

Managing National Assessment Report

St Margaret's College

August 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively St Margaret's 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 2021* (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
- *St Margaret's College, Policy and Procedures for NCEA Assessment, Version 2021* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA Assessment Student Handbook 2021*
- *St Margaret's Curriculum Policy*
- 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:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Science
- Acting Head of Faculty for:
 - Health and Physical Education
- Curriculum Leaders of:
 - Accounting
 - Food Technology and Food and Nutrition
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Associate Principal, Head of Senior School 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.

Background

The school also offers qualifications through the International Baccalaureate at Years 12 and 13.

SUMMARY

St Margaret's College

5 August 2021

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 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

What the school is doing well

St Margaret's College prides itself on its strong learning and academic focus. In recent years, the school has extended the courses it offers to ensure it meets the needs of a more diverse range of learners whilst maintaining its high achievement expectations.

The school responds appropriately to issues identified by both internal and external review. The school strengthened their internal moderation practices to fully resolve the significant issue from the 2017 Managing National Assessment review.

Self-review focuses on change in assessment-related practice to better meet student needs. Driven by the senior leadership team, along with faculty leaders, it often includes extensive consultation with staff, students, and parents. Current review is centred on developing courses in Year 11, following the decision to no longer offer the NCEA qualification at Level 1 from 2022.

Assessment practices are effective, understood by both students and staff, and consistently applied. Identified students receive approved special assessment conditions and are well supported.

Robust internal and external moderation processes, including monitoring and follow up of any necessary actions, exist across the school. These ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA. This effective practice is reflected in the high level of consistency between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

The school's data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes. Assessment data is managed to ensure that results reported to NZQA are accurate and timely. Achievement data is analysed to review faculty and subject practice and course design, set targets and strategic direction, and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications through their portal into the student management system and their NZQA Learner Login. Staff use data to effectively identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving to their potential.

The school has a range of clear and targeted communications in place to ensure all staff, students and parents successfully gain a common understanding of the NCEA qualification and the school's assessment policy and procedures.

Areas for improvement

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Kay Wilson
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29 September 2021

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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 22 March 2017 Managing National Assessment Report St Margaret's College has addressed the significant issue and action items identified in the last Managing National Assessment report. The school is now effectively monitoring internal moderation systems, has clarified derived grade processes, and ensured documentation is aligned with practice. NZQA can be confident in the quality of results reported for qualifications and the systems used to ensure this. The actions taken have fully resolved the significant issues found in 2017.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are fully informed of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required. Moderator feedback from external moderation shows there is a high level of consistency overall between assessor judgements and the national standard.

The Principal's Nominee reads each report and shares them with the relevant staff. If a report indicates there is an issue to be resolved, the faculty has time to reflect on the report. The appropriate teacher then meets with Principal's Nominee to establish the cause of the issue and decide what actions are required to resolve it. The Principal's Nominee monitors the completion of actions to ensure an effective resolution. His own analysis of external moderation shows that the few issues that need resolving tend to result from teachers assessing new standards or using a very different context from previous years.

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)

St Margaret's College has a strong focus on review that leads to improvement in assessment related practices that meet student needs. Their change process includes wide consultation of all relevant stakeholders, providing staff with high levels of access to professional development, and evaluating the impact of the change. While the review process is coordinated and led by the senior leadership team with the support of heads of faculty, review can be initiated by any staff.

Review includes regular checks on school practices and systems. For example, to gain a fresh viewpoint the school brings in outside experts to undertake an in-depth multi day review of each faculty in a quinquennial cycle.

Recent review has led to the decision to no longer assess NCEA at Level 1 from 2022. The review focused on providing the best outcomes for students and a desire to develop learning, not assessment, driven programmes. The resulting change intends to give staff more control over course structures, develop students' risk taking with their learning without fear of failure, reduce assessment, and create more time

for richer learning. The new structure will emphasise the importance of students fully completing a course which aims to help increase engagement in external assessment at NCEA Levels 2 and 3. The school considered different models and discussed current approaches with a variety of schools in developing the new structure.

Other assessment related initiatives the school has introduced that improve current practice and enhance student achievement include:

- creating more diverse pathways to support a change in student cohorts and considering how this could continue to expand
- constructing a Google calendar to help students and staff identify periods of heavy assessment load so it can be proactively managed and reviewing this change to ensure it is effective and becomes embedded practice
- focusing equity review on students with special assessment conditions to ensure they have access to outcomes like their peers
- exploring several online assessment options to support digital learning.

Future developments are planned and include considering how the school can build on its high levels of NCEA achievement to develop a culture of engaging in New Zealand Scholarship to extend students.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews 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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

St Margaret's College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- differentiating assessment through the provision of several courses within an NCEA level in some subject areas
- where appropriate, tailoring assessment opportunities to individuals within a course through choice of contexts, optional extra standards and/or withdrawing them from standards
- extending assessment opportunities by using a range of external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against standards related to career pathways
- offering staff and peer led subject help sessions throughout the year, and extra targeted support such as a pre-med group
- timetabling revision sessions during examination leave
- encouraging a culture of achievement through academic awards based on NCEA results.

