

Managing National Assessment Report

South Otago High School

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively South Otago 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
- *South Otago High School NCEA Assessment Handbook Policy and Procedures 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *South Otago High School NCEA Assessment Handbook for students 2019 Policy and Procedures* (Student Handbook)
- *South Otago High School Assessment policy*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Managers met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Principal
- Head of Department for:
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
 - Ready to Work
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- Teacher of Commerce
- 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, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

SUMMARY

South Otago High School

7 August 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

South Otago High School meets the needs of its students with vocational and academic pathways using external providers to complement what the school provides. A review of processes and structures, informed by student and community voice, has led to improvements that aim to promote student achievement. School review is also focused on ensuring credible assessment with both proactive and reactive management of issues. The improvements the school has made in the last three years illustrate their capacity to effectively manage change.

Assessment practices ensure that students have access to credible assessment and support to help them achieve. The Principal's Nominee checks that teachers follow consistent processes for managing assessment and data. The introduction of student mentoring, along with live reporting and strengthened monitoring of student progress towards qualifications, is helping to ensure timely identification of those who need support or extension.

Moderation systems support quality assessment and are embedded practice. The process for responding to external moderation ensures issues are identified and resolved. Teachers are encouraged to keep up to date with the standard by being involved in subject associations, online forums and conferences.

There is good communication between senior managers, the Principal's Nominee, students and teachers that ensures everyone has the information they need on assessment and qualifications. Teachers value the sharing of information by the Principal's Nominee including her highlighting those aspects that need to be addressed.

Areas for improvement

Adding completion of internal moderation and external moderation outcomes to the departmental end of year check document will strengthen monitoring systems by giving senior management a system level view of both processes so that they have evidence that quality assurance processes are being followed. It will complement the current checks and follow up by the Principal's Nominee.

Agreed action

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

- provide a system view by Heads of Department confirming in the annual departmental report that all internally assessed standards have been internally moderated
- include external moderation outcomes and actions in the annual departmental report.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

27 September 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 17 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The two agreed items to review course names to ensure consistency of use and review school documentation have been effectively actioned.

Response to external moderation outcomes Teachers complete a reflection document for standards which were returned as Not Yet Consistent or Not Consistent with the standard. The Principal's Nominee checks actions are undertaken. Where professional support or development is required, senior managers take responsibility for this and check that these resolve assessment quality issues.

The school agrees that including external moderation in departmental end of year reports would inform school review by senior managers having visibility of outcomes for all subjects moderated, along with any follow-up actions needed.

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)

South Otago High School aims to provide its students with a broad range of educational experiences that enable them to achieve to the best of their ability. They provide a diverse range of external provider experiences aimed at providing students with vocational and academic pathways beyond school. Ensuring students achieve qualifications is important and the focus of recent school review. These have led to the initiatives described below, which illustrate the growing capacity of the school to effect change for improvement.

Change to programme structures to better meet student need The school has moved to a four days per week timetable for all senior students in response to feedback that they were struggling with school courses due to class time missed when engaging in externally provided vocational courses. They offer a different programme on a Friday, providing students with continued access to vocational courses the school cannot offer, along with extension, support and general interest courses in semesters that are tailored to individual student need. The school reports that community feedback has highlighted that they value the initiative but need better communications explaining what the school is doing and how. Students interviewed value the Friday programme for offering a range of opportunities and allowing them to better manage their time.

Mentoring promotes academic conversations A mentoring system has been developed to promote academic conversations with students. Based on the vertical tutor groups, each week mentors meet with students to discuss their qualifications goals, academic progress and check the number of credits available to them. In 2020, the school plans to further formalise the mentoring process by

getting greater consistency to provide a school-wide picture of senior students. This could include the current informal monitoring of Māori student achievement by the Deputy Principal and equity of achievement outcomes in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics subjects.

Courses reduced to promote success In 2019, the school reduced senior course requirements from six to five subjects to promote student engagement by providing opportunities to work towards merit and excellence grades, reduce student workload and associated stress.

Assessment year extended In term four the school now calls back senior students to study for external assessment or, for those at risk of not achieving their qualification, complete work or carry out further learning and assessment.

Overall the school's aim is to produce a cultural shift for students by fostering independent learning and good time management. They expect the impact of the changes made will result in improved achievement rates.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- include external moderation outcomes and actions in the annual departmental report.

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)

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

- extending assessment opportunities using multilevel studies and a range of external providers; academic and vocational, secondary and tertiary
- strengthening their initial identification of the need for special assessment conditions, resulting in school-based evidence being used for one third of applications which removes costs to families of a Level C assessment
- providing a course in Tikanga Māori as part of the Friday programme, along with opportunities for Māori students to consider a broader range of options once they leave school
- recognising the need for increased flexibility in evidence gathering
- re-enrolling school leavers so they can complete qualifications
- providing differentiated assessment within courses.

