

Managing National Assessment Report

Sacred Heart Girls' College (Hamilton)

May 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Sacred Heart Girls' 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
- *Sacred Heart Girls' College Hamilton Assessment Procedures Policy*
- *Sacred Heart Girls' College Hamilton NZQA Assessment Procedures (Staff Handbook)*
- *Sacred Heart Girls' College Hamilton Student Information on NZQF*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students and Leader of Learning for English/Media Studies, Learning Support/Science, Physical Education/Health and Teacher in Charge of Drama.

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

Sacred Heart Girls' College

11 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 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

Sacred Heart Girls' College has effective processes in place which ensure credible assessment for national qualifications. This includes addressing items identified through external reviews such as its timely response to action items from the previous Managing National Assessment report and to external moderation feedback. Self-review processes also show the school's ability to internally review its own NCEA procedures.

The school continues to develop assessment practices to meet the need of its students. Achievement data on students is regularly sent to staff who discuss progress with students and support those identified at risk of not achieving their goals.

The high overall agreement rate for standards externally moderated over time, reflects the effectiveness of the school's embedded internal moderation processes. Teachers understand the reason for the purposeful selection of material and engage with subject specialists within and outside the school to verify student work. Leaders of Learning and the Principal's Nominee undertake robust monitoring of moderation processes. This ensures that the only results that are reported to NZQA are those which have undergone quality assurance.

Assessment data is managed effectively to ensure results reported to NZQA are accurate. Systems are in place for ensuring that entries and results are checked before submission.

Communication supports staff in maintaining a consistent approach to managing assessment within the school. Students and their families are supported with easily assessable, fit-for-purpose assessment information.

Areas for improvement

The school is aware of the anxiety that exists for students with the high expectations to achieve. It is suggested that as part of ongoing review, the school consider programme design. Strategies such as reducing credit totals both within courses and overall, integrating study, restricting the use of optional standards, and reviewing ways to extend students are examples that may help personalise student learning and manage workload.

The random selection process for external moderation must not be able to be predicted. An alternative approach using a function on the student management system was discussed as a way to ensure NZQA requirements are met.

There are some minor updates suggested for inclusion in the next review of assessment-related documentation to align it with current best practice.

Agreed action

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

- review assessment processes and programmes to ensure they meet student needs and are manageable
- update random selection process for external moderation
- update documentation as detailed in this report.

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1 August 2017

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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 17 April 2013 Managing National Assessment report The school has addressed the three agreed actions from the 2013 review. Course information presented to students has been updated and includes information about resubmission and monitoring internal moderation.

Response to external moderation outcomes There has been a consistent and high agreement rate for standards externally moderated over the last three years. The Principal's Nominee works with teachers to ensure all required material is submitted and that they all respond by completing a *Response to External Moderation*. Where an action plan is developed, the Principal's Nominee follows up to ensure these are completed.

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)

The school's own review processes enable it to evaluate the effectiveness of current practice and make considered responses to the issues that are identified from within and outside the school. Recent examples of these processes include:

- reviewing the staff assessment handbook and student information to include clarification on specific processes identified as needing further explanation and NZQA initiated updates
- Leaders of Learning reviewing standards offered each year in response to the needs of students informed by achievement data and student voice
- the Principal's Nominee conducting an annual audit of each Learning area leading to a review of internal moderation processes and sharing of best practice examples
- responding to the changing profile of the school by appointing a Leader of Learning - Learning Support and Transition Dean to assist students who may require additional learning support
- increasing use of data to identify and support students at risk of not achieving their goals.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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)

Sacred Heart Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- applying for special assessment conditions, supporting those eligible to access entitlements and reviewing the appropriateness of these annually
- participating in NZQA digital pilot examinations
- collecting evidence using a range of methods including portfolios, digital evidence, oral and performances
- supporting students new to New Zealand, the school and those identified with additional learning needs
- reviewing and adapting courses.

Sacred Heart Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted for assessment by using suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- enabling students to appeal their NCEA grades
- ensuring derived grades are based on authentic standard-specific evidence from practice examinations or other appropriate assessment
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Continue to review assessment opportunities for students Some teachers commented on high levels of anxiety experienced by students around assessment and achievement expectations. The school is encouraged to continue to review and discuss assessment opportunities and processes, to better meet individual student need while ensuring they are manageable for both students and teachers.

