

Managing National Assessment Report

One Tree Hill College

May 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively One Tree Hill 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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
- *One Tree Hill Teacher Guide: Procedures for Assessment for NCEA Qualifications* (Teacher Guide)
- *NCEA Information for Students and Caregivers 2017*
- relevant Board of Trustee policies
- sample forms and communications about assessment for qualifications
- examples of course outlines and assessment statements for Years 11, 12 and 13 in the curriculum areas sampled.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Senior Leadership team comprising Principal, Principal's Nominee, and three Deputy Principal's, three students and Curriculum Leaders of Digital Literacy, Drama, English, Music, Social Science and Technology.

There was a report-back session with the Senior Leadership team 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

One Tree Hill College

18 May 2017

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 look for, identify and respond to issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

What the school is doing well

One Tree Hill College's focus is on developing standards of excellence with students and teachers "striving for higher things". School policy, process and review is driven by this focus and underpinned by the principles of accountability and empowerment. Evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is the significantly improved student achievement at all qualifications levels over the last four years.

Self-review is effective and central to the school's development. It includes innovation and planning for the future, as well as checking that existing policies and practices are understood and assure assessment quality. An increased use of data helps the school to know the question to ask and evaluate outcomes. Identifying which pieces of data are the most informative is occurring at all levels of school operation, from student tracking to reporting on achievement to the Board of Trustees.

The consistency of approach and understanding is a strength at One Tree Hill College. The school recognises the importance of using structures that support this consistency such as the distributed leadership model used by senior management and the whanau group model for students. Teachers and students show a shared understanding of nearly all aspects of assessment and qualifications.

Roles and responsibilities within the school are clear, support student achievement and assure assessment quality. Moderation, data management, assessment practice and communication practices are effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee, assisted by a Deputy Principal and strongly supported by the rest of senior leadership.

Areas for improvement

The one aspect of practice that needs clarification is the verification sample for internal moderation. Some teachers are choosing more samples than needed to provide confidence that their judgements are at the standard. Confirming what constitutes a sufficient and purposeful sample will assist them when selecting the number of pieces of student work and grade examples.

Agreed action

The school agreed that one action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is:

- clarify with teachers what constitutes a purposeful and sufficient sample of student work for internal moderation.

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20 July 2107

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)

Action Items from 14 May 2104 Managing National Assessment Report Three agreed actions were noted in the report. In response, the school has established an annual random audit for timely monitoring of internal moderation.

They have also developed a separate Teacher Guide (*One Tree Hill College Teacher Guide: Procedures for Assessment for NCEA Qualifications*) and the moderation section has been reviewed and expanded.

A common template for course assessment outlines has been implemented across the school.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a history of credible external moderation results. The response to feedback is comprehensive. Curriculum leaders provide a written response to the Principal's Nominee. She provides this, along with external moderation reports, to all senior leaders who follow-up with their assigned curriculum leader. The follow-up includes a check on internal moderation processes by the senior leader, thereby completing the moderation quality assurance cycle.

Internal review

Evidence found that the school is effectively 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 key school goal is raising student achievement to realise the vision of being the very best the school can. Changing the culture for students and teachers is a cornerstone of this vision and therefore an area of focus for self-review. Review includes both development and evaluation of the effectiveness of current practices. Central to all review is the increased use of data to help to know the questions to ask or evaluate the extent and effectiveness of change.

Distributed model of assessment leadership promotes enhanced achievement

A model of distributed senior leadership has been implemented over the past 18 months to better support the increased student achievement goal. Under this model, all members of the senior leadership team oversee teaching, learning and assessment in the curriculum areas and whanau groups they are responsible for. The team is developing different ways of working and communicating to increase both individual and joint understanding of what is happening in the school, and what the issues and next steps for development are.

Within the team, the role of the Principal's Nominee is to review and develop quality assurance processes that achieve greater consistency for teachers and students, including seeking NZQA advice about evolving best practice. Responsibilities are shared with another Deputy Principal, to ensure sustainability of the role.

