

Managing National Assessment Report

Trident High School

April 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Trident 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 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
- Trident High School General Staff Guidelines for Academic Procedures 2019 (Staff Handbook)
- Trident High School Student Academic Guidelines and Forms 2019 (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum
- Heads of Faculty for:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Technology
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Architecture and Product Design
 - Spanish
- three students.

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

Trident High School

11 April 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

The school has effectively addressed the significant issue identified during the last Managing National Assessment review by developing an online tool, *Subject Manager*, that allows middle and senior managers to monitor both internal and external moderation processes through to completion.

Analysis of achievement data and the collection of student voice assists with the review and evaluation of the effectiveness of school assessment practices and procedures. Led by the Principal's Nominee, Heads of Faculty and Senior Leaders review processes to allow for ongoing improvements to better meet the needs of students.

Assessment processes are well managed by the Principal's Nominee and Senior Leaders. New and modified courses, together with an extended range of assessment opportunities provided by outside providers, allow students to meet academic and vocational goals. Identified students receive approved special assessment conditions and are appropriately supported.

The school has effective processes for managing internal moderation, ensuring that results reported to NZQA are credible. Easy access to moderation documents and monitoring through the online tool ensures consistent moderation practice. Strategically requesting standards for external moderation enables staff to receive feedback that will be useful for their assessment programmes, with much of the assessment material now being submitted digitally.

Assessment information is regularly reported to meet NZQA requirements. Students and whānau are encouraged to check the accuracy of the information reported, and progress towards meeting qualification requirements. The school analyses achievement data to monitor students' progress so that it can provide appropriate support and mentoring, if necessary.

The school uses a variety of methods, including an App for mobile devices, to communicate assessment and qualifications information to its community. This has increased the development of a shared understanding of school processes and NCEA requirements. Staff are supported to develop a common understanding of best practice.

Areas for improvement

Staff and student assessment guidelines require some minor updating to ensure that they remain current and provide the necessary guidance to support consistent school-wide assessment.

Agreed action

The school agreed on an action to improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is to:

- update staff and student guidelines as specified in the report.

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11 June 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 19 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The 2016 review identified a significant issue that was checked by NZQA after 12 months to review the progress made. The school was required to:

- ensure internal moderation is adequately monitored by senior management (CAAS Guidelines 2.6ii).

The school has addressed the issue by developing and introducing *Subject Manager*, an online tool that works in tandem with the school's student management system. It allows Heads of Department and Senior Leaders to effectively monitor the internal moderation processes for each standard assessed.

The school has also addressed the agreed actions from the 2016 report:

- staff ensure all tasks are critiqued by another teacher before they are used for an assessment opportunity
- student work for verification is purposefully selected and the outcomes of the process documented
- the assessment information in course handouts is consistent with that in the assessment guidelines.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has strengthened its processes to follow-up on issues identified in external moderation reports. A form within the online *Subject Manager* allows staff to record actions they intend to take in response to issues identified by external moderation. Monitoring by Senior Leaders allows for the provision of appropriate support and ensures the timely completion of actions. Recent changes will allow teachers to provide management with an evaluation of the effectiveness of any actions they take to improve their understanding of the standards moderated.

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)

While initially introduced to monitor internal moderation processes, the school has integrated many of its other assessment and moderation processes into *Subject Manager*. The Principal's Nominee and Senior Leaders review each process prior to integration. The annual review of *Senior Manager* has also included an evaluation of these processes to identify if improvements are required to make them more effective, and how the tool can support this. As a result, the forms associated with each process have been digitised and staff can now access these online. School review has found that the online tool, because it guides staff through processes, has delivered a greater consistency of practice across faculties and departments.

Review of their own processes by departments ensures they match the school-wide requirements within *Subject Manager*. Staff reported the tool simplified some processes and made monitoring easier.

Analysis of achievement data and the collection of student voice has allowed staff to reflect on their courses and the standards assessed within them. Examples of changes resulting from this included:

- the introduction of new courses such as Level 2 and 3 Financial Literacy by the Mathematics Faculty to provide new pathway options
- renaming Design and Visual Communication courses as Architecture and Product Design, and changing assessment contexts to extend student understanding of what design can be used for
- limiting the number of credits offered within courses to help manage workloads and allow students to focus on the quality of their achievement.

The school has, as part of a Kahui Ako initiative, reviewed its use of digital devices for learning and assessment. A Bring Your Own Device policy for Year 9 has been implemented, and professional development will be provided for staff with the intent to foster greater use of digital devices at all levels of the school in future years. The school has also considered how its current structures support digital external assessment and will recruit a new Examination Centre Manager to allow for the efficient management of an anticipated increase in digital entries.

The school has, as a result of its review of communications with the members of its community, introduced a Trident High School App for mobile devices. This allows links between teachers, whānau and students. Its approximately 3000 subscribers can also use the *Links* feature to access information on the school's assessment practices.

These changes provide evidence of the school's capacity and ability to effectively evaluate its assessment practices and procedures. The changing qualification and assessment needs of individual students are responded to, and teacher understanding and development supported.

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)

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

- modifying existing courses to offer new standards and engage their interest
- extending the range of assessment opportunities available through Te Aho o Te kura Pounamu, E-learning using a Virtual Learning Network, Star and Gateway programme and Trades and Services Academies
- developing a *Landskills* programme to support those whose goals are not specifically tertiary level education
- supporting New Zealand Scholarship candidates through group seminars and subject tutorials
- providing unit standard literacy and numeracy assessment opportunities to assist those needing support to meet NCEA requirements
- using school-based evidence to apply for special assessment conditions to reduce barriers to fair assessment
- ensuring staff are well informed of those with an entitlement to special assessment conditions and providing appropriate support.

