

Managing National Assessment Report

Mount Hutt College

May 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Mount Hutt 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
- *Mount Hutt College Methven 2021 – National Qualifications Assessment Procedures*
- *Mount Hutt College 2021 NCEA*
 - *Level 1 Student Information Sheet*
 - *Level 2 Student Information Sheet*
 - *Level 3 Student Information Sheet*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee/Deputy Principal
- Heads of Faculty/Department for:
 - Arts
 - English
 - Hard Materials
 - Technology
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Agriculture
 - Commerce
 - History
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal's Nominee at the end of the review and a phone call to the Principal two days following, to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

SUMMARY

Mount Hutt College

06 May 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.

What the school is doing well

Mount Hutt College's PRIDE acronym (*Pride, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Excellence*) embodies the behaviours and attributes essential for the realisation of the school's collective vision of a *Thriving Learning Community*. Following a robust internal review, involving extensive community, staff and student consultation, the school is now well-positioned with a shared vision on how to empower its learners, optimise learning outcomes and develop tools for life beyond school. The PRIDE acronym also underpins the school's improvement strategy (*Purpose, Readiness, Implementation, Development and Evaluation*) providing a well-structured model for creating sustainable change.

The size of the school enables teachers to have a thorough knowledge of every student's needs and this is a key contributor to student success. Programmes are highly individualised and personalised to meet each student's needs, aspirations and future pathways. The school has strong vocational pathways programmes to meet the needs of its predominantly rural student population, including a Primary Industry Academy. University pathways are extended by offering Distance Education and running multi-level and small classes. Authentic learning experiences are provided, including Real World skills, to support students beyond school.

Effective monitoring and improved tracking of student achievement progress by staff has fostered student engagement and enabled early interventions for students at risk of not achieving a qualification. The school has maintained literacy and numeracy levels above those of similar schools for the past five years.

Data is used to measure the effectiveness of the school's strategic direction on student achievement outcomes. The use of data analysis and student voice is being strengthened and underpins the planning and delivery of quality learning and assessment experiences for students, utilising the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model.

Areas for improvement

The school's external moderation summary shows that external moderation follow-up has not resolved issues in some standards and identifies some subject areas with a longitudinal lack of consistency. In addition, cases where requested materials have not been sent for external moderation contribute to a lower than expected level of consistency.

The review also identified that an agreed action from the 2017 review to clarify sufficiency and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation has not been effectively addressed. A clear understanding of NZQA's requirements for sufficiency and purposeful selection is yet to be embedded across all faculties.

The Heads of Faculty monitor internal moderation but an annual audit by the Principal's Nominee of each subject area would ensure the process is more robust and that documentation reflects actual practice.

The *Student Information Sheets* and staff *National Qualifications Assessment Procedures* handbook need to be reviewed annually to ensure they are fit for purpose and current. A common course outline would assist students and their whānau to have a better understanding of school-wide assessment practice.

Some other steps for the school to consider regarding the monitoring of both internal and external moderation are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed actions

The school agreed that within 12 months it will close off the following actions from the 2017 MNA report:

- ensure all staff understand NZQA's requirements for sufficiency and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation
- update the staff *National Qualifications Assessment Procedures* handbook and the *Student Information Sheets* as discussed in this report
- ensure students are provided with consistent course outlines using a common template.

The school agrees that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. That is to:

- audit each subject area annually to ensure internal moderation documentation reflects actual practice.

Kay Wilson
Manager
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28 June 2021

NZQA

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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.vi, 3iv-3v)

Significant issue resolved

The 2017 Managing National Assessment review found a significant issue that the school had to address to meet the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

The 2017 review identified that the school had not followed up on a recommendation from the 2014 Managing National Assessment report, to put in place a monitoring process to confirm that all standards assessed are subject to the school's internal moderation process prior to the reporting of grades. The failure to follow-up external review recommendations and findings (*CAAS Guidelines 3v*) became a significant issue resulting in a return visit in 2018 to ensure a monitoring process had been effectively implemented.

The return visit in 2018 confirmed that the Principal's Nominee had implemented a process for monitoring internal moderation, thereby giving Senior Management confidence that all reported results had been quality assured and are credible.

