

# Managing National Assessment Report

**Iona  
College**

**October 2017**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Iona 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
- *Iona College Assessment and Reporting, Staff Procedures Manual, 2017*
- *Policy on Assessment, Iona College, 2017*
- *Policy 101: Curriculum Delivery, Iona College*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students, and Heads of Department for Commerce, English, Geography, Music, Physical Education and Science.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, 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

## Iona College

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

### What the school is doing well

The school is committed to improving assessment outcomes for their students. Self-review processes allow the school to identify areas for improvement that are then acted upon. The role of practice examinations has been enhanced to ensure that students have evidence for derived and emergency grades if required, and results are used to track student progress. Processes have also been created to help manage student and teacher assessment workloads.

The school is continuing to expand the courses it offers to meet the needs of its students. The introduction of Dance, as a subject, enhances the school's strong focus on the performing arts. Similarly, the new Agricultural Science course is a good example of a school responding to the needs and interests of its community.

A robust moderation system is ensuring credible results are reported to NZQA. This is evident by the sound external moderation agreement rate between teachers and NZQA moderators, the school has maintained for the last two years. The Principal's Nominee and Heads of Faculty monitor internal moderation assuring Senior leadership that the correct processes are followed to report credible results.

Effective data management is ensuring that accurate results are reported to NZQA in a timely manner. Analysis of results are reported annually to the Principal and Board of Trustees and form the basis for enhancing course design. Effective tracking and monitoring of student progress throughout the year identifies those who may require extra support from the school.

### Areas for improvement

Improvement in communicating course information and school assessment policy and procedures to students is required. Employing a common course outline template will ensure consistency of the assessment information provided across all courses. A student handbook needs to be produced to ensure students have sufficient assessment information available to them.

Improvement in the process for maintaining student privacy when signing-off grades, is required to meet the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Agreed action**

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

- develop a process to maintain student privacy when signing-off grades.
- provide students with accessible information on school assessment policy and procedures.

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12 December 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, 3iv-3v)*

**Action Items from 10 July 2013 Managing National Assessment Report** No action items were identified in the previous report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has effective processes for responding to external moderation outcomes. The Principal's Nominee and subject Teacher in Charge review the outcomes together with action plans implemented where necessary. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of the plans. The school is developing a digitally based tracking system that will further enhance the robustness of the monitoring process.

### 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 has identified some areas for enhancing their assessment practice. Reviews have been undertaken on the:

- number of credits assessed in courses, following an initiative from the Hawkes Bay Principals Association and PPTA discussion documents. At present, teachers are limiting the number of credits assessed in courses at all levels between 18 and 24, to better manage student and teacher workloads.
- role their practice examinations play in collecting evidence for derived grades and for monitoring student progress. The importance of the practice examinations in producing evidence for derived and emergency grades has been emphasised to students. Those students who miss a practice examination are followed up to ensure all students have grades available for all externally assessed standards. Results are analysed to identify students who are not tracking well towards the final external examinations.
- development of a digital assessment calendar for 2018. A need for subject areas to adhere to assessment deadlines was identified through the school's review processes. Senior leadership has clarified for staff that all assessments must be completed and results reported within the school year. It was decided a common digital assessment calendar shared with students, teachers and families, would help to manage workloads and ensure deadlines are met.

### 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, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)*

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

- using formative assessments, student feedback and feedforward to help determine their readiness for assessment
- making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable using milestones checks and templates
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- making applications for students identified as needing special assessment conditions, and providing appropriate support
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly with digital technology
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver:
  - courses the school is unable to offer
  - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways.

### **Iona College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- managing missed and late assessments, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- ensuring derived grades are based on valid, authentic and standard-specific evidence
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of assessment rules and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work.

**New courses target student interests and needs** The school is continuing to expand assessment practice into areas that particularly focus on the interests of the students. In response to curriculum feedback from parents and students from the farming community, and following a student presentation to the Principal, Agricultural Sciences has been introduced. Dance courses have also been introduced in line with the school's strategic focus on the performing arts, and to meet the growing demand from students.

**Maintaining student privacy** Student privacy needs to be maintained when signing-off grades. Students interviewed identified this as a concern for them. Having students confirm their grades helps ensure the accuracy of the results reported to NZQA, but this should be done in a way that ensures their rights to privacy (*Privacy Act 1993*).

**Agreed action**

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

- develop a process to maintain student privacy when signing-off grades.

## 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)*

### **Iona College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring another teacher critiques assessment activities prior to use
- using the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to document the internal moderation process
- requiring Teachers in Charge to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed prior to reporting results to NZQA
- Heads of Department monitoring internal moderation in their faculties and attesting to senior leadership that this is happening
- the Principal's Nominee reconciling attestation from Heads of Department with assessment plans submitted at the beginning of the year
- using subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify grades for a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

### **Iona College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- actively encouraging digital submission of student work for moderation
- valuing external moderation feedback for the clarification of grade boundaries, assistance with understanding of the standard, and to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation process
- discussing external moderation feedback with teachers, documenting actions and monitoring this is completed.

**Robust moderation system ensuring credible results** The school's overall external moderation agreement rate of over 90 per cent for the last two years provides an assurance of the credibility of the results reported. Its robust moderation processes are clearly documented and staff thoroughly understand and follow them. The Principal's Nominee is now further enhancing the process by moving it to an electronic format for storage, tracking and monitoring. This will maintain the currency of the process as the school develops greater use of digital assessments.

### **No action required**

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

## 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)*

### **Iona College effectively:**

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - annually reviewing course assessments to inform teaching inquiry and modify teaching and learning programmes as necessary
  - using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform decisions about future course content and design
  - annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly to NZQA
  - actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal to the student management system, the NZQA Learner login and NCEA app
  - ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
  - ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations
  - holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers and reconciling them with entries.

**Using data to monitor and support student achievement** The school has effective processes to track student achievement progress. Deans track and monitor student progress throughout the year and case manage those students that may be at risk of not achieving. The Principal also supports students of concern, who are identified following the school's practice examinations, by personally interviewing them and creating study plans.

### **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, 2.7ii(b))*

### **Iona College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- ensuring students receive assessment information for all courses they undertake
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system.

### **Iona College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- holding student assemblies to inform them of school assessment policies and procedures
- providing an information evening to parents and Year 10 students on NZQA and school assessment-related processes before they commence a full NCEA programme.

**Providing updated and consistent assessment documentation** Students must be provided with sufficient and accurate information about assessment processes. Assessment information is currently given to students at assemblies and in some course outlines. Students therefore do not have ready access to school policy and procedures for assessment nor complete information from the course outlines. Pertinent information that students need includes the school's policy for breaches of assessment, appeals, and missed or late assessments.

The assessment information provided to students in course outlines is inconsistent. Not all course outlines sighted contained information on further assessment opportunities for each standard and whether a standard meets a literacy or numeracy requirement. Developing a common course outline template will ensure consistent assessment information is given to students for all courses undertaken.

### **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:

- provide students with accessible information on school assessment policy and procedures.

### **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:

- developing a common course outline template.