

MANAGING NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Palmerston North Boys' High School

July 2016

Managing National Assessment Review

The purpose of reviewing the management of national assessment is:

- 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 2016* (Assessment Rules); and
- 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.

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of assessment materials and of teacher grade judgements for student work selected by the school's random-selection process.
- A random sampling of aspects of assessment systems and data for review or audit on an annual basis.
- A visit to review each school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

Managing National Assessment Report

This report summarises NZQA's evaluation of how effectively the school:

- has addressed issues identified through the three components of 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
- manages and makes use of assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

In preparing this report, two School Relationship Managers met with the Principal's Nominee, the Deputy Rector and Heads of Department for Biology, Careers, English, Media Studies, and Physical Education, and three students.

The school also provided pre-review information and the following documents:

- *Palmerston Boys' High School NCEA Policy and Procedures 2016 A Guide for Students and Parents* (Student Handbook)
- *Palmerston Boys' High School NCEA Policy and Procedures 2016* (Staff Handbook)
- various subject handbooks for the NCEA subject areas interviewed.

There was a report-back session with the Rector, Deputy Rector and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies and next steps and to agree on any action required.

OVERVIEW

Palmerston North Boys' High School

28 July 2016

Areas of strength

Palmerston North Boys' High School continues to maintain and develop effective processes for managing national qualifications. They have well-embedded practices for self-review, which inform senior management that all assessment and moderation procedures are robust, that data is accurate and timely and that important information is shared effectively with students, staff and families.

The school is to be commended for supporting staff to engage with colleagues from outside the school for moderation purposes. Teachers interviewed are proactive in supporting their outside colleagues in this way. They value this professional engagement, considering it to be an investment in good practice and understanding.

The school uses data to effectively evaluate student achievement and to track student progress towards qualifications. Assessment programmes are designed to cater for differing student needs, interests and abilities. The school's *Accelerate Programme* for advanced year 10 students, targeted learning support given to students at years 9, 10 and 11, and the increased range of vocational education courses conducted by outside providers have been introduced in recent years to better cater for student needs.

Positive external moderation outcomes Effective internal moderation processes are robust and well-embedded. They ensure that teacher assessment judgements have consistently high moderator agreement rates for external moderation. Positive external moderation outcomes assure the credibility of internal assessment and moderation processes throughout Palmerston North Boys' High School. The school is also developing their capacity to engage with NZQA's digital assessment and moderation work streams.

Areas for improvement

During this review, one department was unable to provide documented evidence of their internal moderation. As part of the school's monitoring processes, this evidence must be available for review. To strengthen their monitoring processes, senior management has agreed to remind all departments to document their internal moderation. This will not only assure senior management that quality moderation practices are being followed, but documented information from one year to another, can also be used at department level, to support future assessment decisions.

Another department described internal moderation practices that go well beyond the expectations of NZQA, with the Head of Department responsible for verifying many more pieces of student work for every standard than is required. NZQA's requirements are that a sufficient sample of purposefully selected student work is verified by another subject expert to confirm grade judgements. Senior management agreed to clarify expectations around verifying sufficient samples of purposefully selected student work.

These improvements to assessment and moderation practice will further assure senior management that all results reported to NZQA are credible, authentic and reliable.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to further refine assessment practices. Senior management undertakes to:

- remind all departments to document the completion of their internal moderation
- clarify expectations around verifying sufficient samples of purposefully selected student work.

Next Managing National Assessment review Based on the outcome of this assessment systems check, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three/four years.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

21 September 2016

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Response to External and Internal Reviews

Previous external reviews

Evidence was sought that external review recommendations and findings have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 3v)

Action items addressed Palmerston North Boys' High School has addressed the action items from their previous Managing National Assessment review, which was held on 23 August 2012. The agreed items to 'facilitate a discussion amongst HODs on using authentic evidence from formative assessment to supply a grade for a justified absence' and 'add to information regarding privacy to the student handbook when it is next published' have both been satisfactorily actioned. There was a clear understanding of authenticity and privacy in the practice of the HOD's interviewed during this review.

Effective response to external moderation Palmerston North Boys' High School maintains high moderator-assessor agreement rates for external moderation. If poor outcomes are identified, effective responses are immediately actioned to ensure improvement through the use of moderation report action plans. The Principal's Nominee monitors this process with the Deputy Rector providing support where necessary. This embedded practice gives senior management confidence that their internal moderation processes are robust, credible and reliable.

Internal review

Evidence was sought that the school was 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 strong culture of self-review exists within Palmerston North Boys' High School. Senior managers are constantly seeking to improve the effectiveness of assessment practice for their senior secondary students. A range of self-review tools are used to support this. Some outcomes of self-review include:

- the introduction of modified assessment programmes and improved course design after results analysis and student feedback
- strengthened communication with all stakeholders through greater use and availability of technology
- a decrease in standards offered in some Level 1 and Level 2 courses so that the focus is on the quality of results, not quantity
- a wider range of meaningful assessment programmes that match student study and career goals beyond school
- more effective measures for identifying students at risk of not achieving a qualification and consequently implementing effective interventions.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

Assessment Practice

How does the school's assessment practice allow for the effective management of assessment for national qualifications? (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6, 3)

