

Managing National Assessment Report

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School

April 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Samuel Marsden Collegiate School:

- 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 2018* (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
- *NCEA Assessment Policy and Procedures*, Samuel Marsden Collegiate School 2018 (Staff handbook)
- *NCEA Assessment Policy and Procedures*, Samuel Marsden Collegiate School 2018 (from Student Planner)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, the Academic Director, three students, and Heads of Department for Art, English, Languages, Mathematics, Science, and Technologies.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, the Academic Director 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

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School 2018

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

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School has robust NCEA assessment practices ensuring that results reported to NZQA for national qualifications are credible. The school is delivering courses and programmes that are meeting the needs of their students.

Assessment practice was consistent across all departments that participated in the review and evident in the understanding students interviewed for the review displayed. The school has developed pathways and structures that allow all students to follow their passions and interests, while meeting the needs of students of all abilities. The school's timetable allows students to have individualised courses over multiple NCEA levels and undertake assessments at an appropriate NCEA level.

The school has strategically focused on reducing the number of credits available in each course. This is to help manage student workload and coincides with a focus on student well-being. The number of students gaining over 90 credits in Y13 has been trending downwards over the past few years. Students interviewed felt well supported by the school in helping them achieve their goals.

Internal moderation is robust and effectively managed to ensure credible results are reported to NZQA. Staff interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of the process and could readily provide documented evidence of internal moderation happening within their departments. External moderation outcomes are addressed by Heads of Department who complete an action plan to resolve any identified issues.

Data analysis is being used to track student progress and inform course design. Evidence based data supported the setting up of a new course to support students who are at risk of not achieving an NCEA qualification. Departments reflect on student achievement to inform course design and evaluate the effectiveness of their courses, and report their findings to the Academic Director. The Principal's Nominee has effective data management processes to ensure accurate entries and results are reported to NZQA.

The school's community is well informed with appropriate, fit-for-purpose communications. Year group assemblies and parent information evenings have been introduced to improve student and parent understanding of school assessment policy and procedures and how to gain NCEA qualifications. Staff and students interviewed demonstrated a thorough understanding about the school's expectations. A new induction process is supporting new Heads of Department to help develop and embed their assessment practice.

The Principal's Nominee, with support from the Academic Director, effectively manage NCEA assessment practice. Staff interviewed confirm they are well supported.

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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 29 April 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The action items from the 2015 have been addressed. School assessment procedures have been updated and documented as per the review. The role of the Principal's Nominee for Samuel Marsden Collegiate School and the Whitby campus have been separated as has the reporting of grades for students enrolled at each school.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a sound moderation history with very high levels of agreement between teachers and NZQA moderators since the last review. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of external moderation action plans using a tracking process. The Academic Director has discussions with Heads of Department about action plan follow-up when required.

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)

Senior leadership has developed effective systems and processes to monitor and review the school's NCEA assessment practices and processes and the effect on student progress and achievement. Data analysis formed the basis for some initiatives allowing the school to measure the effectiveness of these in meeting student needs. They include:

- limiting the number of credits on offer in all courses to manage student assessment workload. A noticeable decrease in the percentage of Year 13 students gaining 90 credits and above over the past three years highlights the effect of this
- creating courses to meet the needs of students at risk of not gaining a qualification, this is discussed further in this review.

The school's assessment processes are continually reviewed to make improvements where necessary. Changes to assessment practice introduced following review include:

- an *Internal Moderation Tracking Sheet* for Heads of Department to monitor internal moderation in their departments, further assuring Senior Leadership that internal moderation for every standard is happening. Staff interviewed demonstrated a thorough understanding of the process and evidence of use
- Parent Information Evenings, held during parent/teacher interviews to encourage attendance at both events, to inform parents about NCEA assessment
- a separate weekly parent Newsletter for each year group, so that NCEA assessment information and advice is focused and relevant

- year group assemblies held at the beginning of each year about the school's NCEA assessment policy and procedures. Students interviewed demonstrated a thorough understanding of assessment policy and procedures.

These initiatives reflect a shared-ownership in schoolwide good practice evidenced in consistent practice and management structures that encourage all teachers to participate in change processes. The school's philosophy of high expectations and achieving academic excellence is reflected by its practice of continual review for improvement to ensure that its assessment practice is robust and credible results are reported.