St Margaret's College has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, breaches of the assessment rules and appeals
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- safeguarding student privacy.

New courses introduced to support changing cohort need The school has introduced a wider range of courses to support the changing needs of some of their students. These are designed to support students' intended future pathways, build on opportunities offered in the middle school and to provide learning at a more differentiated pace. In recent years new options added include Events Management, Agriculture, Equine, Practical Physical Education, Early Childhood Education, and cross curricular courses.

Students requiring special assessment conditions are well supported Students requiring special assessment conditions are well supported through the Learning Faculty. This includes identifying students, trialling support, using both school data and independent assessor reports to support applications to NZQA, and developing strategies to ensure they can provide their best evidence in assessments. Staff are clearly informed of students' special assessment conditions and appropriate

specialist assistance is readily available, with students encouraged to take agency over accessing it.

Effective support of digital assessment The school has engaged with NZQA digital examinations to enable students complete external assessment where possible in a way of working they are familiar with. Students have very good access to computers giving them high levels of competence with digital learning. The school has researched, evaluated, and used several different platforms to ensure students have effective opportunities to practice for external assessment digitally. They are starting to use the same platforms for internal assessment where appropriate.

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 2021 6.4b)

St Margaret's College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use and previous feedback is referred to
- using subject specialists, from within and outside the school, to verify a sample of student work focused on grade boundaries, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- retaining and updating work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- documenting the quality assurance process, including meaningful discussion to help inform future decisions, on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

St Margaret's College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- negotiating appropriate changes to remove standards that are no longer assessed but are selected for moderation
- querying assessment reports when required
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is stored securely so it is available for submission.

Effective monitoring of internal moderation Processes for monitoring internal moderation assure senior management that all reported results are credible.

Heads of Faculty actively monitor the completion of all aspects of internal moderation. They complete an end of year review sheet which they submit to the Principal's Nominee, confirming that all standards have been internally moderated, and any issues resolved. The Principal's Nominee visits each faculty biennially to discuss moderation processes, check evidence of completion of the process for each standard and to share good practice.

External moderation feedback supports teacher review of standards The school could consider encouraging more staff to suggest standards for their external moderation plan as this provides the opportunity for them to include external moderator feedback in their self-review of standards.

Providing guidance on grade verification sufficiency could reduce staff workload The school could consider providing staff with further guidance on selecting student work strategically for grade verification.

Most faculties vary the sample size for internal moderation verification, dependent on assessor experience and task style and context. Some other faculties, however, could reduce the amount of student work verified through greater strategic selection, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

For consideration

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

- having more subject areas suggesting standards to be included in the external moderation plan
- providing staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification.

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)

St Margaret's College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- faculties analysing results using a templated response to ensure they quantify achievement and focus on next steps, resulting in clear targets and goals that inform their modification of courses and teaching practice
- setting aspirational faculty goals at NCEA Level 3
- reporting a high number of unexpected event grades so they are available if needed
- effectively encouraging students to register and use their NZQA Learner Login, and their portal to the student management system, to monitor their progress towards gaining qualifications.

St Margaret's College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting data files to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate
- having students and teachers check a printout of external entries prior to confirming these with NZQA in term 3
- the Principal's Nominee closely managing withdrawals from standards and late external entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds consent, or against the correct code of outside providers where the Principal's Nominee has a copy of a current memorandum of understanding.

Student progress tracked effectively while interventions improve achievement outcomes The school uses data effectively to track student progress towards literacy and numeracy requirements and overall qualifications, to improve student achievement outcomes.

Students who are identified as being at risk of not achieving have their progress monitored by several members of the senior management team. Where a pattern of concern emerges, or through referral by a teacher, Dean or parent, interventions are implemented and their effect monitored, to help students to improve their assessment outcomes.

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))

St Margaret's College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear and consistent physical and/or digital outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to students and their families using a range of methods
- providing information to students so they can make informed course choices to ensure they support their future pathways
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with the school's expectations for assessment and moderation processes.

St Margaret's College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- discussing NCEA related processes in curriculum meetings
- providing targeted and timely messages in assemblies and emails to brief students about assessment policy and procedures, that are reinforced by class teachers
- ensuring information in the student handbook, staff handbook and school website align.

Students show a good understanding of how NCEA works and school assessment procedures Communication to students about the qualification and assessment practices is effective. Students could clearly articulate how NCEA works. They showed good understanding of school processes such as extensions to assessment submission dates, moderation, dealing with authenticity, derived grades and appeals, and felt their teachers applied them 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.