

Managing National Assessment Report

Mahurangi College

June 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mahurangi 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 2018* (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
- *Mahurangi College Board of Trustees Manual 2018*
- *NCEA Assessment Procedures for Staff - Years 11-13 Mahurangi College 2018*
- *NCEA Student and Parent Guidelines - Year 11-13 Mahurangi College 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Department for Drama, English, Media Studies, Physical Education, Technology and Visual Arts.

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

Mahurangi College

13 June 2018

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.

This review was rescheduled from 2017 to 2018 at the school's request because of changes within the senior leadership team.

What the school is doing well

Mahurangi College strategically focusses on students gaining a meaningful NCEA qualification that reflects their interests, abilities and aspirations. All NCEA students follow a career pathway supported by robust mentoring and tracking. This strategy has contributed to improved student achievement by using the flexibility of the NCEA model.

Students are encouraged to present their best evidence through differentiated assessment programmes and use of optional standards within these programmes. Contexts are changed to engage student interest and students are assessed when ready, where appropriate. Evidence for assessment is collected in a variety of ways.

Effective internal moderation processes are evident in the consistent practice identified during the review. External moderation outcomes are documented by the Principal's Nominee, and action plans are developed and monitored when issues are identified. This has resulted in changes in practice.

A comprehensive process of data analysis informs course design to meet student needs. Achievement progress for each NCEA student is monitored and tracked to identify students at risk of not achieving a qualification, and to ensure students are meeting their academic goals. The new Data Manager is engaged in checking to ensure data reporting to NZQA is both timely and accurate.

Teachers interviewed are actively involved in reviewing assessment practice and discussing concerns that may arise. Documentation is clear and appropriate which ensures consistent credible assessment practice.

Areas for improvement

The Principal's Nominee needs to update documentation on some assessment practices to further support understanding including timeframes for appeals, consequences of unpaid fees and reference to compassionate consideration.

Senior leaders will need to provide teachers with further guidance on what constitutes strategic selection of student work for verification. This has the potential

to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

The Principal's Nominee has agreed to develop a system to reconcile memoranda of understanding held with external providers with all reported results, to ensure all results are reported using the correct provider code.

Agreed action

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

- strengthen the internal moderation monitoring process by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all reported results are quality assured
- update documentation as indicated in this report
- reconcile memoranda of understanding held with all results reported against external provider codes.

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10 August 2018

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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 Item from 26 March 2014 Managing National Assessment Report The single action item from the previous Managing National Assessment review has been partially addressed. The school has established an internal moderation monitoring system for checking the credibility of results before they are reported to NZQA, but as outlined in this report, the process needs to be strengthened.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school's external moderation agreement rate between teachers and NZQA external moderators is improving.

Heads of Department are required to respond to moderation feedback by developing an action plan to resolve any issues raised by moderators. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of these plans. Support provided to teachers includes finding new verifiers, seeking professional development or checking tasks against the current clarification documents.

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 management works with teachers on a continuous improvement of NCEA assessment practice to raise student achievement. Collaborative internal review and reflective practice informs initiatives to engage students and improve their assessment experience to meet students' needs.

Self-Review through inquiry has included:

- the development of evidence-based schoolwide student achievement targets including the goal of 85 per cent of students achieving Levels 1-3 and a target of 65 per cent of students achieving University Entrance
- projects to support Māori and Pasifika students' writing skills and understanding of unfamiliar text to improve literacy outcomes
- mentoring Level 2 Pasifika students to identify and remove barriers to success in assessment.

Continuous improvements of assessment practice have included:

- using Google Drive to store assessment materials and responses to internal and external moderation
- conducting a review of data systems including:
 - appointment of a new school's Data Manager for file submission, and checking all results before they are reported to NZQA

- introducing standard-by-standard reviews on the school management system, to ensure that each teacher considers their own data at the end of each unit of work to feed forward into an effective Course Design Day in November
- conducting a review of communications resulting in online handbooks being written in plain English for students, parents and staff
- introducing standardised assessment statements and ensuring that these are linked with the school's assessment calendar to avoid assessment bottlenecks.

These initiatives indicate that the school has the capacity to continue self-review to ensure school-wide ownership of effective NCEA assessment and moderation practices. The school now needs to review the outcome of these improvements on student achievement.