Action Items from 1 November 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

There were four agreed action items in the 2017 report to improve the quality of the school's assessment processes, which have yet to be satisfactorily addressed. There will be a follow-up visit within 12 months to ensure they have been effectively resolved. These include:

- clarifying teachers' understanding of sufficiency and purposeful selection with regard to internal moderation. This good practice is not yet embedded across all faculties. This review identified some subject areas verify more pieces of work than NZQA requires, including at times random samples. The school must ensure more clarity for teachers around the purpose of NZQA's requirements on sufficiency and purposeful selection, and update the staff *National Qualifications Assessment Procedures* handbook accordingly
- updating the staff and student handbooks has been actioned. However, there are errors and omissions in both sets of documentation that the school has agreed to rectify
- providing students with a common course information template. The school had planned to implement this in 2018 but its development is still pending
- providing evidence of a reconciliation process to confirm that there is a Memorandum of Understanding with all external providers who conduct assessment for the school. The school has provided NZQA with evidence of this process.

These action items will be discussed further within the body of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes Heads of Faculty/Department follow up external moderation found to be Not Consistent or Not Yet Consistent with a *Response to External Moderation Report*. This details the assessor's next steps to resolve the issues identified by the NZQA moderator. The reports are collected by the Principal's Nominee. A next step would be for the Principal's Nominee to evaluate the effectiveness of the Head of Faculty/Department's follow up to ensure that these actions can, and do, resolve the issues identified by NZQA moderators.

Where external moderation records show a poor agreement rate in particular standards over successive years, the school should check both the quality of the verifier and/or the verification process. Feedback from external moderation and its clarification of grade boundaries assists an assessor's understanding of the standard and confirms the robustness of the school's internal moderation.

When a standard sent for external moderation is reported as not consistent or not yet consistent, the feedback should be shared with the grade verifier to improve their understanding of the issue/s raised and a change of verifier considered, if that is more appropriate. Where an assessor has difficulty finding a suitable verifier, the school can contact School Relationship Manager for assistance.

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)

Following the dissolution of its joint Board of Trustees and the appointment of a new Principal in 2019, Mt Hutt College (MHC) undertook a major review of its strategic direction to determine what a thriving learning community would look like for MHC, and to identify what skills, attributes, capabilities and qualifications would enable its leavers to flourish in the 21st century.

The six-month consultation process captured the voice of staff, students and the community culminating in a refreshed Charter with fewer, more actionable goals and a complementary strategic framework aligned to that of the Opuke Kāhui Ako. The four focus areas for the Opuke Kāhui Ako and the school are: Wellbeing, Innovation, Student Agency and Hauora. (W.I.S.H)

To enable improved achievement outcomes for MHC learners, the school is strengthening data gathering, consolidating student tracking and delivering clear expectations and messaging around achievement.

Despite significant disruption from COVID-19 in 2020, NCEA results remained steady, or improved, and attainment overall was generally above that of comparable schools and the national average.

Post lockdown 2020, the school narrowed its focus to two key outcomes for 2021; improving achievement outcomes for MHC learners and implementing *Vision 2021*, the result of the community consultation process. Progress around these two key goals is reported on monthly to the Board of Trustees.

The school has introduced student-led, project-based learning in Years 9 to 10 to strengthen student/whānau engagement and agency over learning. Success is currently measured using the Key Competencies, but the longer-term goal is to align learning outcomes for all learners against their Graduate Profile and provide clearer steps for students to achieve their qualifications goals.

Mount Hutt College's approach to internal review demonstrates that the school has the capacity to identify where change is needed, and to make an appropriate response. A next step for the school would be to internally review NCEA practice and procedures to ensure these are more credible and consistent school-wide.

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.

For consideration

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- further developing capacity for managing national assessment within the school.

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)

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

- aligning Kāhui Ako strategic priorities with school strategic goals and annual faculty/department goals
- actively targeting literacy and numeracy to assist in the attainment of qualifications
- negotiating with students the standards to be undertaken in their assessment programme to reflect student's needs, interests and future pathways
- holding three-way parent/teacher/student interviews in Term 2 to review programmes, evaluate student progress and adjust individual learning plans, as required
- enabling students to explore and discover new pathways through initiatives such as:
 - involvement with MyNextMove, which de-mystifies the workplace and encourages students to look at career pathways in local industries
 - making the Career Central application available for all students
 - running an annual three-day Careers Expo, which provides sessions tailored to particular year groups, including Year 10
- supporting vocational pathways through the Primary Industry Academy, Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), Outdoor Education and Tourism programmes
- creating a strong responsive Gateway programme
- supporting university pathways through distance education, multi-level classes and running small classes.

Mount Hutt College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring resubmission practice meets NZQA requirements
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993* by ensuring student results remain private and permission is sought to use or share student work.

Equity in STEM meets student needs The school tracks the achievement data of its small number of Māori and Pacific students to promote equity of attainment. Māori and Pacific students' attainment rates in one or more STEM subjects are on par, or better than "other" students' over the past five years. This is the result of the wrap around support available to all students to achieve their qualifications goals.

Improve tracking and management of missed and late assessment The management of missed and late assessment would be more consistent if a single person had oversight of this aspect of assessment practice. Requests for extensions are currently managed by class teachers in consultation with Heads of Faculty and/or the Principal's Nominee. However, there is no tracking system to provide an overview of the number, or nature of requests individual students make.

This information would enable the pastoral team to identify and support students who have difficulty managing their workload and ensure greater equity of access to qualifications. It would provide greater confidence that assessments carried out before, or after the scheduled assessment due date are managed consistently across all faculties and that authenticity is monitored.

Extend the period for students to appeal a grade Extending the current period of 48 hours for a student to lodge an appeal against a grade awarded by their class teacher would give students a fairer opportunity to initiate an appeal.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

For consideration

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

- ensuring consistent practice schoolwide with regard to the management and monitoring of missed and late assessment
- extending the period in which a student can appeal a grade.

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)

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- having the same process for both Industry Training Organisation and NZQA moderation
- requiring teachers to submit the completed Internal Moderation Cover Sheets to the Head of Faculty prior to reporting results to NZQA
- requiring all Heads of Faculty to share their Internal Moderation Tracking Sheet with the Principal's Nominee to confirm that all standards assessed are subject to the school's internal moderation process prior to the reporting of grades.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements.

Clarify sufficiency and purposeful selection for internal moderation This review found that teachers' understanding of the reasons behind NZQA's requirements for sufficiency and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation grade verification is not yet embedded across all faculties, despite this being an action item in the 2017 review. NZQA has encouraged assessors, where appropriate, to reduce the number of pieces they verify as this has the potential to lessen verifiers' workload.

To clarify, NZQA does not require a fixed, or predetermined number of pieces of student work that must be verified for internal moderation. The number of samples which will be sufficient is determined by factors such as, assessor experience, familiarity with the standard, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and the number of students assessed.

Some teachers reported verifying eight pieces, which is a requirement for external moderation, but not for internal moderation. NZQA recommends teachers purposefully select work at grade boundaries for verification. Where a faculty/assessor does decide to verify more samples than would normally be sufficient, or to verify random samples, this practice can be valid, as long as the assessor has clear reasons for doing so.

Improve monitoring of internal moderation across all faculties If internal moderation tracking sheets were available online in a central location, rather than located physically within faculties/departments, they could be filled in by the assessor/Head of Faculty and be visible to the Principal's Nominee and Senior Leadership for tracking during the year and archiving at year end. This would also provide a good record to NZQA of the school's quality assurance process.

Annually audit each subject area to confirm best practice It is good practice for the Principal's Nominee to check each subject area annually and to reconcile documentation with actual practice. This should include checking if materials that are to be sent physically for external moderation are stored where they should be to minimise the number of "Materials Not Received" outcomes.

Strengthen the quality of verification The verification process is strengthened by using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work. A verifier should have recent, successful experience assessing the standard verified.

Teachers can access support for assessing standards Where an assessor needs further clarification before they design a task or assess a standard, they can request a clarification from the National Moderator using the *Request for Clarification of a Standard* form available on the NZQA website. Following external moderation, if a teacher needs further clarification of something in a report, they can use the Query function in the external moderation application up to 30 working days after the report is provisionally published. Likewise, if the teacher does not agree with the moderation result, or comments, they can appeal through the external moderation application up to 30 working days after the report is provisionally published.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following actions to improve the school's internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality. Senior management undertakes to:

- audit each subject area annually to ensure internal moderation documentation reflects actual practice.

For consideration

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

- ensuring all staff understand NZQA's requirements for sufficiency and purposeful selection of student work for internal moderation
- creating a centrally held, online *Internal Moderation Tracking Sheet* to provide the Senior Leadership team with better visibility of progress towards the completion of standards; as well as, a record of each year's internal moderation
- saving hard or soft copies of all completed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets* until the end of the following academic year.

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)

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

- having Deans and Kaiāwhina track student achievement, including regular meetings with Middle Management and others in the pastoral network to check student progress, identify “at risk” students and monitor student hauora
- using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform decisions about future course content and design
- reporting an analysis of NCEA achievement to the Principal and Board of Trustees to inform strategic goals and actions
- using school-based evidence with increasing frequency to support applications for Special Assessment Conditions
- celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition.

Mount Hutt College reports accurate achievement data by:

- checking the currency of Memoranda of Understanding with external providers annually and ensuring results are reported with the correct provider code
- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- using the Key Indicators and Data File Submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
- ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations.

Encourage all students to use their Students and Learners Login The school is encouraged to continue to review and improve the process for supporting students to register and use their NZQA Students and Learners Login. This login is the definitive way for students to check that entries and results have been reported accurately, make requests for review and reconsideration of external examinations, to login to Digital Online Exams and to order Certificates and Records of Achievement. A useful *Student Login PowerPoint* can be found under *Seminars for Principal’s Nominees* on the NZQA website.

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.

For consideration

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- continuing to review and improve the process for encouraging students to register for and use their Students and Learners Login.

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))

Mount Hutt College has effective processes and procedures for:

- reporting on student achievement appropriately and regularly to staff, the school community, students and their whānau
- using real time reporting for more timely updates on student assessment outcomes
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction process on assessment policy and procedures.

Mount Hutt College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families in print, in person and digitally
- using year level assemblies to update and remind students about NCEA matters
- holding Subject Information Evenings for years 10 -12 in term 3 each year
- providing all students with a hard copy of the appropriate year level *Student Information Sheet*
- holding annual three-way conferences for students and their whānau to provide updates on student progress and assist understanding of how NCEA works.

Create a common course template to assist understanding of assessment matters for students and whanau The current course outlines follow a variety of formats, provide varying levels of detail and some are missing key information such as the credit value of the standards in the course.

A common template would provide greater clarity and coherence by ensuring all Assessment Statements contain the same key information, and enable students and parents/caregivers to:

- understand which standards are optional and tailor courses as appropriate
- map out and manage the student's assessment calendar
- see how the work will be assessed
- be aware of the number of credits in each course
- check the mode/s of assessment, and
- check the availability, or otherwise, of Further Assessment Opportunities.

Updating of documentation required Suggestions were made during the review on ways to improve both the staff and student assessment documentation, so it better supports consistent assessment practice and gives clear direction to students on NCEA practice and procedures, by:

- adding Course Endorsement at Achieved
- removing obsolete information about financial assistance
- aligning the information regarding prerequisites for course entry with actual practice
- renaming “Appeals” for external assessment as “Reviews and Reconsiderations” in the staff *National Qualifications Assessment Procedures* handbook and linking these to the Students and Learners Login
- adding examples of what constitutes “approved” and “unapproved” leave regarding extensions for missed or late assessment
- including information about consequences for breaches around external assessment.

Revise guidelines regarding prerequisites for course entry The school’s *Student Information Sheets* describe a practice regarding prerequisites for course entry that might be perceived by some students and parents/caregivers as a barrier to entry. It is recommended that the documentation better reflect actual practice by revising the prerequisite guidelines to remove any perceived barriers.

Ensure dual enrolled students and others receive NCEA information when they cannot attend assembly This review identified that some dual enrolled students who attend courses held off site may miss out on important information about NCEA when they cannot attend assemblies. The school is investigating a suitable solution or backup, so students will not be disadvantaged if they miss out on key NCEA information.

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.

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:

- ensuring students are provided with consistent course outlines using a common template
- updating the staff *National Qualifications Assessment Procedures* handbook and the *Student Information Sheets* as discussed above.
- reviewing the guidelines regarding prerequisites for course entry, so the documentation matches actual practice.