Review of assessment practice ongoing and integrated Key to the school's culture change is developing more talk about teaching, assessment and achievement. The distributed leadership model supports this. Communication structures provide timely and ongoing information to inform school process and policy. For example, assessment statements from all departments are now printed and bound into a booklet so senior leaders can refer to these when discussing programme design, timing of assessments, achievement, assessment methods, exemplary practice, and priority students, and to track achievement.

Consistent evaluation and review ensures assessment practices meet the needs of all students and adhere to NZQA requirements. For example, a process review in term 1 of all departments provided the senior leadership team with greater visibility of assessment practice across all departments in the school. Notes were made of any issues and follow up included discussion with the curriculum leader at a weekly meeting with the senior leadership team. Other outcomes of this review are noted further on in this report.

The next reviews the school has planned include:

- preparation for digital assessment of students in 2019 when the first BYOD cohort will be in Year 11
- what and how they communicate with parents and caregivers, starting with a survey to identify what is working and what needs to improve
- strengthening the flow of achievement data between stakeholders, to check that it is relevant, timely, is in response to needs and ultimately raises student achievement.

Change of Examination Centre management Review of external examination attendance rates and achievement for 2014 has resulted in changes to the management of both practice and end of year external examinations.

Student and staff voice had indicated that holding examinations in individual classrooms was noisy and a barrier to achievement so they were moved to a centralised space in 2015. Students and staff report a more purposeful and conducive atmosphere while Deputy Principals can easily monitor attendance, talk with students prior to examination sessions and offer support to the examination process in general. Refinements in 2016 included displaying full student lists outside of all examination spaces and senior leaders completing a roll call before an exam started to identify absentees to contact. Reminder text and email messages were sent to all caregivers the day prior to examinations.

Student and parent feedback on the changes made is positive while achievement and attendance has improved.

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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

One Tree Hill College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- ensuring appropriate support for those students requiring acceleration or approved for special assessment conditions
- withdrawing students entered for assessment where it is apparent that their participation is not appropriate
- providing students with a starter programme for NCEA Level 1 in Year 10, using “non-traditional” standards integrated into a course
- providing best practice advice and guidance on both task and evidence-based assessment so that teachers collect evidence by suitable means
- individualise programmes of assessment after entering all students in all standards in term 1, by adjusting entries for some students after consultation with them and whanau teachers.

One Tree Hill College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed assessment, requests for extensions and appeals
- ensuring consistent approach and outcomes when investigating possible breaches of the rules including instances of plagiarism
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is standard specific and valid
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Clarification of resubmission and further assessment opportunities undertaken

The school has clarified its re-submission and further assessment opportunities assessment policy to ensure that student and staff needs are met. The review was in response to staff request, arising from ongoing confusion and debate where departments did not have consistent practice or, in some cases, policy. Curriculum leaders have addressed the clarification in their department assessment policy and it has been communicated to students via course outlines. Students and staff interviewed have a sound understanding of both processes.

Whanau structure used to lift student achievement The finding that most students identify their whanau teacher as the most significant person for meeting learning as well as pastoral needs has led the school to put this structure at the heart of improving student achievement. The whanau group structure has each student assigned to the same group and teacher throughout their time at the school. Processes for goal setting, tracking and reporting of achievement are now carried out with the whanau teacher and a restructure of the timetable means that eighty percent of student learning now occurs with whanau teachers assigned to that group.

Tracking processes are comprehensive and support student achievement. Priority learners and students at risk of not achieving a qualification (this year University Entrance) are tracked by the whanau's senior leader. Students describe the whanau group as helping to build trust, and the quality of feedback they receive on assessment and improvement as a strength of the school. The effectiveness of this

model approach is evidenced in the steady improvement in student achievement in the last four years.

Broadening of evidence gathering practices Broadening evidence gathering practices promotes achievement by allowing students to present work in ways that best meet their needs and the standard being assessed. School leaders recognise the importance of building teacher and student understanding so they adjust to change with no compromise to the quality of assessment practice.

