Managing National Assessment Report

Albany Senior High School

September 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Albany Senior High School

6 September 2023

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2021.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

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

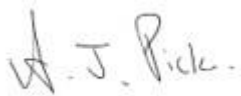| Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Review the current process for managing Memoranda of Understanding	Within a year
Develop a process to ensure derived grades are submitted to NZQA in a datafile prior to the examination period	Immediate
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
Clarify a schoolwide approach for the strategic selection of samples of student work for both internal and external moderation processes, and to document these requirements in the staff handbook.	By 2024

For consideration

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

- analysing the factors contributing to lower NCEA achievement rates for Māori and Pacific students compared to their peers and exploring additional means

of support for these students.

- extending the Responsive Assessment policy to include a schoolwide expectation regarding the circumstances where a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity to be assessed but has not submitted work.

- reviewing internal moderation processes for standards achieved by students through their Impact Projects.

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1 November 2023

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External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Item from 16 March 2017 Managing National Assessment Report
The school has addressed the action item from this report. Terminology used in the staff handbook has been updated to reflect current NZQA usage which reduces the risk of confusion or error.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes   Albany Senior High School has effective processes in place to ensure that concerns raised in external moderation reports are noted and responded to appropriately. This provides confidence to senior leaders that any issues are addressed to ensure that results submitted to NZQA will be credible.

If concerns are raised in a moderation report, Specialist Subject Leaders (SSLs) are required to complete a response form which details the nature of the concerns and the proposed actions required to address them. This response forms the basis of a discussion with the SSL's line manager who is a member of the senior leadership team. This discussion ensures that the proposed actions are appropriate and teachers who may require additional support are identified and duly supported. The line manager also has the responsibility of following up with the SSL at a later date to ensure that actions have indeed been effectively completed. Extending these conversations to consider patterns of poor consistency over multiple years will further enhance this process.

The Principal Nominee oversees these processes, but the role played by line managers holds significant importance as it elevates concerns about moderation into broader professional discussions between the relevant line manager and SSL. This is good practice.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

A feature of the school is the embedded culture of inquiry and review that occurs at all levels and is supported by the analysis of data and the gathering of student voice.

All teachers are expected to be engaged in a personal inquiry which has a focus on improved student outcomes. This inquiry process by teachers forms the foundational element of review which occurs at departmental and senior leader levels and reinforces the school's commitment to meeting the individual needs of students.

The school's stated philosophy is to "always be a new school", to believe that every student is capable of achieving in their own way and to focus on citizenship and not on qualifications alone. The timetable structure (discussed later) offers the flexibility to give effect to this philosophy and enables students to pursue projects that interest them, whilst maintaining a comprehensive NCEA programme with a broad array of options. Mentoring in small tutor groups provides individual support for students and enhances student agency of their learning and progress towards achieving a

qualification. The culture of inquiry and review that permeates the staff is integral to the success of these processes.

Formal reviews are also prepared. Departments are expected to review each course on its completion to identify areas of strength and weakness, and to consider possible changes to improve outcomes for students. Student voice is an important part of this process. Annual reports on NCEA progress in departments are prepared for senior leaders and the Board of Trustees.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Emphasis on meeting students' individual needs   Albany Senior High School shows a commitment to meeting students' individual needs and has a weekly timetable that enables this to be realised. There are three focus areas:

- **Specialist Subjects:** These comprise a wide range of courses in which students achieve most of their NCEA credits. Students select five courses in two 100 minute periods each per week. There are no prerequisites and no streaming.
- **Impact Projects:** Wednesday is allocated for students to work on projects that are of interest to them. The focus is on the development of key competencies.
- **Tutorials:** Small tutor group meetings are held in two 100 minute periods a week providing mentoring opportunities as well as general academic advice and tracking. The time allocation (equivalent to a specialist subject) indicates the relevant importance of these personalised tutorials.

This timetable emphasises student choice and agency supported by mentoring and provides the structure in which these can be realised effectively. Course offerings are further enhanced by Gateway and Trades Academy options.

Assessing students when they are ready   The school has developed a Responsive Assessment policy which emphasises the need to assess students when they are ready rather than following an approach of inflexible deadlines. The policy details ways that this can be managed and emphasises the need for negotiation and reasonableness. This is good practice which balances the need for flexibility with the practical demands of completing an assessment in a reasonable time and aims to be fair to all.

Consider extending the Responsive Assessment policy   The school should consider extending the Responsive Assessment policy to include a schoolwide expectation of teachers regarding the circumstance where a student has had an adequate assessment opportunity to be assessed but has not submitted any work.

The school has a number of internal entries submitted without a result. The absence of a result does not accurately reflect the true nature of that assessment. This could be a student wilfully choosing to not submit work even though they had been adequately prepared and were expected to be assessed, or a student who wished to be withdrawn from this standard and never intended to be assessed, or could be an error. This may, of course, be an unintended consequence of the current policy to only assess students when they are ready.

