding of NCEA has been effectively developed through Pacific Peoples' fono facilitated by NZQA, school-based information evenings and discussions about NCEA in local churches. Where possible the school seeks delivery of information through Pacific or Māori male role models. These diverse strategies are meeting student needs.

**Communication has improved community understanding of NCEA** The Principal's Nominee commented communication with parents, including questions over assessment policy and student progress, has significantly increased over the past three years. For example, this has been measured by the Principal's Nominee as a five-fold increase in email communication from parents.

### **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.