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 2018 5.5)

Mahurangi College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- developing academic and vocational pathways to meet students' career goals and aspirations
- providing differentiated and flexible assessment opportunities across classes in the same subjects and within courses, including the use of optional standards to individualise assessment programmes
- offering relevant contexts to engage interest
- using extensive feedback, feedforward and milestone checks to support achievement
- assessing students when ready, where appropriate
- using and investigating strategies to gather evidence of student achievement by collecting common evidence across subject areas
- identifying students entitled to Special Assessment Conditions using a range of school-based evidence, and ensuring they can use these conditions for all assessment opportunities
- Academic Deans conferencing students to support them to meet their literacy and numeracy requirements
- celebrating students' academic success through a Blues Award assembly

Mahurangi College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through the missed and late assessment process, provision of valid extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- using a range of strategies during assessment and marking to assist students to submit authentic work
- ensuring students' derived grade applications are based on pre-existing standard-specific evidence
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Trades Pathways courses as a next step To further meet the aspirations, interests and abilities of students following a vocational pathway, the school is exploring the possibility of establishing a Trades Academy. This initiative would access more resources to design coherent courses to engage these students in skills and competency assessment, and a provide more viable pathway to further tertiary study or employment.

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 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 2018 6.4b)

Mahurangi College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists from within and outside of the school, to verify a purposefully-selected sample of student work through benchmarking and moderation meetings
- requiring staff to document completion of steps in the internal moderation process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- submitting copies of their completed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to the Principal's Nominee via Team Drive for monitoring completion of the process before results are reported to NZQA.

Mahurangi College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Development of a Digital Assessment Policy The school should consider developing a digital assessment policy to reflect the increasing use of digital tools to collect evidence for assessment. The school has developed storage and file-naming protocols but these need to be formalised to ensure consistency of practice. This will assist departments to organise evidence so that it is readily available for external moderation.

Strengthen internal moderation monitoring The next step in developing the monitoring process for internal moderation is to reconcile documentation with actual practice.

While teachers currently submit all internal moderation coversheets to the Principal's Nominee before results are reported, this documentation needs to be reconciled with samples of student work annually for each subject. This will provide senior management with confidence that all results reported have been quality assured

Verification requirements for sufficiency Heads of Department interviewed for the review indicated they verify more samples of student work for internal moderation than is required. Strategic selection will allow them to select sufficient samples based on the context of the assessment.

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 needs to continue to provide staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work.

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 internal moderation monitoring process by reconciling documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all reported results are quality assured.

For consideration

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

- documenting its Digital Assessment Policy
- ensuring teachers are selecting a sufficient sample, for verification of teacher judgements, when they are internally moderating.

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)

Mahurangi College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - identifying and tracking priority learners, and those at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification, to decide changes to assessment programmes and provide appropriate support to help them attain their goal
 - providing students with regular credit summaries each term so that they can track their own progress.
 - setting schoolwide targets based on annual reports submitted to the Principal and the Board of Trustees; and using comparative and longitudinal analysis with similar schools
 - investigating internal/external outlier data to explain variations
 - informing teacher as inquiry, to improve the student achievement of Māori and Pasifika students.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
 - submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
 - ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
 - ensuring that external entries are made in a timely manner
 - encouraging teachers and students to identify and report errors in reported results and entries by signing off returned results, checking on the school management system, and in their Learner Login.

Reconcile Memoranda of Understanding with results reported Each Memorandum of Understanding should be managed centrally to assure senior management that they are current, and the correct provider code is used to report results.

Currently these documents are managed by each department. Central storage will allow the Data Manager to reconcile current Memoranda of Understanding with the actual results reported by the external providers.

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:

- reconcile Memoranda of Understanding held with all results reported against external provider codes.

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))

Mahurangi College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive standardised course outlines for all course they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure through a variety of digital and physical means
- supporting teachers new to the school to understand assessment and moderation.

Mahurangi College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- checking whether teachers, students and parents are following processes
- 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.
- presenting NCEA handbooks in plain English to make them accessible for students
- annually reviewing staff and student handbooks.

Changes to documentation required The review identified that a number of additional changes to communications need to be made for the purposes of consistency and clarity. These are:

- clarification of the appeals timeframe
- clarification of the consequences of non-payment of NZQA fees
- removal of reference to compassionate consideration
- terminology needs to refer to the derived grade process consistently.

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 documentation as indicated in this report.