

Managing National Assessment Report

Ashburton College

August 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Ashburton 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017 (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
- *Ashburton College – Student Handbook 2017*
- *Ashburton College – Staff Handbook 2017*
- *Ashburton College – Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Policy*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students and Heads of Faculty for Arts and Languages, English, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science and Technology.

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

SUMMARY

Ashburton College

3 August 2017

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

Ashburton College uses the flexibility of the NCEA to provide a range of assessment programmes including using distance learning and outside providers to support students' interests and aspirations. English as a Second Language classes and literacy support are provided in response to changing enrolment demographics.

The Principal's Nominee, who is new to the position, has conducted a number of reviews to address the agreed actions from the 2014 review. Changes have been made to assessment procedures and others are planned to ensure assessment credibility.

A multi-pronged approach is used to identify, track and support students at risk of not achieving a qualification. Māori and Pasifika students are a focus for all staff who are proactive in monitoring achievement against set targets. Mentoring and the individualisation of assessment programmes further supports student achievement.

Internal moderation is embedded and assures assessment quality. The planned monitoring by the Principal's Nominee this term will confirm that documentation reflects actual practice, and that assessment procedures are being followed. A robust follow-up to external moderation has been established that ensures feedback is used to improve assessment decisions.

Digital achievement evidence collection is developing, with technology being used to engage students and to support them to present their best evidence. The school encourages teachers to be involved in the digital trials.

NCEA data is used to review achievement against national statistics and set targets. Heads of Faculty report twice a year to the Board of Trustees on achievement progress and planned changes to further support students to reach their NCEA qualification goals.

The Principal's Nominee provides staff with clear expectations of school procedures to ensure consistent assessment practice. Assessment information for students, parents and staff is available through a variety of media and formats including providing information evenings and NZQA produced specific language information brochures on NCEA at parent evenings. The changes to school assessment procedures will be incorporated into the staff and student handbooks when updated for 2018.

Areas for improvement

Some teachers described an internal assessment grade sign-off process, after each assessment, that does not protect student privacy. The school plans to remind all staff of the need to protect student privacy during this process, to comply with the *Privacy Act, 1993*.

The selection of work for verification by some teachers was the random selection for external moderation. The school agreed to clarify with staff that student work for verification should be purposefully selected and sufficient to confirm assessment decisions are consistent with the standard.

Some course outlines provided to students include assessment procedure information that is also provided in the student handbook. To remove the possibility of contradictory information being provided to students, assessment procedures information will be removed from course outlines for 2018.

Agreed action

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

- remind staff to ensure student privacy is protected when confirming grades
- clarify student work for verification should be a purposeful selection and that the random sample for external moderation is not to be the verification sample
- remove assessment policy information from course outlines.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

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NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)

Action Items from 14 August 2014 Managing National Assessment Report The school has responded to the items agreed to during the previous review including:

- strengthening the internal moderation process by monitoring the coversheets submitted against course assessment statements to confirm all standards assessed are internally moderated
- requiring the random selection for external moderation to be made using the student management system
- making the required changes in the staff and student handbooks
- developing an assessment statement template to enable consistent course information to be provided to students
- establishing a process for memoranda of understanding to be stored centrally so they can be reconciled annually with provider codes used.

Response to external moderation outcomes An effective process for following up on external moderation feedback is in place. A response template has been developed to document agreed actions and to monitor their completion. Ensuring agreed actions are completed further supports the development of assessors understanding of the standard. To address the historical low agreement rates in one subject area the subject specialist verifier and internal moderation verification process has been reviewed and changes implemented in 2017.

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)

The 2015 Education Review Office report identified the need for the school to set targets and implement actions to improve achievement of boys, Māori and at-risk students. The school has responded by reviewing the strategies used to support achievement leading to:

- setting NCEA targets for achievement to be measured against
- introducing a credit predication programme, where actual credit achievement is compared to predication, to identify early in the year, students potentially at risk of not achieving a qualification
- setting a minimum target of students achieving 14 credits in each subject which teachers then monitor actual progress toward
- using Heads of School and Deans to identify those at risk and provide support including modifying assessment programmes and mentoring

- providing professional learning to support staff to provide relevant curriculum and assessment contexts.