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 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 2018 5.5)

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- using a range of methods during assessment to gather evidence of achievement
- tailoring assessment programmes within courses to meet student needs
- using milestones checks and making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable
- offering extension opportunities for Year 10 students to undertake NCEA assessments, and supporting New Zealand Scholarship candidates, as appropriate
- offering individualised learning programmes to those students identified as requiring extra support to attain an NCEA qualification
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver courses the school is unable to offer
- assessing when ready where manageable and appropriate .

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring derived grades are based on valid, authentic and standard specific evidence
- using a range of strategies to ensure that student work is authentic
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work
- withdrawing students from standards where they have not had an adequate assessment opportunity
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Timetable flexibility to meet the needs of students The school's timetable has been specifically designed to enable students to achieve at multiple levels of NCEA. Many students achieve at a higher NCEA level than their year group. The timetable removes barriers to achievement by allowing students to undertake courses at an appropriate NCEA level. Individualising courses to cater for student passions and interests can also be achieved.

International students supported to achieve their goals International students are well supported to achieve NCEA qualifications. Assessments, where required,

are modified with help from the English as a Second Language department to ensure the language is appropriate for the student. Evidence of achievement is gathered in various ways where written assessments are not necessary.

Managing student assessment workload for student well-being The school is committed to maintaining student well-being and minimising stress, particularly for Year 13 students. Deadlines are negotiated between Heads of Department during November in the year prior, to create a school-wide assessment calendar. The Academic Director must approve any changes to the set dates to avoid clashes. Assessments are not permitted to run through term breaks. Programmes are modified and a management plan implemented for students who are identified as struggling with workload and extra-curricular commitments.

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 2018 6.4b)

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- using subject specialists both within and outside the school to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- documenting the internal moderation process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- requiring Heads of Faculty to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their faculty prior to reporting results to NZQA
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- the Principal's Nominee reconciling the *Internal Moderation Tracking Sheet* with actual practice annually for each department, to ensure all results reported are credible.

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to NZQA requirements
- adequately storing samples of student work ensuring they are provided for external moderation if required
- 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
- discussing external moderation feedback with teachers, documenting actions and monitoring these are completed.

Engagement with NZQA's external moderation application The school is encouraging the use of the External Moderation Application Tool to provide professional feedback to teachers. The school encourages teachers to select standards submitted for external moderation, but few have taken this opportunity.

No action required

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

For consideration

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

- encouraging teachers to select standards for inclusion in the moderation plan for professional development
- submitting digital evidence for external moderation, where appropriate.

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)

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School effectively:

- uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:
 - informing assessment programme design so that the standards offered match student strengths and interests
 - Heads of Department annually reporting to the Academic Director an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions
- reports accurate achievement data by:
 - using the Key Indicators to check the accuracy of data and to identify and follow up any errors
 - reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
 - reconciling results from external providers with a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
 - ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
 - ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations
 - actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the NZQA learner login and NCEA mobile application.

Supporting at-risk students through evidence-based data analysis Review of student achievement data identified a need to provide more support for students at risk of not gaining a qualification. The school recognised that a small number of students needs were not being met through established courses. A newly created Guidance Studies course supports these students with their NCEA assessments to improve their opportunity to gain NCEA qualifications.

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))

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures through the staff handbook and the student planner
- supporting new teachers to the school to understand school assessment policy and procedures
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Samuel Marsden Collegiate School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- holding at the beginning of each year, a professional development meeting for staff, to inform and remind them about school policies, procedures and updates
- having a common template for course outlines across all subject areas which is reviewed and updated annually, ensuring consistent assessment information,
- providing opportunities for teachers to attend best practice workshops.

Senior Leadership actively supports Heads of Department Senior Leadership actively supports Heads of Department to understand and meet the school's and NZQA's assessment requirements. The 'Reminder for Heads of Department', issued at the beginning of each term, is a checklist of assessment practice related tasks and instructions on how to complete them. Staff interviewed commented on its effectiveness in making processes transparent and helping them to meet deadlines.

New Heads of Department are well supported to understand the school's assessment processes and policy. Senior Leadership identified through review process that improvement was needed inducting new Heads of Department in a more timely manner. New Heads of Department now have wrap-around support with an induction meeting with the Principal's Nominee, a Head of Department 'buddy' to help them throughout the year with school processes, and regular meetings with the Academic Director. Heads of Department induct and support new teachers in their departments. Staff interviewed commented that they are well supported and felt confident in their understanding of the school's assessment policy and procedures.

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.