Trident High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late assessment, extensions, appeals and further assessment opportunities
- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- collecting credible evidence to support derived grade applications
- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act, 1993 when handling students' assessment information.

Clarifying resubmission processes recommended The school should consider clarifying with staff the expectation that it is the teacher who decides when, how and to whom a resubmission is offered. A resubmission may be offered if a teacher, at their discretion, judges a student has made a minor error or omission that they can identify and correct on their own. While students confirmed consistent and correct use of the resubmission process by their teachers following assessment, one staff member interviewed was uncertain of when a resubmission would be justified. NZQA's *NCEA Mythbuster #4 - Resubmission* publication and material from the 2018 Principal's Nominee seminar are useful references that could assist with this.

Māori and Pasifika engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects Senior Leaders are aware that there is still a gap in achievement in STEM subjects between Māori and other students. The number of Māori students taking STEM subjects has, however, risen steadily over the last four years as a result of recommendations on subject selection. Most Year 11 Māori students are now choosing at least one Science option. New Level 3 Technology and Science courses have been developed to engage students, while allowing them to meet University Entrance requirements.

For consideration

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

- clarifying resubmission processes with teachers.

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)

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

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and provide students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
- teachers using standard clarifications and exemplars to inform their grade judgements during marking
- purposefully selecting samples of student work around grade boundaries for grade verification
- using subject specialists to verify samples of student grades
- requiring staff to document the steps of their moderation processes, including noting verification discussion and decisions, on an online internal moderation document within *Subject Manager*
- Senior Leaders, Heads of Faculty, Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee using online internal moderation documents to monitor the completion of internal moderation processes and ensure all reported results are credible.

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

- meeting NZQA requirements to randomly select samples of student work for external moderation
- staff strategically requesting inclusion of specific standards on the school's external moderation plan to confirm their understanding of the standards' requirements
- providing staff with appropriate access to the NZQA External Moderation Application, enabling them to view reports and assist with the submission process
- encouraging digital submission of material for moderation
- requiring external moderation, regardless of the standard-setting body, to follow the same response process.

Ensure Principal's Nominee sights all moderation reports The Principal's Nominee does not receive external moderation reports from all standard setting bodies. Some Industry Training Organisations send their reports directly to the assessing staff. Without knowing that a report exists, the Principal's Nominee cannot ensure that the external moderation response process is appropriately completed. The school should consider contacting the organisations that send reports to teachers and ask that these are sent to the Principal's Nominee instead.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on conducting 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 currently assure the quality of the grades they award by including work at grade boundaries in the verification sample. However most of those interviewed have more samples of student work verified than just these.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- requesting standard setting bodies, where necessary, to send external moderation reports to the Principal's Nominee rather than the assessing teacher.

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)

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

- Departments analysing NCEA data to report annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees, mapping trends in student achievement, variance between Māori and New Zealand European students, and identifying areas for development
- setting targets for student achievement based upon comparative analysis of achievement data
- encouraging students to use their NZQA Learner Login to monitor progress towards meeting qualification requirements
- Deans analysing achievement data to ensure staff, students and whānau are kept informed of students' academic progress, and appropriate mentoring and support are provided.

Trident High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- regularly reminding students and whānau to check results and personal details held in the school's student management system and report required changes
- checking for, and correcting where necessary, data submission errors shown on the Key Indicators and data file submission reports from NZQA
- removing, where appropriate, internal entries of students who have left or changed assessment programmes, to ensure all entries have a reported result
- only reporting results for standards for which the school has consent to assess, or against the provider codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

Reduce late entries for external examinations The school should review its processes for checking the accuracy of the external entries it makes for students to reduce late entries. Reducing the number of late entries for external examinations can assist with the smooth running of the examination centre, enable NZQA to set up appropriate online folders for digitally submitted portfolios and ensure that students have personalised papers. In 2018, five times the number of entries for external examinations were made, after the 1 September deadline for personalisation, than in 2017. The use of the External Entries Variance Check on the school's NZQA Key Indicators page can help staff identify changes in patterns of entries for externally assessed standards.

For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing its processes to reduce the number of late entries for external examinations.

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))

Trident High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- providing students with consistent information on the standards they will be assessed against within courses
- ensuring students can easily access appropriate plain English information on qualification requirements and school assessment processes
- communicating information on assessment policies and procedures to the school community through a range of physical and digital formats, including face-to-face meetings
- annually reviewing communication processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Trident High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- the Principal's Nominee explaining NCEA requirements and school assessment processes to students during Year level assemblies
- providing teachers with information about assessment best practice, including short video presentations, and giving them opportunities to discuss changes in school or NZQA requirements at staff, department and Heads of Faculty meetings
- inducting and supporting new staff so they understand the school's assessment and moderation processes and know how to use *School Manager*.

Minor updates required to assessment handbooks Some minor updates are required to handbooks to ensure school documentation is current and consistent.

The staff handbook should be updated to provide guidance on:

- how teachers can ensure sufficient grade verification through the strategic selection of student work
- collecting valid, authentic and verifiable grades from quality assured assessments in case students apply for derived grades.

The student handbook should be updated by:

- providing information on requesting an extension where a student cannot, for a valid reason, submit assessment material on time
- changing the term conferencing to resubmission and ensuring the information it contains reflects that in the staff handbook
- including information on students' rights under the Copyright Act 1994 with respect to their ownership of any submitted assessment material, and to determine if examples of their work can be shared with other students.

While it is good practice to reference material on the NZQA website, it is important to review these annually to ensure any links still work. The links in both handbooks require updating.

Agreed action

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

- update staff and student handbooks as detailed in the report.