

Managing National Assessment Report

Scots College

July 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Scots 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 2019* (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
- *Scots College Assessment Manual: Staff 2019*
- *Scots College Assessment Handbook – Short Version – (NCEA and IB Diploma): Students and Parents 2019*
- *Scots College Turnitin Policy – NCEA: An Information Sheet for Academic Staff 2019*
- *Scots College and Turnitin: An Information Sheet for Students 2019*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Learning Area Coordinators for:
 - Business Studies
 - English
 - Languages
 - Science
- Heads of Department for:
 - Geography
 - Physical Education
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Senior School 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

Scots College

02 July 2019

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

In keeping with their motto "Virtutem Paret Doctrina" – let education build all-round character – Scots College focuses on delivering a strong academic and character-development education. To achieve these aims and meet the changing demands of its students the school reviews its courses and organisation and is willing to make change accordingly.

After careful review senior school leaders have identified that ensuring a "future focussed education" best serves its community. A major change brought about by this review is that the school will focus more on teaching and learning at Year 11, rather than on making the achievement of Level 1 NCEA the goal. New courses have been developed for 2019 for Year 11 students. These teach foundations in knowledge and develop key skills such as collaboration, communication, research, creativity and critical thinking.

The school has strongly managed processes for assessment. The Principal's Nominee effectively coordinates changes made to programmes to ensure they are applied and communicated consistently. Teachers review assessment tasks and adapt them to the needs and interests of their students.

Moderation processes ensure a high level of school confidence in the grades being reported to NZQA. A second subject expert critiques tasks and verifies grades for a selection of student work.

Student assessment data is monitored to support individual students as required. Priority learners are supported to reach their achievement goals. Data is analysed to review programmes of learning and to inform change.

Scots College uses a variety of modes to communicate with its stakeholders to ensure a consistent understanding of NCEA and assessment practice. Career coaching and course counselling support families and students in making decisions about course selection and future pathways.

Areas for improvement

The final step of the external moderation cycle is for schools to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes made in response to the feedback from NZQA moderators. Scots College has agreed to implement a process to ensure that changes are reviewed for effectiveness.

Effective internal moderation includes subject experts verifying student evidence at grade boundaries and ensures that all grade verification meets NZQA expectations.

All student entries for standards should be reported with a grade or be withdrawn where assessment has not occurred. School processes should ensure that student entries are accurately reported with a result or are withdrawn before the final datafile submission.

Agreed action

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

- develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of changes made in response to external moderation
- ensure that internal moderation follows a process which focuses on verifying work at grade boundaries
- ensure all internal entries have a result reported by the final datafile submission or are withdrawn.

Kay Wilson
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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. Further assessment opportunities in all departments meet NZQA expectations. The reporting of student results meets the NZQA expectation that course endorsements are only available within a one-year period.

Response to external moderation outcomes Scots College has maintained a high level of agreement between its assessors and NZQA moderators. Where NZQA moderators identify inconsistencies, curriculum leaders review the information and make the required changes to teaching and/or assessment. They report on this response in their annual departmental review.

The Principal's Nominee reviews external moderation outcomes and arranges appropriate support as necessary. The school has agreed to develop a process for evaluating the effectiveness of changes made in response to moderator feedback.

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)

Review of teaching, learning and assessment Scots College have completed a three-year review of teaching, learning and assessment where ensuring a “future focussed education” and improving student outcomes are the goals. They identified the success of their Middle School, Middle Years Programme (MYP), which focuses on students making connections between subjects and with their wider world, as a driver in designing Year 11 study. The dual pathway offered by the school for NCEA Levels 2 and 3 and an alternative qualification also provided drive for change in Year 11.

The review identified concerns teachers had about repeated cycles of assessment and the emphasis on credit gathering over learning. Students have indicated concerns about their well-being, with the stress of constant high stakes assessment a factor.

The review process included parent surveys, stakeholder focus groups, school visits, staff feedback and information sessions for prospective and current students and families.

This has resulted in a fully integrated “Future Pathways” careers programme across the school, and two major changes. First, students in Year 11 focus more on learning goals than assessment, as discussed in detail later in this report. Second, the senior school is to become co-educational from 2020. Staff have been prepared for these

through a period of professional development both internally and with external providers.

Review of assessment practice The Principal's Nominee, who was new to the school from late 2018, and not involved in the school-wide review, identified assessment processes that needed strengthening to ensure they were being consistently managed. He oversees all changes to courses including standards being assessed, deadlines and further assessment opportunities to make sure these are consistently applied across the school and effectively communicated to all stakeholders. A Breaches Committee investigates and adjudicates all suspected breaches. This ensures that any concerns about authenticity of student work are addressed consistently.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior leadership agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior leadership undertakes to:

- develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of changes made in response to external moderation.