A number of initiatives are underway to expand teacher confidence in their evidence gathering practices and were described during this review visit. One curriculum area is moving to use one context to collect evidence across more than one standard. The same area uses standard-setting booklets to help develop teacher understanding of assessment and evidence gathering by linking the curriculum, standard and conditions of assessment. This is good assessment practice.

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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)

One Tree Hill College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a sample of student work, including specialists from other schools
- keeping borderline examples to inform future grade judgements
- senior leaders using the achievement data each term to randomly audit internal moderation
- the Principal's Nominee monitoring compliance with internal moderation when the standards for external moderation are collected and checked.

One Tree Hill College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements after the external moderation plan is released
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- following feedback, requiring written action plans that are monitored by senior leaders.

Clarification of purposeful selection for internal moderation Clarifying what makes up a purposeful and sufficient sample for internal moderation will boost teacher confidence in the quality of their moderation practices. A range of understanding about the size and composition of the verification sample was described, with most using some combination of checking all borderline examples along with a random selection. This exceeds the school's or NZQA's expectation and may result in teachers doing more work than necessary in assuring assessment quality. In confirming expectations, the school will discuss contextualising sampling to take account of teacher experience and needs.

Checks and review inform monitoring of internal moderation As part of their improvement focus, the school examines assessment practices through several lenses and uses their findings to inform multiple purposes. Quality assurance of internal assessment is one of these. For example, in 2016 the Principal's Nominee selected thirty-three internally assessed standards across all departments. Senior leaders completed an audit of these standards with their assigned department in Terms 2-3 to check for moderation cover sheet, date moderation completed, student samples, physical or digital storage arrangements. Notes were made of examples of best practice and any issues and discussed for follow up. These processes provide a view that confirms quality assurance but also feeds in to review of practices and process.

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:

- clarify with teachers what constitutes a purposeful and sufficient sample of student work for internal moderation.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

One Tree Hill College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - clearly communicating achievement targets and priorities to teachers, students, and families so that everyone is accountable and empowered
 - timely achievement tracking and review and allowing for effective intervention by having clear deadlines
 - senior leaders checking each term that the student achievement rate in each standard assessed to identify whether the subject and students are on target
 - identifying priority students at risk of not achieving and actively monitoring progress towards the targets set
 - monitoring school progress towards achievement targets; for example, the goal that 100 percent of Year 11 students achieve the Level 1 numeracy requirement in 2016
 - developing an on-line tracking tool for students to record progress towards their qualifications goal, which is shared with the whanau teacher and student's family
 - having teachers base their decisions on student entry into assessment of standards (internal and external) on their previous performance and readiness to assess, at checkpoints during the year
 - benchmarking achievement data against national rather than decile 3 rates.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - ensuring that results students achieve in the Year 10 starter programme are stored and appropriately reported the following year
 - ensuring most entries sent to NZQA have a result reported against them.

Achievement is supported by effective and timely entries Ensuring students are on track to achievement is a cornerstone of the school. The change in leadership structure means the whole senior team is now responsible for student achievement, which requires them to have deep understanding of the policy and process for managing student entries and results. To help build this understanding senior leadership reviewed the data entry and withdrawal process. Built-in checks during the year have been added to increase discussion of entries with students and colleagues before making final decisions. Teacher thinking is signalled to parents to ensure everyone is well informed about decisions.

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 communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)

One Tree Hill College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive standardised outlines and assessment statements for all courses they undertake in written and digital formats
- tracking student achievement using individualised tracking documents, hard copy print outs from the student management system, the student and parent portal in the student management system and a digital application developed by the school for students to track their own achievement progress
- providing an annual assessment calendar for planning and to manage workloads
- reviewing memoranda of understanding with outside providers to check they are fit for purpose.

One Tree Hill College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- holding an NCEA information meeting for all students at the start of each year which, after a common introduction, splits into year levels to address the different focus of each
- the senior leadership team meeting with a curriculum leader every Friday to discuss achievement and their assessment practices in their subject departments
- assigning a senior leader to all departments and whanau groups who operates an open-door policy to manage individual questions and issues
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- helping students understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification
- reviewing the teacher guide to centralise information in a clear coherent format from a range of documents.

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.