It would be best practice to clarify with teachers (and to publish in an updated policy) the exact circumstances in which a Not Achieved grade is awarded or an entry withdrawn when a student does not submit work to be assessed. This will eliminate any confusion about the nature of entries without results and ensure a consistent approach.

School is well-prepared for future changes   Senior leaders and teachers are thoughtfully preparing for the challenges of upcoming changes to NCEA and to assessment in general which inspires confidence in the school's ability to respond to these challenges. This includes:

- being well prepared for the move to increasing digital assessment for NCEA
- planning in detail for the introduction of new Level 1 standards in 2024
- considering the impact of developing artificial intelligence on assessment.

Process for managing Memoranda of Understanding must be reviewed   The school must review their current process for managing Memoranda of Understanding to ensure that these are current and fit for purpose, and that results are reported using the correct provider codes.

Memoranda of Understanding are not currently held in a way that is easily accessible to the Principal's Nominee who has responsibility for overseeing this process. Consequently, she cannot be sure whether these are in place for all outside providers, are current and fit for purpose. This raises the risk of results being incorrectly reported to NZQA.

Support for Māori and Pacific student achievement   The school should consider why the NCEA achievement rates for Māori and Pacific students are below those of other students and how these students can be further supported.

The NCEA achievement rates for Māori and Pacific students were showing an upward trend in recent years although they were still lower than for other students. However, these achievement rates were significantly lower in 2022 when viewed against the achievement of other students particularly at Level 2. Māori students had a 56% achievement rate at Level 2, Pacific students a 30% achievement rate while Pākehā students had a 80% achievement rate. There appears to be no clear understanding of the cause for this decline.

Submit derived grades to NZQA   The school must develop a process to ensure potential derived grades generated from practice examinations or similar assessment events are submitted to NZQA in a datafile prior to the examination period. This will ensure that these grades are readily available should they need to be applied for certain students due to a disruption to their end of year exams.

In recent years, the school has had a low reporting rate for these grades, particularly in 2022 when no grades were reported.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEO's assessing Achievement Standards and Candidates 2023)

Consistency in moderation practices needed   The school must clarify a schoolwide approach to the strategic selection of samples of student work for both internal and external moderation processes and document these requirements in the staff handbook.

Specialist Subject Leaders interviewed during this review explained varying approaches to the selection of samples of student work for moderation. In the majority of cases, samples were being purposefully selected at grade boundaries for internal moderation which is consistent with NZQA's requirements. However, the number of samples selected varied, and teachers interviewed seemed unaware of the nature of strategic selection or whether a schoolwide approach had been mandated.

In the selection of work for external moderation, some SSLs were using random selection which is no longer the approach required by NZQA, and there was no consistent approach to the number of samples needed nor the nature of the current selection process required by NZQA.

All teachers interviewed valued the importance of moderation to ensure the credibility of results and to improve assessor judgements. Although some variability in these processes is valid due to the differing size and complexity of departments, these procedures must follow NZQA's requirements. A clarification of schoolwide expectations is needed.

Consider the approach to Impact Projects   The school should consider reviewing the approach to monitoring internal moderation processes for standards achieved by students through their Impact Projects.

Currently, few standards are achieved by students during their participation in the Impact Projects, although there are plans to extend these opportunities. Most standards achieved by students occur during their Specialist Subject classes and assessment and moderation is therefore supervised by the Specialist Subject Leaders (SSLs).

The approach taken to the assessment and moderation of standards achieved through the Impact Project programme appears to be ad hoc, although teachers confirmed that staff with standard-specific experience were being used for assessment. How, or if, these assessments are being included in internal moderation practice is unclear. Only results that have been part of a quality assurance process should be submitted to NZQA.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Albany Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations

- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required

- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement

- assessing students when they are ready

- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs

- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support

- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams

- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Albany Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment

- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment

- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions

- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules

- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies

- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

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

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes.

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

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

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

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Albany Senior High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families about assessment

Albany Senior High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake

- supporting students to monitor their achievement

- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year

- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement

- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes

- celebrating students' success.

Albany Senior High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing students about suitable learning pathways

- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Albany Senior 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.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023.*

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance

- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *Responsive Assessment Processes and Moderation FAQs, Albany Senior High School, 2022*
- *Staff NZQA Handbook, Albany Senior High School, 2023* (Staff Handbook)
- *Student NZQA Handbook, Albany Senior High School, 2023* (Student Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Specialist Subject Leaders for:
    - Commerce
    - English
    - Mathematics
    - Performing Arts
    - Technology
    - Visual Arts
- two 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.