

Managing National Assessment Report

Dunstan High School

April 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Dunstan High School:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 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
- *Dunstan High School, Assessment, Policy and Procedures 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Dunstan High School Staff NCEA Reporting-Assessment Guidelines 2019*
- *Dunstan High School Board of Trustees Assessment Policy*
- *Dunstan High School Diary and Handbook 2019* (Student Handbook)
- *Senior Course Choice Book 2019*
- a sample of school newsletters including NCEA information
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Senior Academic Director (and Head of Faculty for Science)
- Head of Faculty for Mathematics
- Teachers in Charge of:
 - Food and Nutrition (and Specialist Classroom Teacher)
 - Te Reo Māori
- Teacher of Geography
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee, Deputy Principal and Senior Academic Director 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

Dunstan High School

4 April 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

Dunstan High School responds appropriately to assessment issues identified by both internal and external review. Self-review is driven by the management team, taking account of teacher and student voice. This leads to changes in assessment-related practice to better meet the needs of students. Student support has improved through wider analysis of data and mentoring, establishing new courses and improving communications.

The school provides a broad assessment programme to cater for the varied pathways its students wish to follow. Assessment is differentiated for students through multiple course choices in several subject areas, along with some individualisation in other courses. Assessment opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses and standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. The school has worked to identify an increasing number of students who can benefit from approved special assessment conditions and provides them with appropriate support. These actions contribute towards assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation and monitoring by Heads of Faculty and the Principal's Nominee ensure that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA. This is reflected in the overall high level of agreement between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. The school is developing the capacity for individual staff to take ownership of the management of data related to their own courses. Achievement data is analysed to review faculty practice and courses, set strategic direction and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications, and staff use data to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving a qualification.

The school has communications that allow staff, students and their families to gain a common understanding of NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

Processes are in place so that students and staff check the accuracy of results reported to NZQA. These checks also need to cover the withdrawing of entries in internal standards. The school must ensure that all internal entries to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This would mean that data sent to NZQA reflects the assessment undertaken and ensures that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress.

Some minor changes and additions are required to the comprehensive information provide to students, parents and staff so they are current and accurate.

Agreed action

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

- ensure that all entries in internal standards made to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed
- update staff and student handbooks so they provide current and accurate information in a format suitable for the audience.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

17 May 2019

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 for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 11 May 2016 Managing National Assessment report The review identified three agreed actions to refine internal and external moderation practice and these have been actioned. The school is considering digitising the tracking of the completion of moderation to further enhance their processes. A fourth action to refine school assessment documentation has been partially completed and further improvements are outlined in the relevant section of this report.

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. The school actively manages any ongoing issues to resolve them.

Teachers understand the need to reflect on each report and request clarifications and/or appeals where appropriate. Subject areas provide written feedback to the Principal's Nominee on each standard, including any actions needed to resolve concerns. The issues are discussed within the senior management team and the Principal's Nominee follows up on the completion of any required actions.

Feedback from external moderation shows that overall there is a high level of consistency between assessor and moderator judgements overall.

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)

The school effectively reviews its assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements. This is driven by the senior management team and the Senior Academic Director, with input from other staff and student voice. Staff have also visited other schools to examine their practice and consider what changes could improve outcomes for Dunstan High School students. The impact of changes is reviewed, and if necessary, these are refined and built upon. The school's self-review also includes forward planning and work is underway to conduct a major curriculum review next year.

Faculties complete annual reviews using formatted assessment data in a templated response to the Principal. This model allows staff to focus on analysing data and formulating conclusions, rather than processing the data. One current area of focus is identifying students who have not gained 14 credits in a course and considering if this should lead to any changes. The analysis of results has also led to an emphasis on increasing Excellence endorsements. This is being done through identifying students with the potential to gain an endorsement and working with them to focus on what is required to reach the endorsement goal. As part of the endorsement focus

the school intends to complete internal assessment for most subjects by the end of term 3 to ensure students can concentrate on preparing for external assessment.

