

Managing National Assessment Report

Blue Mountain College

September 2018

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 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 2018* (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
- *NZQF Assessment Procedures Staff 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *NZQF (NCEA) Assessment Procedures Students and Parents 2018* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the:

- Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Physical Education
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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

Blue Mountain College

5 September 2018

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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

What the school is doing well

Blue Mountain College described undertaking review and evaluation of the effectiveness of their NZQA assessment practices and procedures. The school responds appropriately to assessment issues identified by external review. Self-review has led to changes in assessment-related practice to better meet the needs of students.

The school promotes an ethos of achievement, and assessment processes are effectively managed to meet the qualifications needs of students. The school provides differentiated assessment through multiple course choices in certain subject areas and some personalisation of courses for identified students. Assessment opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses and standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. Identified students are provided with approved special assessment conditions and appropriately supported. These all contribute towards assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Embedded internal moderation processes, action plans in response to external moderation, and proactive monitoring by the Heads of Department and Principal's Nominee assure assessment quality and help ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA. The recording and sharing of outcomes fully informs senior management of any issues and the progress made with resolving them.

Data management and use effectively support student achievement outcomes. Assessment data is managed through checks to help ensure results reported to NZQA are timely and accurate. Achievement data is analysed to review school courses, set strategic direction, monitor student progress to complete qualifications, and to identify and support students at risk of not achieving to their potential. Students are effectively encouraged to use their NZQA Learner login to monitor their own progress.

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

Areas for improvement

A number of results from assessments in Year 10 are held over and reported in Year 11 assigned to courses. These results are not eligible for the inclusion in the

calculation of a course endorsement as a course must be completed within a calendar year. They must also be reported as unassigned standards.

Some minor additions are required to the student handbook so that it is current and accurate. The school needs to ensure that course outlines consistently present information that students need to help them understand and manage their progress towards qualifications.

Agreed action

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

- ensure results assessed in previous years are reported as unassigned to a course
- update the student handbook so that it provides full information on resubmissions and derived grades
- ensure all course outlines include the required information.

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29 October 2018

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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 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 22 July 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The review identified four agreed actions to refine assessment related practices. The three associated with moderation have been actioned through clarifying expectations with staff and changes to the monitoring of both internal and external moderation. Teacher documentation and course outlines have been reviewed, though not all departments are including all the required information in course outlines. This is discussed further in the relevant section of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to NZQA external moderation feedback. Results show a good level of moderator agreement with assessor judgements. There are no departments with widespread or ongoing concerns.

The Principal's Nominee reviews each report and identifies any concerns. The Head of Department or Teacher in Charge completes a written response and any required actions are discussed with the Principal's Nominee. The written responses are submitted to both the Principal's Nominee and Principal. Any issues and their resolution are also recorded in a department's annual report.

In both 2017 and 2018 the school did not query or appeal any reports. When staff disagree with reports or need further clarifications, they should make use of queries and/or appeals. This would help clarify any concerns they have and support them with consistent assessment judgements in the future.

The school uses the same process for responding to external moderation conducted by Industry Training Organisations.

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 Principal's Nominee reviews assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements. Senior management lead broader curriculum related review. Several assessment-related initiatives have been introduced to improve current practice and enhance student achievement. These include:

- improved coordination of support to help Year 12 students gain University Entrance literacy requirements, and support for Year 13 students who did not gain it in Year 12
- improving parents understanding of NCEA by re-establishing a parent evening to explain how NCEA works and the related assessment processes

- trialling with some Year 13 students access to the student management system to improve tracking of their NZQA entries and results, with the idea of expanding this to other students and parents
- creating an agricultural science course in response to a cohort need, using vocational and general science contexts to engage students and support their future career pathways
- considering how to assess across subject areas, starting by exploring the use of common contexts.

For consideration

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

- using the query and/or appeal process to clarify concerns raised in external moderation reports.

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 2018 5.5)

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

- providing differentiated assessment through offering multiple courses within some core subjects, and when appropriate, tailoring assessment opportunities to individuals within a course
- altering the courses available and the context of assessment depending upon the needs and interests of the cohort
- providing tutoring to students through a mixture of planned and ad hoc sessions
- ensuring that students potentially entitled to special assessment conditions are identified and support trialled
- using school-based evidence to support special assessment conditions applications to remove the potential financial barrier of requiring an independent assessor's report
- clearly informing staff of a student's special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance
- creating a culture of achievement through an expectation of participation and recognising success at whole school occasions and in individual classes
- offering Year 10 students assessment against some internal achievement standards to give them experience of standards-based assessment.