As discussed during the review, there is a growing awareness that 'doing less, better' may assist teachers and students in managing workload. In 2016, approximately 60 percent of the Year 11 cohort achieved 120 credits or more. Not every standard or topic in a course needs to be assessed. A course may be designed to include a mix of prescribed and optional standards. Optional standards could be restricted to individual students to meet specific needs such as meeting prerequisites or course endorsement.

Extension of students may be better undertaken by broadening learning and working towards developing a deeper understanding rather than simply undertaking assessment at a higher level.

Integrated study can enable assessment across more than one learning area undertaken within the same context. Where manageable, flexible timeframes allow students to be assessed when they have a fair opportunity to achieve.

It is agreed that the school will continue to review its course design to ensure that there is a balance between the meeting needs of students while maintaining the school's overall high academic achievement. The aim is that teachers can guide students into individualised courses that provide assessment opportunities relevant to their goals and aspirations.

Agreed action

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

- review assessment processes and programmes to ensure they meet student needs and are manageable.

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)

Sacred Heart Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring new and amended assessments are critiqued before use
- engaging with suitably-qualified subject specialists within and outside the school to verify student work
- purposefully selecting samples of student work at grade boundaries for verification of assessor judgements
- documenting the internal moderation process, including noting verification discussion and decisions on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- monitoring the completion of the process through:
 - Leaders of Learning attesting to confirm internal moderation has occurred for every standard where results have been reported to NZQA
 - the Principal's Nominee conducting an audit of each learning area at least once a year to review the internal moderation process undertaken.

Sacred Heart Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- responding effectively to the moderator's findings.

Update random selection process for external moderation The school uses a process for random selection of student work based on an outdated method. To meet NZQA requirements, random selection for external moderation must involve a method that does not allow for prediction of the sample likely to be selected. An option for this using the school's student management system was discussed during the visit.

Effective exit processes for staff The Principal's Nominee meets with teachers leaving the school to ensure she is aware where material is stored in case it is required for external moderation. In addition, she makes note of any verifiers used in the internal moderation process which can provide an initial point of contact if required by incoming staff.

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:

- update random selection process for external 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)

Sacred Heart Girls' College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - tracking and monitoring student progress toward NCEA qualifications and identify students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway
 - supporting Companion teachers with learning conversations about student NCEA goals
 - requiring Leaders of Learning to report an analysis of NCEA achievement data against school goals to senior management and to inform future teaching and assessment
 - informing changes to standards and assessment programmes for the year ahead
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - submitting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis
 - managing assessment results for Year 10 students
 - using a confirmation process prior to 1 December data submission to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported
 - ensuring all internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
 - checking entries in externally assessed standards with students to limit late entries and ensure accuracy
 - using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
 - supporting students to use their Learner login to track their NCEA progress and identify errors.

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)

Sacred Heart Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families in print, in person and digitally
- ensuring students receive outlines for all course they undertake
- supporting teachers new to the school
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Sacred Heart Girls' College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes through regular Middle Leaders and staff meetings
- including links in assessment documentation to the NZQA website to provide greater clarity of understanding
- ensuring students can use their Learner login and are familiar with the NZQA website
- publishing a student NCEA assessment handbook that is written in a style and language suitable for the audience
- confirming that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Update documentation Documents sighted during the visit were of an overall good standard. The school has an expectation that a common template for student course material is used. This is good practice as it makes them recognisable and easy for students and parents to understand. Although the general format of the examples viewed during the visit were similar, there was some variability in the information presented. There are some minor updates suggested for inclusion in the next review of assessment-related documentation to ensure consistency of message and to align it with current practice. These are for

- Staff and student handbooks:
 - standardise the language between school documents and NZQA, such as further assessment opportunity rather than reassessment.
- Student course outlines:
 - indicate standards that contribute to literacy and numeracy
 - note if courses are University Entrance approved and/or eligible for endorsement
 - refer students to their student handbook for school-wide processes such as appeals to ensure version control
 - consider the option of a common template obtainable through the school's student management system as discussed.

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 this report.