

Managing National Assessment Report

Manawatū College

March 2020

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Manawatū 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 2020* (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
- *Manawatū College (0205) National Qualifications 2020: Staff Procedures Handbook*
- *Manawatū College National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA): Student Handbook 2020*
- *Senior Academic Coaching – Term One Booklet: Young Men and Women of Character*
- *(Manawatū College) Graduate Profile*
- 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:
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Sciences
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal – Senior School and Principal's Nominee and 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

Manawatū College 2020

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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2019.

What the school is doing well

The Manawatū College vision for students is that they are "succeeding together in a caring and supportive environment." Staff put this into practice by using their knowledge of students to provide individualised course design and pathway planning for assessment and qualifications. The school utilises local networks to provide opportunities for learning and assessment at the senior level. This broadens the curriculum, especially in locally important vocational pathways.

Staff review of achievement results over recent years has identified the need for students to be more independent and to have greater agency over pathway goals and course design. Ambitious and significant changes have been implemented in 2019 and 2020. Last year, the school introduced an academic coaching model for all students. Within this a programme for coaches has been developed which assists students with pathway planning, goal setting and their understanding of NCEA. In 2020, changes have also been made to the timetable to increase student agency, making academic coaching crucial in ensuring course planning and scheduling is effectively linked with student pathway priorities.

The processes for identifying and working with verifiers are well embedded. Early in the year staff are expected to identify verifiers, many of whom are external to the school, and report these to the Principal's Nominee.

The Principal's Nominee actively supports staff to understand NCEA best practice. She has produced a comprehensive staff handbook and is readily available to support teachers and faculty leaders when questions arise. She has a regular audit process, by which each faculty will have a more formal check of their processes biennially. The information given to students is comprehensive. They generally have a good understanding of school assessment processes, and of the importance of the authenticity of their work for assessment.

Areas for improvement

Senior leaders need to monitor and review the internal and external moderation processes alongside faculty leaders to ensure that assessment issues are effectively resolved. External moderator feedback has identified ongoing concerns about grading of assessment in some faculties. Tracking processes initiated by the Principal's Nominee now ensure that appropriate staff respond to external moderator

feedback each year. The next step is for senior leaders to check that action plans lead to effective change.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that faculty actions taken in response to external moderation feedback effectively address identified issues
- ensure faculties monitor and review their grade verification processes, including the suitability of verifiers and the prioritising of verification at grade boundaries.

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26 June 2020

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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 16 June 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment review have been addressed. Review of both authenticity and privacy documentation, and of the use of Supported Learning standards, has led to improved practice. Missed and late assessment processes are clearly communicated to staff and applied consistently. Staff select appropriate samples of student work for internal verification, although the selection of samples at grade boundaries could be more strongly prioritised. The school analyses assessment data and has made changes in order to better meet student needs.

Response to external moderation outcomes A relatively low level of agreement between school assessors and NZQA moderators has been noted by senior leaders at the school. Some learning areas have ongoing patterns of inconsistent outcomes. These need greater support and follow-up from senior management. The school has agreed that in their role as 'line managers', senior leaders will take responsibility for faculties to ensure that assessment and internal moderation systems work consistently and effectively to produce credible grades.

Senior management oversight will ensure that any issues with external moderation, identified by the school or by external moderators, are addressed in a timely manner with support or interventions planned, and then followed through to completion and evaluation of effectiveness. The current process is well embedded and, in some faculties, ensures that issues are identified and addressed. Heads of Faculty use the External Moderation Application to identify points of concern raised by external moderators. They report these issues to the Principal's Nominee and the steps they are taking to address them. The Principal's Nominee maintains a record of which faculties are required to make a formal response to external moderation. These processes will be strengthened by the involvement of senior leadership as line managers when they work with faculty leaders to address issues consistently in all faculties and evaluate the effectiveness of action plans.

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)

In 2019 the school reviewed assessment and qualification results for senior students. They have made significant and ambitious changes aimed at improving these outcomes. Firstly, they changed their vertical form system to a horizontal academic coaching model. This is designed to increase student agency in course and assessment planning and improving communication between the school and the student about NCEA and pathways.

Secondly, ambitious timetabling changes have been implemented in 2020 to give students a high degree of agency over their individual pathway and timetable design and better meet their NCEA goals. Lessons are now separated into 'Instructional' and 'Mastery' types. The Instructional lessons are set on the timetable while the mastery lessons are filled according to student need and teacher availability. These changes are designed to work alongside the academic coaching programme to ensure that quality mentoring supports student thinking and planning.

The school also developed a Graduate Profile that outlines a range of desirable character, social and academic traits, which informs pathway planning and academic goal setting.

These significant changes are currently being integrated into everyday school life. Students are generally supportive of the new timetable structure and the options and opportunities it affords, despite some early teething problems. It will be important for teachers and school leaders to evaluate the impact of these changes on student attainment. School leaders will also need to monitor the impact of having a more flexible timetable on assessment and qualification outcomes and on maintaining processes that ensure credible and authentic assessment.

Heads of Faculty use assessment data to identify classroom successes and positive outcomes, the challenges faced in meeting assessment goals, and analyse the strategies applied to meet them. They produce annual faculty reports in which they analyse results from the previous cycle. The next step is for faculty leaders and teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and consider how this informs their practice for the next assessment cycle.

A biennial audit process managed by the Principal's Nominee provides a quality assurance check on faculties. She manages the system for checking that faculties use assessment, moderation and data management practices which meet school and NZQA expectations and requirements. She gives faculty leaders feedback and has a system for following up on recommendations.

The Principal's Nominee at Manawatū College has identified the need to develop a succession plan for the role. She has created and communicated a robust system of assessment for qualifications, including assessment practice, moderation processes, and management of data. Her considerable expertise in this area should be capitalised on in the planning for, and development of, a successor.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that faculty actions taken in response to external moderation feedback effectively address identified issues.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- encouraging faculty leaders and teachers to analyse the effectiveness of strategies used to meet assessment goals
- succession planning for the Principal's Nominee role.

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 2020 5.5)

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

- identifying appropriate courses with students which support their learning pathways
- accessing a wide variety of external courses which contribute to meeting individual pathway needs of students
- providing flexibility within a learning programme so that they are assessed when ready.

Manawatū College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing deadlines in consultation with students
- following up student appeals of grades for internal assessment
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Addressing low rates of application for Special Assessment Conditions

Problems with staffing the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator position in recent years has resulted in Manawatū College identifying few students eligible for Special Assessment Conditions. Positively, the school, through the Principal's Nominee, has identified several new candidates for Special Assessment Conditions in 2020 and have applications in progress. The appointment of a new SENCO this year would strengthen and expand on this work.

Requirement for authenticity of student work well managed The school's process for ensuring the authenticity of student work are robust. It is explained well in the student handbook and in meetings with the Principal's Nominee. The information is supported by classroom teachers and academic coaches. Students are able to explain what authenticity is and what it means for them in assessment. They confirm their understanding and acceptance in writing, which the Principal's Nominee oversees. Teachers are adept at monitoring student work, which is largely completed at school, through active management of feedback and progression through tasks.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3 Leaders at Manawatū College have reviewed the STEM information and identified several factors potentially contributing to current levels of participation and attainment at Level 3 in STEM subjects. The Mathematics and Science faculties are working on specific interventions designed to promote interest in STEM with junior students. The school's new timetable system is designed to promote what they see as key levers for success in STEM; for example, independence, agency over learning goals and thinking and meta-cognitive development.

Analysis of STEM outcomes of Level 3 students at Manawatū College reveals that the participation and success of Māori students is generally equitable when compared to their peers. This is also true when comparing success for Māori students with their peers for a variety of other qualification measures including Level

1 and 2 and University Entrance. School leadership is committed to inquiring into strategies which lift attainment for all students, and which maintain equity.

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 for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2020 6.4b)

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

- ensuring assessment materials are valid and fit for purpose prior to use
- documenting discussions between assessors and verifiers using the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- monitoring for the completion of moderation prior to reporting results.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring that student work is available for selection by being securely stored in faculties
- suggesting a wide range of standards to be externally moderated.

Improving assessor judgements through internal moderation Strengthened internal moderation processes will provide greater assurance of the quality of teacher assessment judgements.

Faculty leaders need to more closely monitor and review their grade verification processes to ensure that suitable verifiers are consistently used, and that priority is given to verifying samples of student work at grade boundaries. Early each year Faculty leaders identify verifiers and report this information to the Principal's Nominee. However, when external moderation reports indicate ongoing concerns in subject areas, review of verification, including a possible change of verifier, should be part of a suitable action plan.

Consistent verification of student samples at grade boundaries would provide greater assurance of assessor judgements. Faculties currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including some work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. The selection of samples for grade verification should be more strategic.

Gaining maximum benefit from external moderator feedback Teachers should be encouraged to seek clarification or appeal external moderation to gain further confidence in their judgements. Some staff interviewed for this review raised concerns about the feedback supplied by external moderators. Faculty leaders and teachers who have questions about the information provided should raise a query or appeal the moderation report.

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:

- ensure faculties monitor and review their grade verification processes, including the suitability of verifiers and the prioritising of verification at grade boundaries.

For consideration

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

- utilising the query and appeal functions to follow up on external moderation comments that teachers are uncertain about or disagree with.

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)*

Manawatū College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- tracking academic progress to assist with monitoring and mentoring students towards meeting their qualifications goals
- reporting annually to the senior leadership and Board of Trustees on successes and challenges to inform strategic goals, plan ahead and review
- analysing internal and external achievement data by faculty in order to identify successes and challenges, leading to action plans for the following assessment cycle.

Manawatū College reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring results are supplied for all entries or withdrawing student entries as appropriate
- setting aside time for students to check their entries and results in the online portal to the student management system, and encouraging them to access their NZQA learner login
- having faculty leaders routinely use the NZQA login to check for the accuracy and completeness of entries and results
- checking the Key Indicators and responding to any issues that arise
- managing relationships with external providers including the appropriate creation and storage of memoranda of understanding and use of provider codes when reporting 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))

Manawatū College has effective processes and procedures for:

- providing students with subject information outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff through a thorough, accessible and up-to-date staff handbook
- supporting new teachers with a professional development programme to develop their understanding of NCEA
- meeting with, and reporting to, whānau and caregivers about student progress and achievement.

Manawatū College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- providing students with a handbook which concisely explains NCEA and the school processes supporting assessment in clear and accessible language
- reinforcing key messages to students through planned sessions in the senior academic coaching programme.

Principal's Nominee strengthens communication of NCEA processes Since the previous Managing National Assessment review, the Principal's Nominee has strengthened communication to staff and students about NCEA and the supporting processes. She regularly reviews communications to ensure they are accurate, current and audience appropriate. She uses a variety of forms and a biennial faculty audit to check that processes are used and understood. Improved levels of senior leadership support will provide further assurance that these processes are well embedded, followed and reviewed across the school. The appointment of two new deputy principals in recent months creates an opportunity for this support to be provided consistently.

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.