Blue Mountain College 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 and further assessment opportunities
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Providing access to a wide range of assessment The school extends the assessment opportunities available to students using a range of external providers including Net NZ, Hokonui Tertiary High School, Gateway and Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (The Correspondence School). This provides assessment in courses the school is not able to offer, and greater flexibility with timetabling and assessment of standards related to career pathways. The school also applies for extensions to the school's consent to assess to offer new courses itself, such as Hospitality.

Students undertaking distance learning are well supported The school recognises that students undertaking distance learning courses require targeted support to maximise their success. Before enrolling in a course, students are

counselled by the Senior Dean to consider if distance learning is appropriate for their learning style. Students who select courses are timetabled to work in a supervised dedicated area to help them manage their progress.

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 2018 6.4b)

Blue Mountain 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 both within and outside the school to verify a sample of student work at grade boundaries to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- retaining work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- following identical processes for moderation of both Industry Training Organisation and NZQA administered standards
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is readily available by all work being stored centrally until the external moderation round has been completed
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan and negotiating suitable changes.

Effective monitoring of internal moderation The school has an effective documented process for monitoring internal moderation. This provides quality assurance and assures senior management that all reported results are credible.

Heads of Department and the Principal's Nominee proactively monitor the completion of all aspects of internal moderation. Once teachers have completed their internal moderation process the student work, assessment task and the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* are submitted to the Principal's Nominee. She checks the information recorded, reconciling documented practice with her knowledge of the teacher's processes and querying any issues. Once she is confident the process has been completed satisfactorily she signs off completion and results are entered into the student management system.

No action required

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

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)

Blue Mountain College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - encouraging students to register and track their own progress using their NZQA Learner login
 - monitoring student progress towards reaching the literacy and numeracy requirements for achieving NCEA Level 1, to target support where required
 - analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform course design and set strategic direction
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - a data administrator creating markbooks from submitted course outlines
 - students checking moderated results before the data administrator enters them in to the student management system, and the teacher then checking a printout of the results
 - reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
 - reporting Not Achieved results, as appropriate
 - students checking a printout of entries, results and personal details before NZQA deadlines
 - withdrawing entries where students have not had an opportunity to be assessed
 - checking the accuracy of external entries to ensure minimal late entries
 - holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers.

Student progress effectively tracked to improve achievement outcomes The school effectively uses data to track student progress with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. The school submits all entries in their first data entry file to NZQA, thereby ensuring students, parents and staff can see the full year's assessment programme, and can not only track results but also forward plan. At the start of the year the Senior Dean counsels students with their course choices and completes a mid-year check on their progress. Along with teacher feedback this identifies students who are at risk of not achieving a NCEA qualification. Where necessary, interventions are put in place including further support from the Dean, discussions with the class teacher, assistance with managing assessment workload and checkpoints to encourage progress. The form teacher supports the process by reinforcing the Deans interventions with students.

Ensure results held over from a previous year are report as unassigned standards When submitting internal assessment results to NZQA held over from a previous year the school must report these as unassigned standards. Carrying over results allows students to start the year with some credits towards their Level 1

NCEA without incurring a fee the previous year. However to be eligible for inclusion in the calculation of a course endorsement, these must be gained in a single year. The Principal's Nominee will undertake to clarify this with relevant staff and ensure the reporting of the results meet NZQA's requirements.

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 results assessed in previous years are reported as unassigned to a course.

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))

Blue Mountain College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- encouraging the completion of financial assistance applications where appropriate and the payment of NZQA fees
- Heads of Department annually reviewing assessment policy and the Principal's Nominee reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes.

Blue Mountain College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- the Principal's Nominee reminding staff of NZQA related process at the start of each year
- providing students with both a hard copy of the student handbook and digital access, and emailing a copy to parents
- using a variety of year level meetings to brief students about assessment policy and procedures
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes in parent meetings and through timely reminders in newsletters.

Students show good understanding of how NCEA works and school assessment procedures The students interviewed 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 consistently.

Additions required to student handbook To give full and accurate information that reflects current practice the student handbook should include the resubmission process for internal assessments and what can be used as evidence for derived grades.

Ensure course outlines provide the required information Course outlines need to consistently present information on the availability of further assessment opportunities, whether standards contribute to literacy and numeracy requirements, and if a course is endorseable. Including this information in all course outlines will help students with their understanding and management of their progress towards qualifications.

The school has created a template that departments can use, and lists the required content in the staff handbook.

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 the student handbook so that it provides full information on resubmissions and derived grades
- ensure all course outlines include the required information.