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 2019 5.5)

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

- designing courses, and using external providers, to meet a wide variety of pathway needs
- applying for special assessment conditions and providing appropriate support for eligible students
- scaffolding assessment tasks, using milestones and feedback to manage projects and monitor progress towards completion.

Scots College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing and communicating changes to courses, including deadlines
- students to appeal grades and have these thoroughly investigated using the principles of natural justice
- ensuring that appropriate evidence required for emergency and derived grades is collected
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Changes to teaching and learning at Year 11 From 2019, students no longer focus on NCEA Level 1 in Year 11, but complete a course designed to prepare them for NCEA Level 2 and beyond. Students have mandatory courses in English, Mathematics and Science alongside a range of full year and semester courses, and a year-long project. These have been developed to build the key skills that the school has identified as foundational to future success – including collaboration, communication, research, creativity and critical thinking. To prepare students for the assessment requirements of NCEA Level 2, each full-year course includes one internally assessed and one externally assessed achievement standard.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3 The Senior Leadership Team at the school has noted that in some years there is lower participation and achievement in STEM subjects for Māori and Pacific students than for students of other ethnicities. However, while the number of Māori and Pacific students is low, the rate of success overall for these students is generally equitable with other students.

Senior Management are committed to strengthening course counselling for all students over coming years to ensure that STEM subjects remain an equitable part of student pathway planning. The school will evaluate the impact of the 2019 changes to Year 11 courses, where additional STEM learning is available to students, as part of its review of this initiative.

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 2019 6.4b)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify grades for a selected samples of student work
- using the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to attest to the completion of the moderation process and subsequent follow up by the Principal's Nominee who reconciles a sample of cover sheets to student work
- storing and using benchmarked samples of student work.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Strengthening internal moderation processes is required The school should strengthen its moderation practice by purposefully selecting student samples at grade boundaries for verification. High quality internal moderation includes verification of student work at grade boundaries.

Strategic selection may reduce teacher workload The school should provide guidance to teachers on purposeful and strategic selection of student work for grade verification to provide targeted feedback on assessor judgements, while potentially reducing teacher workload. Currently, departments and learning areas assure the grades awarded by verifying a fixed or proportional sample of a range of grades, rather than focusing on grade boundaries. With strategic and purposeful selection, there is no fixed or predetermined number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

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 that internal moderation includes a process which focuses on verifying work at grade boundaries.

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)

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

- reporting results to students and families using an online portal to the student management system, so that they have up-to-date information about attainment and progress
- identifying “priority learners” who are followed up by deans for academic counselling
- identifying appropriate pathways through course selection processes.

Scots College reports accurate achievement data by:

- using Key Indicators to identify and correct issues or errors
- the Principal's Nominee actively managing the setting up of, and any required amendment to markbooks.

Reduce internal entries with no result recorded In 2018, Scots College had a higher than usual proportion of student entries for which there were no grades reported. Entries with no grade could cause confusion for students and might indicate missing results and under-reporting of success. All entries should either have a grade reported, or they should be withdrawn if no adequate assessment opportunity took place. The school should have a process for ensuring this happens.

Departments and Learning Areas regularly review assessment data Courses are regularly reviewed to ensure that assessment plans meet the needs of each cohort. They consider the mix and use of internal and external achievement standards, the teaching topics or contexts to focus on, and the assessment tasks to be used in their review.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure all internal entries have a result reported by the final datafile submission or are withdrawn.

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))

Scots College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive comprehensive outlines for all courses they undertake
- advising all students, parents and teachers of any changes to courses – including changes to standards being offered and to assessment dates or deadlines
- communicating NCEA information and school assessment policy and procedure.

Scots College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- the Principal's Nominee checking that teachers are following processes
- maintaining guides to NCEA information for staff and students
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes.

Career and course counselling support understanding of NCEA and appropriate course selection The school process for course selection focuses on having a high level of communication between parents, students, teachers and Deans. The focus is on students creating an appropriate individual pathway. Scots College partners with an outside provider to assist with assessing students' talents and interests, and matching these to appropriate pathways, through career coaching and course counselling. Information for students about NCEA and school courses is further supported by parent/teacher interviews and course planning days.

Amendments to the staff handbook suggested The Staff Assessment Manual should clarify expectations for assessment practice. The following changes are recommended:

- prioritise verification of student samples at grade boundaries in the internal moderation procedures
- amend the section on Special Assessment Conditions to include the use school-based evidence in applications, so that policy and practice align.

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:

- reviewing and amending the staff assessment manual as detailed.