Palmerston North Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring student achievement progress and tracking literacy and numeracy throughout the year, so that any barriers to achievement of NCEA or University Entrance are minimised
- managing missed or late assessment opportunities
- gathering a range of authentic evidence to support the grade awarded
- checking the authenticity of work submitted, including use of on-line checks, for work done inside and outside of the classroom
- meeting the needs, interests and abilities of their students through offering:
 - extra standards in some programmes to extend students
 - the *Accelerate Programme* where targeted students start NCEA at Year 10
 - learning support for targeted Year 9, 10 and 11 students to support the school's goal of improving Level 2 NCEA pass-rates
 - the opportunity for students to study university papers while still at school
 - extra classes, tutorials and assessments outside of normal school hours
 - programmes run by outside providers to extend vocational skills and provide seamless transition to further study beyond school
 - flexibility within classes and multiple pathways within subjects
 - new subjects to meet changing demands.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

Moderation

How effectively does school internal and external moderation assure assessment quality? (CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 3)

Palmerston North Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing:

- **internal moderation by ensuring that:**
 - all assessment tasks are critiqued before use
 - robust internal moderation practices occur in all departments for all assessed standards for which results are reported to NZQA
- **external moderation by ensuring that:**
 - feedback is analysed and responded to at classroom teacher, department and senior management levels
 - it is used to assure senior management of the effectiveness of their internal moderation processes
 - randomly selected samples of student work are securely stored for external moderation purposes
 - all requested assessment material is submitted to NZQA on time.

Robust internal moderation processes embedded Robust internal moderation procedures are well-embedded at Palmerston North Boys' High School. Examples of the effective practices that ensure the credibility of results reported by the school include:

- a team approach to developing assessment tasks, giving all assessors a common understanding of expectations before the standard is assessed
- blind verification
- pre-marking meetings to identify grade boundaries
- panel-marking within departments to ensure that final grade decisions are that of more than one person
- verification of grades by subject experts from within or outside the school.

Evidence of internal moderation not consistently available In most departments, internal moderation cover sheets are used to document internal moderation processes. This enables the Principal's Nominee to easily monitor who has contributed to this robust process. To strengthen their processes and to confirm for senior management that all results reported to NZQA have been moderated, the senior managers have agreed that all departments will document their internal moderation. This will not only assure senior management that quality moderation practices are being followed, but can also be used, at department level, to support future assessment decisions.

In one high performing department there was no written evidence recording the completion of their internal moderation. This department takes a team approach to developing assessment tasks, and making judgements so that grades are determined by more than one person. These practices have been most effective for this department, with exemplary moderator agreement rates and external moderation feedback over recent years. Nonetheless, completion of moderation needs to be documented so that it can be monitored by the school's senior managers. For this

department, noting the standard, participants and any outcomes in the department minutes would provide sufficient evidence.

Select samples for verification strategically Another department described internal moderation practices that go well beyond the expectations of NZQA. All student work at grade boundaries, as well as all work awarded an excellence grade by the assessor, was to be verified by the Head of Department, for every standard. NZQA's requirements are that a sufficient sample of purposefully selected student work is verified by another subject expert to confirm grade judgements. The size of the sample may depend on the experience of the teacher, whether the standard has been used previously, and any feedback from external moderation. Senior management agreed to clarify their expectations around verifying sufficient samples of purposefully selected student work. This should decrease the workload for teachers within this department without compromising the rigour of the moderation process.

Support provided for moderation meetings with teacher colleagues beyond the school Teachers at Palmerston North Boys' High School work with colleagues from surrounding schools to verify assessor judgements, viewing this as a two-way opportunity to share and gain greater understanding of the national standard. The school is to be commended for supporting their staff to engage with outside colleagues, often during school hours, as they see it as an investment in good practice and understanding.

Digital moderation developing One department has fully embraced digital assessment and moderation, with all of their standards being assessed and moderated online. The Head of Department is one of the school's lead teachers for digital assessment and moderation, and through staff development in this area, the school is developing its capacity to benefit from NZQA's digital assessment and moderation work streams.

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:

- remind all departments to document the completion of their internal moderation
- clarify expectations around verifying sufficient samples of purposefully selected student work.

Data Quality and Use

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 2.7, 3)

Palmerston North Boys' High School effectively:

- **manages assessment-related data by:**
 - systematically recording student achievement
 - having appropriate checks to ensure reported results are accurate
 - reporting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis
 - using the correct provider code for assessment undertaken by external providers
 - maintaining current Memoranda of Understanding with the external providers for whom they report results.
- **makes use of the following assessment-related data:**
 - Key Indicators to ensure that only consented standards are assessed and to help ensure data accuracy
 - results data to set strategic direction, inform decision-making and track and monitor student progress and achievement.

Assessment-related data accurate The school has very effective processes in place to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of all assessment-related data. Positive outcomes of these efficient processes include that:

- unreported results are minimal
- there are very few late entries
- all outside providers are recognised through using the correct provider code when data is first entered.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

Communication

How effectively does the school maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, and students and their families?
(CAAS Guidelines 2.4i (f), 2.4v, 2.6, 2.7ii, 3)

Palmerston North Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families
- engaging parents/caregivers in ongoing discussions about their children's achievement
- informing parents/caregivers with NCEA updates through a fortnightly parent email and opening up an online parent portal to the student management system
- ensuring that students are provided with sufficient assessment information about each of their courses
- ensuring that all students know how to access their student achievement information through using their NZQA Learner login
- sharing assessment and moderation best practice through the Principal's Nominee running workshops within departments
- reporting NZQA matters appropriately and regularly to staff, the school community, students and their families.

Greater use of technological communication increases interest Along with traditional methods of informing parents through parent / teacher interviews, NCEA information evenings and phone calls home from form teachers, technology is being used effectively to communicate aspects of senior assessment to parents. The parent portal on the school's student management system, social media and a fortnightly parent email are effective mechanisms for informing parents about student progress and providing NCEA updates. Senior management confirmed that these technologies have increased interest and participation from their parent body.

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.