Several other initiatives have been introduced to better meet student assessment need. These include:

- introducing Communication English and Numeracy courses at Level 2 to provide more suitable pathways for students to continue in these subject areas beyond Level 1
- increasing the use of the Trade Academy in response to cohort need
- offering new courses both within the school and through external providers such as a school-based primary industry course and using the Southern Institute of Technology for courses related to sports science and nursing
- piloting a mentoring project with a group of Year 13 students with the intention of expanding to all students in the year and then other year groups if successful
- increasing the use of a learning management system and developing staff skills in digital pedagogies and assessment.

Self-review has also focused on improved communications. This has led to:

- combining the NCEA information evening for parents with an *Art of Learning* presentation to increase attendance
- using the student management system to communicate with parents, with the school now considering using it to check which recipients are opening emails to see if communications are reaching their intended audience.

Another area of development has been to improve the use of data to support student achievement. This has included:

- introducing common assessment tasks in the junior school to identify and intervene with at risk students in Year 10, and monitor and support cohort needs in preparation for NCEA programmes
- recording more level of detail in the fortnightly reports to parents and students to make it more apparent if intervention is required.
- investigating how the student management system can better support school processes such as Deans and senior management tracking of students' progress.

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 2019 5.5)

Dunstan High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- providing differentiated assessment through offering multiple courses within several subject areas, and when appropriate, tailoring assessment opportunities to cohorts and individuals within a course
- using milestone checks, feedback, and feedforward to assist students to present their best evidence of achievement
- focusing on assessing when ready to minimise the need for further assessment opportunities
- providing an end-of-year catch up course based around leadership skills, for students to complete additional assessment if they are at risk of not achieving Level 2 NCEA by a small number of credits
- the Senior Academic Director or a Dean meeting with Year 13 students to help them manage their assessment programme to meet their desired outcomes
- offering regular informal tutoring outside class time.

Dunstan High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission opportunities
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*
- assisting with the effective management of NZQA external examinations.

The school focuses on providing a range of pathways to meet student needs

To ensure the school provides suitable pathways for students, they are offered a wide choice of courses. The school finds ways of accommodating their selections through school-based classes, which could be multi-level, or through an increasingly wide range of external providers. These include a virtual learning network, a Trades Academy, the Southern Institute of Technology, Star and Gateway courses and Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (The Correspondence School).

The school is aware that if a student is not fully engaged with distance learning they are less likely to achieve to their potential, so they counsel students to help them consider if these types of courses are appropriate for their learning style.

Improved access to special assessment conditions The school has increased the number of students who have access to special assessment conditions. This have been mainly achieved through trialling conditions with students in Year 10, or when they join the school in other year groups, to provide support for school-based

evidence applications. Staff are well informed of student entitlements and appropriate assistance is readily available through a booking system coordinated by the librarian.

The school is considering how to streamline the processing of evidence and applications to make this part of the support process less time consuming.

Māori and Pacific student engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects Over the last five years there is little difference between the success rate of Year 13 students of different ethnicities with achieving one or more STEM subject at Level 3. For three or more subjects the difference is greater. The school is currently working towards improved equity through inclusive practice and anticipates setting school goals related to this in their upcoming curriculum review.

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)

Dunstan High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- staff understanding the need for all new or modified assessment materials to be critiqued prior to use
- retaining and updating work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- following appropriate processes for moderating Industry Training Organisation administered standards
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- Heads of Faculty monitoring the completion of the moderation process
- the Principal's Nominee completing subject area checks of moderation processes
- teachers submitting the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*, to the Principal's Nominee with him following up on any issues with staff.

Dunstan High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- teachers requesting approximately half of the standards selected for external moderation to gain feedback on standards they feel need targeting
- negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is available by the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of the materials.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. 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.

Verification of grade judgements is done using subject specialists, within and outside the school, currently focusing on a selected sample of work which includes work at grade boundaries.

Develop a policy for the storage of digital assessment material As teachers improve their confidence with digital pedagogies, assessments are beginning to be completed digitally. Developing a policy for the storage of digital material will enable

the school to ensure it is secure, can continue to be easily accessed, shared with outside verifiers, and be available, if required, for external moderation.

For consideration

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

- developing a policy for the storage of digital assessment material.