South Otago High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring patterns in breaches of assessment conditions by recording them in the student management system
- ensuring consistency of practice and understanding of resubmission and further assessment opportunities by introducing cover and marking sheets for student assessment evidence
- managing missed and late assessment
- investigating appeals of assessment decisions
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Review of exam processes A review by the Principal's Nominee has provided her with evidence that the internal examination processes used to supply derived grades are consistent. Heads of Department were surveyed to find out where exams were sourced, who had access to the exam before it is administered, how the exams were marked and what happened to them after marking. She found that all departments were aware of and following appropriate processes for derived grades.

Department reviews of courses The school is encouraging departments to consider courses and assessments that better meet student needs. In response, one department has removed streaming and instead has discussions with students about which standards they are to be assessed against to meet their needs. Another has reviewed its courses and now includes portfolio assessments and a Technical course option for students that suits this learning and assessment style.

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)

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

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using external subject verifiers where required
- encouraging teachers to keep up to date with the standard by being involved in subject associations, online forums and conferences
- documenting the moderation process and providing the Principal's Nominee with access
- requiring that results are not reported to NZQA until internal moderation is completed
- monitoring completion of the process by the Principal's Nominee checking markbooks against documentation.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring Heads of Department provide samples of student work by them being adequately stored
- supporting Heads of Department to be proactive by using the online application to organise and submit work for external moderation, access reports and discuss outcomes with the Principal's Nominee
- meeting the expectations of NZQA and Industry Training Organisations.

Support monitoring of internal moderation An addition to the current monitoring process for internal moderation will provide the Principal's Nominee and senior managers with a system-wide picture by including completion of internal moderation as part of the departmental end of year check. This will provide greater visibility and supplement the checks the Principal's Nominee currently carries out on markbooks and internal moderation cover sheets.

Focus on reducing workload by considering grade verification requirements

This year the school has provided staff with guidance on strategically selecting student work for grade verification. Heads of Department are starting to adopt this approach which 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 verified student work. The verification sample size is determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

Teachers currently assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries. However, most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than would be required with a strategic approach.

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:

- provide a system view by Heads of Department confirming in the annual departmental report that all internally assessed standards have been internally moderated.

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)

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

- having teachers update their estimate of the number of credits students will gain each term so that Deans, mentors and senior leaders can monitor student progress to identify those at risk of not achieving literacy/numeracy and/or their level certificate
- providing departments with an analysis of achievement to inform assessment practice and inquiry
- reporting unexpected event grades for external assessment to NZQA
- reporting annually to senior leadership and the Board of Trustees on what is working well and next steps for improvement, to inform strategic and resource planning.

South Otago High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- having Heads of Department sign that they have checked that all senior mark book entries are completed before submitting data to NZQA
- reporting entries and results regularly to NZQA
- ensuring all entries have a result reported against them
- holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers
- applying for extension to their consent to assess where appropriate.

Additional data checks introduced While the school data management is sound, this year the Principal's Nominee has introduced additional data checks to further strengthen management and accuracy in response to an issue found with the Leaving Teacher Procedure. Before teachers leave the school, a check that markbooks are up to date has been implemented in response to a teacher leaving results unmoderated which were then not submitted to NZQA. In addition, teachers will have to sign that they have checked their external entries before the due date to ensure the school's record of minimal late entries continue.

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 for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

South Otago High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure
- providing conferencing opportunities with students and whanau twice a year to discuss academic progress, which has resulted in 85-90 percent attendance compared with just over 20 percent previously.

South Otago High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- providing a checklist for teachers of tasks they must complete
- using a shared Google drive for NZQA information including internal moderation forms and course outlines
- checking whether teachers, students and parents are following processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- ensuring students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Introduction of live reporting enriches feedback to students and parents

This year teachers report through the parent and student portal after every NCEA internal assessment, following a trial conducted in the junior school in 2018. Students and parents value the immediate feedback this live reporting provides. Teachers can pace their workload and find that their comments are more relevant to the assessment event being reported on.

Review of student and staff handbooks The school should consider some changes to the student and staff handbooks when these are next reviewed. Removing the information for students from the staff handbook would make review easier by being only in the student handbook. Within the staff handbook, reducing instances where information is repeated is recommended for greater ease of access, while the language in the student handbook could be tailored to that audience.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- incorporating the suggestions made when the staff and student handbooks are next reviewed.