Additional Vocational Pathway courses are planned to be introduced in 2018 to better meet the needs of the 70 percent of students who transition to employment or further training after school.

The English skill level of the increasing number of Pasifika and Filipino students now attending the school is a potential barrier to achievement. This diversity has been responded to by providing:

- English as a Second Language support to students in Year 9 and 10 to develop language skills and enable them to access Level 1 when in Year 11
- literacy support to assist students to meet the NCEA and University Entrance literacy requirements
- different language NCEA information brochures to help students and parents understand NCEA.

To ensure the significantly increased number of students with special assessment entitlement needs are met, and the school's resources effectively used the school has:

- recorded the entitlements on the student management system to facilitate staff knowledge and the provision for internal assessment, as appropriate
- sent letters to parents and students notifying them of their entitlement and requested confirmation of them wanting to use it for their practice examinations
- planned training for readers and writers, who are community volunteers, to ensure the evidence collected is authentic and NZQA special assessment rules are met.

The school's planned next step is to ensure a needs analysis for the 2018 roll-over is carried out. This will identify students who did not use or want their entitlement, or who may require support to access their condition.

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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

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

- collecting evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways including blogs, portfolios, digital and verbal
- differentiating and individualising assessment programmes to enable students to undertake an assessment course that meets their needs including:
 - offering flexible timeframes for assessment submission, where manageable and appropriate
 - offering NCEA Level 1 extension opportunities in some Year 10 subjects
 - providing students with the opportunity to design their assessment course by providing optional standards or a menu of standards to select from
- engaging with external providers to offer a range of vocational and trade-based courses, including Hair and Beauty, Automotive assessment programmes and a Primary Industry Academy
- using NZ Net and Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu to offer academic courses the school does not have the resources to provide
- collecting school-based data to support applications for special assessment conditions
- identifying and supporting students at risk of not meeting the literacy requirements of NCEA or University Entrance.

Ashburton College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring consistent school-wide assessment practice for extensions, further assessment opportunities and resubmissions
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted
- ensuring derived and emergency grades are based on standard-specific authentic evidence from practice examinations.

Assessment programme design is being reviewed Senior management has identified that some subjects are offering assessment programmes with a large number of credits. Aimed at providing students with the greatest opportunity to achieve their 14 credit target, it has resulted in some Level 1 students gaining 140 credits.

As part of this review senior management has lead discussion at Heads of Faculty meetings around offering fewer credits in assessment programmes. This should

assist with managing teacher and student assessment workload and support the school's goal of increasing the number of Merit and Excellence endorsements.

Student privacy needs to be protected Currently, in some subjects, students are able to view other students grades when they "sign-off" the accuracy of their internal grades. The school agreed to remind staff, when they use the class result list from the student management systems they need to ensure student privacy is protected under the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Consistent granting of extensions The Principal's Nominee approves all extensions and maintains a record to identify individual student or subject trends. This process ensures there is consistent approval for extensions. With the embedding of a consistent understanding of the school's extension policy the Principal's Nominee's planned next step is for Heads of Faculty to manage extensions within their faculty.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- remind staff to ensure student privacy is protected when confirming grades.

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Evidence found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)

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

- ensuring teachers are provided with clear expectations on the school's requirements
- requiring teachers to document the process for each standard assessed before results are reported to NZQA
- using panel marking or subject specialists from within or outside of the school to verify assessor judgements
- requiring completed moderation cover sheets to be submitted to the Principal's Nominee to monitor that all standards assessed have been subject to a quality assurance process.

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

- requiring all teachers to document a response to external moderation, including identifying actions to address issues, where appropriate
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored
- using a random selection method that meets NZQA requirements.

Selection of work for verification requires clarification Two Heads of Faculty described verifying the random selection for external moderation, in addition to other work selected either randomly or at grade boundaries. The school will clarify with all teachers that:

- the random selection for external moderation is not the verification sample
- work selected for verification should be purposefully selected, at grade boundaries and sufficient to be confident marking is consistent with the standards and across classes.

The purposeful selection of student work will assist with managing teachers' assessment workload and provide benchmarks to support future assessor judgements.

Documenting of verification discussion Moderation coversheets sighted at the review identified that some teachers do not document verification discussion. The school will remind teachers to document the verification discussion. Documenting verification discussion assists to develop teachers' understanding of grade boundaries, further strengthening the internal moderation process.

Changes to increase uptake of digital external moderation While digital evidence is collected in most subjects nearly all work provided for external moderation in 2017 was submitted physically. The school is encouraged to develop

digital storage protocols at a department level to facilitate digital submission of external moderation.

Submission of work this year was managed solely by the Principal's Nominee. Moving forward, if Heads of Faculty were responsible for preparing the submission material it would reduce the Principal's Nominee's workload and allow her more time to focus on issues and improvements.

Planned audit of moderation processes The Principal's Nominee plans to visit departments later this term to confirm that internal moderation processes are followed, the documentation reflects actual practice, and material is stored to be readily available for external moderation. A check list will be used to provide a record of the monitoring.

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 clarify that:

- student work for verification should be a purposeful selection and that the random sample for external moderation is not to be the verification sample.

For consideration

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

- developing digital storage protocols to enable assessment material to be readily available for external moderation submission
- having Heads of Faculty prepare external moderation submissions.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Ashburton College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - providing students with credit summaries to assist them to check their grades and monitor achievement
 - reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement data, by gender and ethnicity against national statistics, department goals and informing on changes that further support achievement
 - enabling Deans and Heads of School to mentor students including discussing pathway plans, setting and reviewing goals, and monitoring progress toward their NCEA qualification.
- **manages assessment-related data by:**
 - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
 - reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with which the school holds a current memorandum of understanding
 - requiring students to “sign-off” that their external entries are correct to ensure minimal late entries and the accuracy of internal results.

Strengthening the processes for ensuring all internal entries have a result reported While the number of internal entries without a result reported was lower in 2016, the school acknowledged that it could be further reduced. It is recommended that the school use NZQA reports to strengthen data checking processes. This will ensure that all entries have a result reported or are withdrawn if an adequate assessment opportunity has not been provided. Using NZQA reports also helps to identify school leavers or students who change course but still have an internal entry without a result reported.

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 found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)

Ashburton College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating NCEA information and assessment procedures to staff, students and whānau using written, digital and face-to-face methods
- supporting teachers new to the school to understand school assessment procedures and expectations
- assisting students and parents to use the parent portal to monitor NCEA qualification progress
- supporting students to register and use their NZQA Learner login so they can check the accuracy of grades and order certificates.

Ashburton College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- ensuring all Heads of Faculty have access to the NZQA secure Provider login so they can access copyright material and statistical data
- supporting students understanding of what they need to achieve a qualification
- using Heads of Faculty and staff meetings to clarify changes in assessment procedures and facilitating discussion on assessment best practice
- supporting parental understanding of NCEA and assessment procedures through targeted meetings within the school and school community, and providing NZQA brochures in other languages.

Staff and student handbooks support good assessment practice The staff and student handbooks are relevant documents presented in plain English. The inclusion of the new internal and external moderation procedures and other assessment changes will be included when the handbooks are updated for 2018. The school agreed to include information on quality assurance processes for assessments used to generate a derived grade so the schools good practice is documented.

Removal of assessment policy information from course outlines A standard assessment statement template has been developed to accompany course outlines and provide consistent information. However, some course outlines still include school wide assessment procedure information. To ensure version control the school agreed to have assessment procedure information removed from course outlines.

Ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers

The central, digital storage of memoranda of understanding is being developed. The school uses a large number of external providers for assessment so the change will enable them to more easily confirm a memorandum is in place for every provider used.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- remove assessment procedure information from course outlines.