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)

Dunstan High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- subject areas analysing results with a focus on next steps, which informs the modification of courses and teaching practice
- analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to guide strategic direction
- submitting all entries in the first data file to NZQA ensuring a student's full assessment programme can be considered when tracking progress.

Dunstan High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- having student and teacher checks and a sign-off process when results are recorded in the student management system
- the data manager using the *Key Indicator Checklist* and *Data File Submission* reports to identify and resolve data issues
- closely managing late entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds consent, or against the correct code of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

Student progress is effectively tracked to improve achievement outcomes

Data is used to effectively track student progress with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. The Senior Academic Director regularly checks results, and progress grades for portfolio-based standards, are recorded in the student management system so data is current. This information, alongside fortnightly reports and comments recorded in the student management system, is used to identify students who are at risk of not achieving to their potential. The Deans have moved to a more academic support focus, and along with the Senior Academic Director and tutors or teachers with a particular connection with a student, they work towards putting in place interventions to enable a student to succeed.

Developing the ability of staff to take ownership of assessment data The school has a teacher in the role of data manager who is working alongside staff to develop their ability to manage their own markbooks in the student management system. It is intended that teachers take ownership of their assessment data, which includes checking the school has consent to assess the standards, that they are assessing latest versions and that entries and results are accurate.

Ensure all internal entries are withdrawn if a result is not recorded The school needs to continue working towards ensuring that in all subject areas internal standard entries submitted to NZQA have a result reported, or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This will ensure that data sent reflects the assessment undertaken. This will improve the outcome of the current teacher and student checking of entries and results, and will ensure that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress.

In 2016 and 2017 five percent of internal standard entries did not have a result recorded, but this dropped to two percent in 2018.

Consider how to further support student access to the functions provided through the NZQA Learner login The school should consider how they can further support students to register their NZQA Learner login so they can continue to access the functions it provides. When students do not register their NZQA Learner login, they cannot check their personal details and the reporting of results to NZQA, apply for reconsiderations and/or reviews of external assessments, or order certificates and their New Zealand Record of Achievement.

Over recent years close to 100 percent of students registered their Learner Login, but this has dropped to below 90 percent in the last two years. The introduction of the facility for students and parents to access their data through the student management system appears to have impacted on the number of students registering their NZQA Learner Login.

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 that all entries in internal standards made to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed.

For consideration

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

- how they can further support students to register and use their NZQA Learner 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))

Dunstan High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- publicising details of NZQA fees and financial assistance, and following up with identified families
- assisting students and staff to manage assessment workload by publishing and updating assessment dates in an online calendar, which is redistributed each term.

Dunstan High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- creating *Dunstan High School Staff NCEA Reporting-Assessment Guidelines 2019*, a concise one-page summary of processes as a reminder and easy reference for staff
- using a variety of year-level meetings led by the Principal's Nominee at key points in the year to explain and remind students about assessment policy and procedures, with messages reinforced by class teachers and tutors
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes at parent meetings and through regular and timely reminders in newsletters and social media
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with the school's expectations for assessment and moderation processes.

Students show a good understanding of how NCEA works and school assessment procedures Students could clearly articulate how NCEA works. They understood school processes such as extensions, moderation, dealing with authenticity, derived grades and appeals, and felt their teachers applied them fairly and consistently.

Changes required to staff and student information School publications have been reviewed but require some further alterations and additions to give accurate information that reflects current practice. This includes:

- adding information in the student handbook on special assessment conditions and where evidence for results used for derived grades can be from
- updating the special assessment conditions section in the staff handbook to include applications based on school evidence
- updating the staff handbook to include the literacy and numeracy requirements to gain NCEA Level 2 or 3.

Students' knowledge of assessment related processes mainly came from verbal information shared in meetings and through discussions with staff. The school should consider reviewing the *Assessment Policy Information* in the *School Diary and Handbook 2019*. Presenting it in a more user-friendly format and in language

targeted to the audience. This would ensure students could refer to and understand appropriate written information as and when required.

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:

- update staff and student handbooks so they provide current and accurate information in a format suitable for the audience.