

Managing National Assessment Report

Blue Mountain College

March 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Blue Mountain College

30 March 2023

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2021.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

The school agreed that one action will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. This is:

| Action | Timeframe |
|--|--|
| External and internal review | |
| Formalise a process to ensure effective response to external moderation outcomes | To support the 2023 round of external moderation |

For consideration

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

- continuing to prepare the school's response to the NCEA Change Programme.



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9 May 2023

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External and internal review

External review

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

Action Items from 5 September 2018 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has addressed the three action items from the 2018 review. As a result the school now reports results in the year of assessment, as required by NZQA. Staff and Student Handbooks describe the school assessment processes in an accessible format to help teacher and student understanding. Course outlines are standardised across all courses and include clear, easily navigable information that supports school-wide consistent assessment practice and access to programme pathways.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes External moderation reports indicate that, while most assessor judgements are at the standard, there are a small number of subjects with low rates of consistency. Completion of action plans by teachers in response to external moderation outcomes would ensure that identified issues with verification of results are addressed.

To ensure that response to external moderation is effective, school leaders, along with the Principal's Nominee, should formalise an evaluation process based on best practice within the school. Teachers interviewed indicated that the feedback from moderation was valuable but there was no formal documentation of responses that had been made as a result of the feedback to inform future practice and ensure they adjust benchmarks for assessor judgement. Once the process has been formalised, it should be followed up by the Principal's Nominee and school leaders to identify any concerns and ensure that issues raised are addressed for future assessments to strengthen school assessor decisions.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

Blue Mountain College is developing effective self-review of the school's assessment practices to help meet the needs of students and support their achievement. The Principal's Nominee, supported by senior leadership, is leading changes to the school's assessment practice and has implemented systems to support consistent assessment practice, for example the school's internal moderation process and digital storage of associated material. This provides oversight for the Principal's Nominee of the school's assessment practice and will support them to identify any risk to credible assessment in the school. Teachers have built ownership of and capability in their assessment practices supporting student achievement with consistently good information about their assessments and timely grade verification and processing of results.

Academic mentoring and tracking of student achievement In order to ensure that each student in the school has a personal plan to gain appropriate NCEA qualifications, the school has strengthened their academic mentoring and tracking of student achievement. The Senior Dean monitors student course selection and progress towards qualifications is for all Year 11 to 13 students. This allows students to choose courses which can be tailored to match their goals but also identifies students who are at risk of not completing a qualification or who are working below

their potential. This includes the involvement of parents and the development of action plans if required. Curriculum area leaders analyse the previous year's achievement data to check that assessment practice meets student needs.

Student ownership of assessment information and data The school has identified a need to widen the use of digital tools in teaching, learning and assessment. The Principal's Nominee has provided strong leadership in the development of school-wide processes for teachers to collect assessment evidence, give feedback to students, and help ensure that students have ongoing access to all course and assessment data. Most students have set up and used their NZQA login and regularly access the student management system.

Students interviewed report having a good understanding of their current achievement progress.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of 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)

Flexible programmes to meet individual student needs Blue Mountain College is a small school with only 69 participating students; regardless, the school aims to provide a broad curriculum which focuses on students as individuals, and enhances their engagement in completing qualifications. This strategic purpose is reflected in their curriculum design and commitment to providing learning and assessment pathways that are meaningful for all students.

The school leadership regularly reviews the curriculum, leading to the development of flexible programmes that utilise support from external providers through timetabled classes and the school's gateway programme. Many students access assessment by unit standards to complete NCEA Level 2 and the school's data shows high completion at this level.

Assessment practice supports student achievement The school supports students to present their best evidence of achievement with staff and student handbooks providing clarity around processes like special assessment conditions, resubmission, further assessment opportunities, authenticity, and derived grades. Teachers are familiar with student needs and support them in their individual learning pathways.

The school effectively identifies students with priority needs and supports teachers to adapt assessment to be more accessible. This includes giving students access to digital supports, different modes of presentation, and teacher aide support in class as well as each student's Special Assessment Conditions entitlements. There are high levels of Special Assessment Conditions applications, supported by school-based evidence, which has removed barriers to fair assessment.

Growing staff and student digital capacity The school has prioritised the provision of devices and digital tools for students from Year 9 and professional learning for teachers in order to support learning and assessment. As a consequence, the use of digital platforms grown in the school. While uptake of digital exams is still growing, students are using devices for assessment, accessing assessment documents, and their results. Students were confident in their use of Assessment Master and the school intends to expand the uptake of digital assessment in 2023.

Readiness for Level 1 NCEA Change Programme To ensure that students are ready for the changes required to successfully engage with the NCEA Change Programme, the school should continue to ensure that all curriculum areas are prepared for full implementation of Level 1 in 2024, including developing a wider range of assessment methods. The school plans to engage with the Literacy/Numeracy co-requisite standards in 2023.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021 6.4b)

Internal moderation is effectively monitored and managed The Principal's Nominee has oversight of the internal moderation process, which is designed to ensure that the school meets its Consent to Assess obligations.

The current internal moderation process ensures that accurate results are reported to NZQA and that all standards assessed can be submitted digitally for moderation. Teachers quality assure the assessment task, schedule, student work, and document the grade verification process. Only when these are checked by the Principal's Nominee as completed can results be entered.

Departments are expected to ensure that the process used for grade verification is appropriate for each standard and that verifiers are subject experts. The school has built verification relationships with other schools and cluster groups where experts are not available within the school. Teachers see this process as an integral part of their professional learning.

The selection of student work for internal moderation is strategic, with the focus being on grade boundaries or where a teacher is unsure of a segment of the assessment task or schedule. New staff are supported in this process and given further guidance to ensure the effectiveness of the internal moderation process.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

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

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing expanding opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Blue Mountain College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived and unexpected event grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

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

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

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

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Blue Mountain College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Blue Mountain College reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their families about assessment

Blue Mountain College has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

Blue Mountain College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Blue Mountain 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 whānau.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school's review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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's consideration 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 five 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
- *Blue Mountain College Staff Assessment Procedures – 2023 (Staff Handbook)*
- *Blue Mountain College NZQF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES 2023 (Student Handbook)*.
- *Blue Mountain College Assessment Policy - Updated April 2022*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Science
 - Social Sciences & English (Acting)
 - Technology (Hard Materials) & DVC
- Teacher in Charge of:
 - Home Economics
- Teacher of:
 - English
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement.