

Managing National Assessment Report

Solway College

March 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Solway College
20 March 2025

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

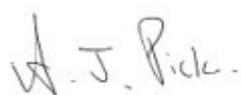
The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Clarify the resubmission rules with all staff	Immediate
Ensure that privacy is maintained when returning results to students	Immediate
Ensure accurate, up to date and complete assessment information is supplied to NZQA in a timely manner.	Immediate and ongoing

For consideration

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

- utilising a task-specific authenticity declaration
- reinforcing the expectations of the school's extension process with staff and students
- strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation practices by utilising the moderation function in the Student Management System.



Amanda Picken
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Support

22 April 2025

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 23 October 2019 Managing National Assessment Report

Solway College has effectively responded to the action included in the previous MNA review by updating assessment documentation to clearly differentiate between resubmission and further assessment opportunities, as well as replacing the term “Compassionate Consideration” with “Derived Grade”.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school effectively meets all of the requirements of external moderation. Moderation samples submitted to NZQA are timely and complete, with no instances of *Materials Not Received* since the previous MNA review. In addition, recent submissions have returned high rates of consistency, which is indicative of the accuracy of assessor grade judgements and provides evidence of the strength of its internal moderation practices.

Although 2024 external moderation outcomes for the new Level 1 Achievement Standards saw an increase in the number of *Not Yet Consistent* reports, the actions taken in response effectively address the feedback. These actions regularly incorporate the use of external support from the Ministry of Education, NZQA, subject associations, subject matter experts and online modules available on Pūtake. Any changes made to the assessment task undergo a rigorous critiquing process which often utilises the same external support. Together with the oversight of the Principal’s Nominee, these actions allow senior management to be confident that the school is responding well to the outcomes from external moderation.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

A highly effective cycle of self-review is in place at Solway College that ensures that the school’s assessment and learning programmes continue to meet the needs of individual students, including those considered at-risk of not achieving their NCEA qualifications. Integral to this practice is the utilisation of a valuable student achievement tracking programme and the use of student and community feedback. Both are extensively used by the school to highlight areas for improvement, to evaluate assessment practices and to inform decision making in numerous areas across the school.

Self-review occurs at all levels from the Board of Trustees through to the individual teacher. It involves analysing achievement data, considering external report recommendations, and incorporating student voice and anecdotal observations. Sharing the results from review cycles during staff meetings fosters participant ownership and leadership not only in the review process itself, but also in subsequent actions.

A recent review of the school’s course offerings, exemplifies Solway College’s excellent practice in this area. Observation of student leaver tendencies, as well as enrolment trends into assessment offered through external providers, prompted the

school to investigate the inclusion of additional standards from the Technology domain. Feedback from students and family supported the school's findings and as a result, an additional subject option designed to appeal to those following a vocational pathway has been included for the first time in 2025. The school would like to further enhance vocational pathway options but is awaiting further feedback and results from its first steps, evidence that the school is using its internal review practices to better meet the assessment aspirations and interests of its students.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025)

Tracking student achievement informs interventions Solway College has effective systems in place to identify students at risk of not meeting their achievement goals and provides targeted and tailored support as required. Under the oversight of the school's "Academic Facilitator", teachers regularly make predictions regarding student attainment in upcoming assessments. These predictions are informed by standardised testing results, teacher observation and extensive formative assessment practices. These are used in combination with finalised results for many purposes within the school, including the identification of students at risk of not gaining their qualification, the NCEA co-requisites and/or University Entrance. The success of this approach can be seen in the high levels of NCEA and NCEA co-requisite attainment at the school and is currently being modified to be able to track endorsement achievement.

Student awareness of their own progress is another well-addressed priority at Solway College. Students interviewed during this review acknowledged the approachability and responsiveness of their teachers, deans, careers advisor and senior leaders when assisting them to achieve their academic goals and providing well regarded guidance. Students regularly engage with this practice with their form teachers and this allows them to be well versed in their current achievement, effectively engaging them in the ownership of their own progress.

Improve data management processes The school's management of student entries and results needs to be strengthened to meet NZQA expectations. Although the number of internal entries without a result has declined since 2022, the school should aim to further decrease this number before 1 December of each year. This would allow students and whanau access to accurate entry and result information through the NZQA portal. In addition, the school should attempt to submit accurate external entries prior to the 1st of September. This will prevent students from being hindered from accessing assessment opportunities held either on the digital platform or on personalised paper examination materials.

Ensuring the authenticity of student submissions Solway College has substantial and consistent practices in place across all subjects to ensure evidence of achievement produced by a learner is their own. Students are well supported to avoid authenticity breaches by being notified of what constitutes a breach in specific tasks due to the conditions of assessment of that task. Staff are also well versed in ways to detect breaches of authenticity ranging from the use of a variety of third-party detection tools through to extensive knowledge of the capability of students gained through checkpointing and evidence gathering. The practice of interviewing students to determine their understanding of the content and skills being assessed, is also well utilised. The school's process of managing suspected breaches and appealing decisions is understood by both students and staff, ensuring equitable outcomes.

This robust approach gives senior leaders confidence that internally assessed results at Solway College are authentic.

To further support teacher and student practice in this area, the school is encouraged to include a task specific student authenticity attestation in place of the current annual attestation. This could provide an additional means of keeping students informed of appropriate practice in specific types of assessment.

Ensure a common understanding of resubmission rules Although the staff assessment handbook is updated to reflect the current resubmission rules, some staff do not consistently apply these in practice. It became apparent during the review that some teachers are providing an inappropriate level of guidance to students on correcting errors to improve their grade from Not Achieved to Achieved. Therefore, the school must take steps to ensure that all teachers follow NZQA's published resubmission guidelines consistently to ensure more equitable assessment practice.

A valid resubmission opportunity can only occur where individually identified students are able to discover and correct minor errors by themselves and must take place before the teacher gives any feedback to the whole class (or any student) on the work done. If feedback has been given after the assessment opportunity, resubmission is no longer a valid option and providing a further assessment opportunity would be more appropriate. By ensuring compliance in this area, the school can further ensure the credibility of its reported internal assessment results.

Ensure privacy is maintained during the return of assessment results The school must take steps to ensure that student privacy is maintained during the return of assessment results. While interviewing students, it became evident that while most teachers return results in an appropriate manner, there were some staff who did not. Reminding the staff of their obligations in this area will help the school to be confident in its ability to meet the provisions of the New Zealand Privacy Act, 2020.

Ensure equity in the granting of extensions Solway College should consider reinforcing an understanding of its extension policy to all staff and students. Although the staff handbook clearly outlines the criteria for, and the process to follow during the granting of an extension, there was some indication that this may not be being universally followed by all staff. By making sure that all processes and guidelines in this area are followed, the school can ensure equitable outcomes for all candidates.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Robust internal moderation monitoring and audit process The school can be confident in the credibility of internally assessed results due to effective internal moderation practices. Department heads take ownership and leadership of the moderation cycle, thoroughly documenting processes using standardised templates for each assessed standard. Extensive use of external subject specialist critiques and verification, together with support from NZQA, subject associations and the Ministry of Education, help to ensure that tasks and judgements continue to meet the current requirements of the standards being assessed. High-quality verifier judgment statements contribute to effective quality assurance for internally assessed standards and are routinely used together with external moderation feedback and moderator reports during the critiquing process in the following year. Together with mostly consistent external moderation outcomes in 2022-2023, the effective management that the Principal's Nominee maintains over this process indicates that the school is meeting its quality assurance obligations in the area of internal moderation.

Solway College may wish to consider using its Student Management System to increase the efficiency of recording and monitoring the completion of internal moderation processes. The attributes of this function would provide the school with further assurance of the completion of all internal moderation and improved visibility of the end-to-end process.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Solway College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Solway College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

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

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

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

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

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

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Solway College reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data

- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families about assessment

Solway College has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

Solway College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Solway 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.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *NZQA Student Handbook – Procedures for 2025, Solway College, 2025*
- *NZQA Teacher’s Handbook – Procedures for 2025, Solway College, 2025.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal’s Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Commerce and Accounting
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Music
 - Physics and Digital Technology
 - Science
- three students

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.