

Managing National Assessment Report

Columba College

March 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Columba 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 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 check
- *NZQA/NQF Staff Handbook 2017, School NCEA/NQF Policies and Guidelines and Quality Assurance Procedures*
- *NZQA/NQF Student Handbook 2017*

- *Years 11 to 13 Course and Careers Handbook 2017*
- *Columba College Assessment Policy*
- *Columba College Policy and Procedure for Breaches of Assessment Rules – Internal Assessment (2016)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal, Assistant Principal, Principal's Nominee and Heads of Department for English, History, Languages and Science.

There was a report-back session with the Assistant 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

Columba College

9 March 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

Columba College has implemented all the action items from the 2014 Managing National Assessment review.

The school is developing an increasing capacity to undertake its own review and evaluation of the effectiveness of their NZQA assessment practices and procedures. Self-review has led to enriched academic programme guidance for students through establishing an academic coordinator, and improved clarity across the school around authenticity, missed assessments and appeals processes.

Assessment processes are managed to meet the needs of students. The school provides a degree of differentiated assessment through multiple course choices in certain subject areas and some individualisation of courses for identified students. Assessment opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses they are unable to run. These contribute to assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Sound internal moderation processes are embedded assuring assessment quality. This is reflected in the high level of the school's moderation agreement rate between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements. Monitoring ensures that only credible results are reported to NZQA.

Assessment data is managed effectively to ensure results reported to NZQA are timely and accurate. Achievement data is analysed to review school courses, set strategic direction and to monitor student progress to complete qualifications and to identify students at risk of not achieving to their potential.

The school has communications that allow staff, students and caregivers to effectively understand NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

In response to the previous Managing National Assessment review, the school has improved its processes to monitor internal moderation. However, an end of year departmental attestation to the completion of the internal moderation process for every standard would complement existing practice and confirm for senior management that there is robust quality assurance of all results.

While the school has improved its capacity to undertake self-review it should consider reviewing the varied approaches departments have to some facets of the

assessment process. This would lead to an understanding of whether students experience a coherent assessment process that meets student need, allowing them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Agreed action

The school agreed an action that will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is to:

- ensure the annual departmental internal moderation plans include notes on the Principal's Nominee monitoring and that departments attest to the completion of the plan.

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15 May 2017

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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 the 25 March 2014 Managing National Assessment Report

The review identified three actions to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. The school undertook to:

- require subject departments to annually verify teacher judgments with an external subject expert for one standard at each NCEA level
- monitor teacher compliance with internal moderation processes on an annual basis
- review the student and staff handbooks to ensure key messages are clear and relevant.

All three have been actioned. The school is in a position to review if it is still necessary for all subject departments to annually verify teacher judgments with an external subject expert for one standard at each NCEA level.

Response to external moderation outcomes In 2016 one standard was not moderated and several standards were moderated late due to difficulties with accessing student work where staff members had left the school. The school has started a process of reviewing staff exit procedures, particularly around the sharing of digital materials, to ensure work is available for moderation and benchmarking.

Response to data issues In response to a recent focus from NZQA on the recommended content of memoranda of understanding, the school is reviewing if all of theirs are fit for purpose. The Principal's Nominee is particularly concentrating on the management of entries, results and the use of provider codes with courses run through reciprocal agreements with a local school.

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 school is developing a culture of reviewing its NCEA assessment practices in response to issues they have identified. This is helping ensure credible assessment and utilising the flexibility of the NCEA model, to meet the needs of students. Several assessment related initiatives have been introduced to improve current practice and enhance student achievement, including:

- establishing an academic coordinator role with an overview of a student's academic programme to check and advise if their programme is suitable for their assessment goals
- clarifying assessment policy, particularly focusing on the processes around not meeting assessment deadlines and appeals

- in response to the increased availability of technology such as smart watches, updating authenticity processes and explaining to students in year level assemblies what authenticity means
- improving internal communication around student assessment practices using the student management system to record information on breaches and appeals.

The effectiveness of these initiatives is being evaluated during the year. They indicate that the school has the capacity to continue to grow self-review of its NCEA assessment practices.

Extending good practice in Departmental review

Departments review their assessment processes and can clearly articulate and justify their rationale for aspects such as the amount of credits offered, use of digital tools in internal assessments, strategies for managing authenticity, course outline formats, etc. The school should consider reviewing the varied approaches to see if students experience a coherent assessment process that meets student need allowing them to achieve to the best of their ability.

For consideration

To support school response to external review and self-review of assessment systems and practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing if departmental assessment practices leads to a coherent student assessment experience that meets student need and allows them to achieve to the best of their ability.

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)

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

- ensuring that students who need special assessment conditions are identified, staff are well informed of student entitlements and appropriate assistance is readily available
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers
- developing an ethos of striving for course and certificate endorsements and New Zealand Scholarships where appropriate
- providing differentiated assessment through offering multiple courses within a subject area and when appropriate, tailoring assessment opportunities to individuals within a course.

Columba College has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted during the assessment and marking process, including recording the outcomes of any investigations
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Extending good practice by using school-based evidence for Special Assessment Conditions applications

The school has started to use school-based evidence to support Special Assessment Conditions applications where an independent assessor report is unavailable. Although most parents are willing to provide an independent assessor report the school should consider developing processes to easily gather school-based evidence.

For consideration

To meet student needs and support assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing processes to easily gather school-based evidence to support Special Assessment Conditions applications where an independent assessor report is unavailable.

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)

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

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- thoroughly reviewing departmental moderation processes during the triennial departmental review cycle.

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

- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to meet NZQA requirements
- using a response form to provide senior management with staff feedback and actions to address identified issues.

Strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation Recording the checks on internal moderation carried out by the Principal's Nominee and adding an end of year attestation to the department moderation plans would strengthen the quality assurance process and better inform senior management of outcomes. Departments annually submit to the Principal's Nominee a plan for critiquing and moderating each standard in their learning area. The Principal's Nominee uses information gathered through various processes such as data from NZQA, departmental reviews, feedback in meetings, knowledge of staffing in a department, etc. to target support and informal checks on internal moderation.

Agreed action

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

- ensure the annual internal departmental moderation plans include notes on the Principal's Nominee monitoring and that departments attest to the completion of their internal moderation plan.

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)

Columba College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - monitoring students' progress towards NCEA achievement
 - analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform course design and set strategic direction
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
 - having appropriate student and teacher checks to ensure reported results are accurate
 - reporting Not Achieved results, as appropriate
 - holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers.

Student progress is effectively tracked to improve achievement outcomes

Students who are at risk of not achieving to their potential are identified and have interventions put in place as necessary, to improve their assessment outcomes. Class teachers, tutors, deans and the academic coordinator use a traffic light system to help identify and track a wide range of priority learners. A literacy coordinator and a numeracy coordinator track and intervene where required with progress towards literacy and numeracy requirements.

Withdrawing entries if a student has not had an adequate assessment opportunity The Principal's Nominee will focus on practices in two departments who in 2016 had a small number of internal entries without results.

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*)

Columba College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive assessment information for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families using a range of methods
- actively encouraging use of the NZQA Learner login and the student management system portal for students and parents to monitor progress
- publicising information on NZQA fees and financial assistance.

Columba College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- annually briefing students in tailored year level meetings about assessment policy and procedures
- presenting to parents NZQA and school assessment related processes as part of the course information evening
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes
- having assessment policy and procedures available in both physical and digital formats.

Standardisation of information in year planner required All courses use a common year planner in their course outlines allowing students and parents to easily access important assessment information. Some departments do not use the registered standard numbers which can cause issues when accessing resources and results through 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.