

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Hamilton Boys' High School**

**March 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Hamilton Boys' 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
- Hamilton Boys' High School Board of Trustees Policy 3.2 and Appendices *Assessment on the National Qualifications Framework*
- Hamilton Boys' High School Planner and Diary 2019 (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Faculty for:
  - English
  - Language, Arts and Music
  - Mathematics
- Teachers with Curriculum Responsibility for:
  - English
  - History
  - Mathematics
  - Psychology
  - Te Reo Māori
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Headmaster, 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

## Hamilton Boys' High School

1 March 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

### What the school is doing well

Hamilton Boys' High School maintains high expectations for students to achieve. The school is proud of its NCEA, University Entrance and scholarship achievement, which is significantly above national and decile attainment rates for all students. The school has programmes and courses in place to meet the assessment needs of its students and to support achievement. School quality assurance processes are well managed by the experienced Principal's Nominee, supported by the Headmaster and members of the senior management team. This ensures credible results for national qualifications.

The school is moving to digital evidence gathering and assessment. Online tools assist the monitoring of student progress, staff procedures and ensure authentic work is submitted.

An improved understanding and application of moderation processes was evident during the review. Interviews with teachers indicate moderation discussion and feedback is viewed more as professional learning rather than a compliance requirement. Teachers are developing an awareness that external moderation can assist in reviewing the effectiveness of their internal moderation processes. They understand and practise strategic selection through the purposeful selection of a sufficient number of pieces of student work and make use of subject specialists from outside the school to ensure an objective view.

The management of assessment data is efficient, ensuring results reported to NZQA are complete, timely and accurate. Teachers annually reflect on results and analyse data to track student achievement progress and inform changes to course design.

Information on assessment processes is communicated to the school community in a range of formats and appropriate language, to facilitate the development of a common understanding.

### Areas for improvement

Robust internal moderation processes will be reflected in consistent external moderation outcomes. To ensure this link is understood and practised in the school, teachers' responses to external moderation, particularly when issues are raised, would be strengthened by reflecting on the internal moderation process previously undertaken. This should include reviewing the verifier used and the strategic selection of material. The internal moderation monitoring process should be

strengthened to ensure a robust process across all subject areas by reviewing and reconciling department moderation documentation with actual practice.

There is an inconsistent understanding and application of the requirements for an assessment resubmission. Further discussion and clarification of the process along with the correct use of terminology will assist staff to apply it consistently and meet NZQA requirements. Additional information and refinements are required to some documentation to clarify assessment procedures and align with NZQA.

The school needs to clarify with all staff that a Not Achieved should only be awarded when a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work.

### **Agreed action**

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

- ensure staff responses to external moderation include reviewing the internal moderation process
- clarify the process of resubmission and reinforce the requirements with staff
- withdraw students from a standard where they have not had an adequate assessment opportunity
- strengthen monitoring of the internal moderation process by reconciling completed internal moderation documentation with actual practice
- update documentation as detailed in the report.

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30 April 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 6 July 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** This report identified three agreed action items. Documentation has been updated, and the verification process was clarified with staff.

The final agreed item was the need for follow up and support for subject areas with ongoing low external moderation agreement rates. Further work is required in this area. More specifically, there is a need to review and determine the extent to which poor internal moderation processes may be contributing factors to poor external moderation outcomes and address these.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Feedback from external moderation not only informs understanding of standards, but confirms the effectiveness of internal moderation. This review recommends teachers reflect upon their internal moderation processes as part of their response to external moderation, particularly where consistency issues are noted. This should include reviewing the verifier used, and the extent to which the strategic selection of samples is understood and implemented by all assessors involved in the assessing of the standard.

The review identified one subject area whose previous response to external moderation feedback over several years had focused solely on responding to the moderators' specific standard-related comments. This response had not changed the understanding of the standard requirements by assessors, resulting in ongoing consistency issues and poor agreement rates. This department now recognises that despite having many subject experts within their department, they had become insular in their view and regarded internal moderation as a compliance exercise rather than focusing on professional dialogue and learning. The department is now seeking input from verifiers outside the school and engages in strategic selection of material through the purposeful selection of a sufficient number of pieces of student work relevant to the individual assessor's needs. This change of focus represents good practice.

