

Managing National Assessment Report

School Assessment Systems

2007

ACG International College and ACG Parnell College

S1606 ACG International College

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Report on Managing National Assessment School Assessment Systems 2007

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The purpose of Managing National Assessment (MNA) is to assist schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment. It is a partnership between schools and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and has two components:

- a visit to check and report on the school's assessment systems at least once every three years
- the annual external moderation of assessment materials and assessor decisions for a sample of internally assessed standards across all curriculum areas.

This report summarises the findings of the assessment systems check carried out by an NZQA School Relationship Manager (SRM) on 18 July 2007. The SRM met with the Principal's Nominee (the Nominee) to review developments since the last visit on 16 June 2004 and appraise the school's assessment policies and procedures against the *Assessment and Certification Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools*, the *Quality Assurance Standard for Accreditation of Secondary Schools* and national practice.

This meeting was attended by the teacher of English as a Second Language (ESOL) which is assessed against National Qualifications Framework (NQF) standards, to check that the school's policies and procedures are consistently and effectively applied.

At the end of the visit here was also a meeting with the Principal, the Nominee and the ESOL teacher to report on the discussions held, to identify strengths and suggest some further good practice.

This and previous MNA reports will be used in combination with the Education Review Office report in reconfirming the school's accreditation.

School Policies and Procedures

2004 Managing National Assessment Report

Evidence was sought that action items in the previous MNA report have been addressed.

The 2004 report recommended some changes to the school's assessment procedures documentation and practice. Most items have been actioned and the remainder will be completed in the 2008 documentation.

Review of Policy and Procedures

Evidence was sought that school-wide assessment policies and procedures have been reviewed and are in line with national practice.

The school's assessment policy is reviewed every three years as part of the policy-review cycle.

National Qualifications Framework: The school currently assesses only some students of ESOL against two Level 2 English standards to meet the university entrance literacy

requirement. NQF assessment procedures information is published for these students and their families in the school's *National Qualifications Framework Assessment Information Students' Handbook*. This handbook is specific to this English assessment programme. It is user-friendly and presented in frequently-asked questions format.

NQF assessment procedures information for teachers is published in a separate *Course Document for Teachers*, which is also specific to this course.

Some changes to both handbooks were suggested, as set out below. Some involve expanding a section, while others advocate only minor editing or a change of emphasis.

Course outlines and assessment statements: The student and staff handbooks list the registered number and version, the full title and credit value of the English standards to be assessed. A student assessment statement developed for any future course in another subject could be based on the English one, just as a generic teacher handbook could be based on the English course's teacher procedures. Any student of a subject or level not taught by the school and therefore dual-enrolled with The Correspondence School would be given the latter school's generic assessment guide and assessment statement specific to the course.

Missed and late assessments: Students are informed that a medical certificate is necessary to justify missing an assessment or deadline through illness. The teacher may offer a late or further opportunity or an extension. If the absence or lateness is for some other valid reason, the student must approach the Nominee. Where no late or further opportunity is possible, teachers may award a grade based on other authentic standard-specific evidence of the student's achievement. This last provision should be added.

Authenticity and breaches of the rules: This section would be clearer if it were reordered. The rationale for authenticity and some of the means by which teachers ensure it could come first, with the ways it can be breached following that, together with the consequence of a breach: that no grade will be awarded.

Assessment opportunities: The student handbook includes a year planner which makes it clear that evidence for the two standards may be accumulated as late as mid-November. Students are told that they may resubmit redrafted writing work as often as they need to and that they may redraft responses to reading up to three times, if necessary, before they will need to read a new text. These are appropriate ways of recognising students' best work.

Appeal process: The process for appealing a grade is set out clearly. The Assessment section of the teacher handbook mentions that an outside expert may be consulted as part of the internal moderation process, so the school may again consider adding that such a subject expert may also be called in to verify a grade under appeal, as suggested in the 2004 report.

Special assessment conditions: In order to summarise these provisions accurately, the school should redraft this section, as discussed with the Nominee, setting out the conditions more clearly.

Privacy Act: The teacher handbook should instruct staff that all student data and work must be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993. No data or work may be released to anyone who does not need it without the permission of the student. This is clear in the school's privacy policy and should be repeated here.

Quality Assurance Processes

Evidence was sought that systems are in place to ensure that:

- *internal moderation is taking place*
- *departments are linking externally to maintain a current understanding of the national standard*
- *concerns raised by external moderation are dealt with.*

Internal moderation: The teacher critiques the assessments before use and verifies results with an expert colleague. In order to document these processes, so that the Nominee can monitor them readily and in case another teacher should have to take over the class at short notice, the school intends to use an internal moderation cover sheet. This sheet should be appended to the teacher handbook and the rationale and process set out in it:

- All materials, whether sourced commercially, downloaded from websites or developed by teachers, must be critiqued prior to use and modified, if necessary, to ensure consistency with the registered standard and appropriateness of language, content and context for students at the school.
- Consistency of assessment needs to be managed across classes within a year and from year to year.
- Samples of all assessor judgements should be verified for accuracy and consistency and benchmark samples of student work kept, both to inform teachers the next time the assessment is used and in case these materials are needed for external moderation.
- All assessment materials must be reviewed prior to further use, taking into consideration any advice from an external moderator.
- Underpinning these guidelines is the need for teachers to engage with their wider professional community to maintain their knowledge of national standards.

External moderation: There is no mention of external moderation in the teacher handbook. The school should set this process out in the revised handbook. As part of this, it might include to a sample tracking sheet page from a moderation plan off the Provider Login web pages, as this shows the process from notification of the plan through to any necessary post-moderation follow-up. This tracking sheet also provides a good way for the Nominee to inform teachers of the standards selected, the materials to submit and the submission date.

Quality Management Systems Documentation

Evidence was sought that the school's Quality Management Systems (QMS) documentation meets the requirements of the Quality Assurance Standard for Accreditation of Secondary Schools, May 2004.

The school's Quality Management System documentation has not yet been updated and confirmed as meeting the requirements of the *Quality Assurance Standard for Accreditation of Secondary Schools* (May 2004). The school intends to complete this by the end of 2007. The completed documentation should be kept up to date for future MNA system checks and for any applications to extend the school's accreditation.

Administration

Evidence was sought of suitable systems and procedures for the management of assessment related data.

The school has a robust process for making entries and reporting and verifying results. Teachers enter results into the student management software and check their accuracy before they are reported to NZQA.

The Nominee checks the *Key Indicator Checklist (KIC)* after the first file is sent to NZQA each year and again after each monthly updated file and resolves any issues the KIC reveals.

Action Items

The number and nature of action items below do not indicate a lessening of standards within the school, but rather advocate greater refinement of policy and practice.

In order to comply with the *Assessment and Certification Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools* and the *Quality Assurance Standard for Accreditation of Secondary Schools*, the school must:

- add to the teacher assessment handbook:
 - that a grade may be awarded based on other evidence of the student's achievement where justification of a valid reason for a missed or late assessment has been documented
 - a redrafted section on special assessment conditions
 - that all student data and work must be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993
 - the rationale and process for internal and external moderation
- complete its updated QMS documentation.

In line with good practice as seen nationally, the school should consider:

- reordering the section on authenticity and breaches of assessment rules
- adding that an outside subject expert may also be called in to verify a grade under appeal.

Commendations

ACG International College is commended for its sound practice for NQF assessment. Teachers use assessment methods that help students get the best results they can. Quality assurance practices are robust and teachers work collaboratively to maintain their understanding of the national standard.