The school agrees the *External Moderation Response* form and discussions currently overseen by the Principal's Nominee will include reflection on the internal moderation processes undertaken. This will ensure internal moderation is more robust and that assessors maintain understanding of the standard.

**Response to data issues** A derived grade audit was undertaken in September 2018. The report noted the school has effective systems for managing derived grade applications for candidates. Some next steps were suggested to extend good practice, including updating information in the student diary, and further developing processes to confirm grades come from authentic and standard-specific evidence.

## **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)*

The school reviews its learning programmes and assessment procedures in order to maintain its high levels of academic achievement and investigate ways to best meet the needs of its students.

The school makes effective use of NCEA statistical data to inform progress and identify areas for improvement. Heads of Faculty and Teachers with Curriculum Responsibility are provided with data which is reviewed and analysed. Each faculty meets and reports to the Headmaster annually. This requires teachers to reflect on their assessment practice and course design relating these to school and faculty targets and goals. Teachers interviewed discussed teaching and learning strategies recently reviewed and areas for future focus and consideration including:

- managing the move towards more online teaching and learning including strategies for online evidence gathering
- moving to more contextualised and connected study rather than focusing on discrete standards in isolation
- reviewing entry criteria and course structure in order to meet expected outcomes and maximise success for students
- reviewing the order and timing of assessments
- making use of student voice in reviewing and planning programmes.

NCEA assessment practice is effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee. He liaises with senior management primarily through the Deputy Principal - Curriculum, but also with Deputy Principal - Professional Development as necessary. Regular meetings with Heads of Faculty and, as necessary Teachers with Curriculum Responsibility, support the consistency of assessment practice and quality assurance processes throughout the school.

## **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure staff responses to external moderation include reviewing the internal moderation process.

## 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)*

### **Hamilton Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- offering a wide range of courses to meet the aspirations, abilities and needs of students
- reviewing entry criteria for students into courses on an annual basis
- applying for, and providing, special assessment conditions.

### **Hamilton Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using digital tools and suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, extensions, and further assessment opportunities
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity
- applying procedures for students to appeal assessment decisions
- managing NZQA external examinations efficiently
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* in the issuing of student results and using student work as exemplars.

**Clarify processes for resubmission** 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. It should not be student driven, offered to all, or a planned aspect of the assessment. The review identified variation in the use and understanding around this process. The school has agreed to clarify resubmission with staff. Material from the 2018 Principal's Nominee seminar and NZQA's resubmission *Mythbuster* publication are useful references that could assist with this.

It should be noted that for many forms of assessment, especially if the evidence is gathered by portfolio, or over an extended period of time, a resubmission may not be appropriate. The use of checkpoints, milestones and feedback/feedforward will usually remove the need for resubmission. In such cases, it is important to ensure the correct terminology is used. This is discussed further in the communication section of this report.

**Review processes for adequate assessment opportunity and reporting not achieved** The review identified an example in one department where a result of Not Achieved was reported where a student did not have an adequate assessment opportunity. This does not meet NZQA guidelines and does not align with the school's procedure for withdrawal from internal standards. A Not Achieved grade for an internal standard should only be reported if a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work. If a student has not been given an adequate assessment opportunity, they should be withdrawn from the standard. The school needs to ensure all teachers follow the school's policy.



**Consider more individualised assessment strategies** NCEA enables flexibility in developing and differentiating assessment programmes to reflect individual student needs, interests, abilities and future pathway. For the school, differentiation of assessment in subjects with multiple classes occurs through streaming. Classes offer a different number and/or type of standard to meet the expected outcomes of the class as a whole. In smaller subject areas students can negotiate an individualised assessment programme from a suite of standards. The school requires students to confirm their assessment programme at the beginning of a year. Students are then expected to enter and complete all internal standards and sit all external standards offered within a course.

One subject area interviewed discussed wishing to allow students to amend their course during the year such as reducing the number of assessments undertaken after realising they had over committed to an assessment programme. While the school has processes in place for such amendments to occur, it is not an expected or common practice. The school is encouraged to continue to review its course design and assessment practices to provide a balance between meeting the needs of students, including their qualifications or pathways aspirations, while maintaining the school's overall expectations.

### **Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- clarify the process of resubmission and reinforce the requirements with staff
- withdraw students from a standard where they have not had an adequate assessment opportunity.

### **For consideration**

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

- developing strategies to support individualised assessment programmes.

## 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)*

### **Hamilton Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- critiquing new and amended assessment activities before use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- engaging with suitably-qualified subject specialists from within and outside the school to verify samples of student work for every standard
- developing teachers' understanding of the verification process by encouraging strategic selection of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions
- teachers completing an online check sheet to attest completion of all steps in internal moderation before results are submitted to NZQA.

### **Hamilton Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- encouraging teachers to request standards for, and negotiating changes to, the external moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements.

**Strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation** The monitoring of internal moderation can be strengthened by reconciling documentation with actual practice. Currently staff complete an *Internal Moderation Check Sheet* to attest that internal moderation has been completed. Annually reviewing documentation for a random sample of standards in each subject area will provide a transparent account of moderation processes and effectiveness. Review of internal moderation practice in departments should focus on aspects such as the strategic selection of student material, appropriateness of the verifier used, and evidence of discussions around borderline examples of student work. This will support school-wide consistency, reinforce effective practice and confirm to senior management that internal results reported are quality assured.

### **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 monitoring of the internal moderation process by reconciling completed internal moderation documentation with actual practice.

## **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)*

### **Hamilton Boys' High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- identifying appropriate placements in subjects with multiple classes
- tracking student achievement including identifying students at risk of not achieving a qualification
- supporting teacher inquiries on improving student achievement
- completing and using evidence-based reviews as a tool for improvement
- annually reporting to the Headmaster an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions.

### **Hamilton Boys' High School reports accurate achievement data by:**

- submitting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- managing the reporting of results for Year 10 students
- using the Key Indicators to identify and resolve data submission errors
- ensuring low levels of late external entries and internal entries with no results
- using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers and reconciling these with current Memoranda of Understanding
- ensuring that students have confirmed acceptance of the grade awarded
- submitting fees paid and financial assistance applications on time
- encouraging the use of the NZQA Learner Login and student management system parent portal to check results.

### **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 for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))*

### **Hamilton Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake using a common template to provide consistent assessment information
- communicating assessment policy and procedure.

### **Hamilton Boys' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- assisting students and whānau to monitor NCEA progress through a tracking booklet, using the parent portal and Learner Login
- running an NCEA information evening for families
- using online links within documentation and the school website to ensure accurate and consistent information.

**Ensure a consistent use of resubmission and further assessment opportunity terminology** Teachers and students used a variety of terms such as resit, reassessment and redo when describing resubmission and further assessment opportunity. There were also a variety of terms used in school and course documentation. To avoid confusion, it is suggested that the terms resubmission and further assessment opportunity be used throughout to ensure consistency with NZQA requirements and to avoid confusion.

**Minor updates required in school documentation** Some minor updates were signalled during the review as detailed below. These will ensure all school documentation remains consistent and aligns with NZQA language and expectations.

#### Appendix A:

- Update section relating to breaches of the rules. A school must report a Not Achieved grade for the standard where a candidate has been found to have breached the rules as detailed in Assessment Rule 6.6.
- Update information relating to online external moderation processes.
- Include guidance for staff on further assessment opportunity, resubmission and reporting of emergency grades.

#### Student diary:

- Remove reference that the Principal's Nominee approves derived grades. This is undertaken by NZQA.
- Consider clarification of certificate endorsement to include information for endorsement in a subsequent year as detailed in Assessment Rule 8.4f.

#### Course outlines:

- Remove resubmission and conferencing option as this should not be predetermined.
- Replace the term reassessment with further assessment opportunities.

**Review accessibility of staff procedures** The school's assessment procedures, contained in appendices attached to a Board of Trustees policy document, are not easily accessible or visible to staff. Some of the teachers interviewed were unaware of how to access the Board of Trustees policy and use information contained in the student diary as their primary written reference. The school could consider having the procedures as a stand-alone working document linked within the policy document, while the Board of Trustees policy contains overarching principles.

### **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 detailed in the report.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing location of school assessment procedures.