

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Fiordland College**

**May 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Fiordland 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 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
- *Fiordland College, Assessment and National Qualifications Guidelines 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Fiordland College, Student Assessment and National Qualifications Guidelines 2019* (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:
  - Arts
  - English
  - Health and Physical Education
  - Social Sciences
- 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

## Fiordland College

8 May 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

As part of their vision, Fiordland College aims to provide wide-ranging learning opportunities so that all students fulfil their individual potential. This is demonstrated through their commitment to ensuring individual student assessment needs are met.

Assessment opportunities are tailored to cohorts and where possible individual students. The school extends the opportunities available to students by using external providers to offer courses and standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. The school is making good use of school-based evidence to support eligible students' access to approved special assessment conditions and provides them with appropriate support.

Assessment practices are effective, understood by both students and staff, and consistently applied. These practices contribute towards assisting students to improve their achievement outcomes.

The school responds appropriately to issues identified by both internal and external review. Self-review is driven by the management team along with Heads of Department, taking account of teacher and student voice. This leads to changes in assessment-related practice to better meet the needs of students. A major focus of review has been on how to best enable students to achieve more Merit and Excellence results.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee and Heads of Department ensure that only credible assessment results are reported to NZQA. This effective practice means any issues are identified promptly and resolved, and 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. Achievement data is analysed to review departmental practice and courses, set strategic direction, and evaluate the effectiveness of changes. Students monitor their own progress towards completing qualifications through their portal into the student management system or their NZQA Learner Login. Staff use data to identify and intervene with students at risk of not achieving to their potential.

**Areas for improvement**

Some minor changes and additions are required to the teacher and student handbooks so that they are current and accurate.

**Agreed action**

The school agreed that an action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are:

- update staff and student handbooks so they provide full and current information.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

17 June 2019

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://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 10 September 2015 Managing National Assessment report

There were no action items from the previous Managing National Assessment report.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are aware of issues and involved in the review of outcomes where required.

The completion of any actions required to resolve issues are checked by the Principal's Nominee. Recording the resolution of issues in the school's *Quality Assurance Management* documents would assist with continuity and succession planning.

The Principal's Nominee reads each report and discusses with departments any required follow-up. Actions include seeking clarifications and/or appealing the outcome, making changes to tasks, working with other schools, and professional development where appropriate. These discussions are shared with the Principal.

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

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

**Response to data issues** 2017 results data showed a department as an outlier at Level 1, as there was a difference between the school's internal and external results in the subject areas and the national pattern for schools of a similar decile band. The school readily identified the reason behind this was the structure of option choices and the nature of the cohort that year. Although the course did not produce levels of achievement comparable to other schools of a similar decile, school self-review found it achieved the expected and desired outcomes for the students.

### 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 Principal's Nominee working alongside Heads of Department, with input from other staff and student voice. Students can also initiate change, with the Year 13 students currently investigating setting up a mentoring programme to tutor younger students. The impact of changes is reviewed, and if necessary, refined.

One current school-wide area of focus is to improve student assessment outcomes by increasing the number of grades at Merit and Excellence in externals. This is being undertaken through various approaches.

Assessment processes in Years 9 and 10 mirror NCEA processes to help students develop their understanding of assessment and the skills required to achieve Merit and Excellence grades. Several teacher enquiries support this focus. These include teaching the higher-level thinking skills required to gain Merit and Excellence grades, making cross curricular links so that learning is in a meaningful context, and different ways of gathering evidence to match students' preferred methods of working.

Senior courses are assessing a reduced number of credits to allow for more in-depth learning and prepare students to achieve at a higher level. This includes reviewing the number of NCEA assessments completed by Year 10 students. It is also having an extra impact of reducing student and teacher assessment workload.

Review by the Principals' Nominee has led to a change in the quality assurance process. The school used to require departments to complete a monthly *Quality Assurance Management* document. This had become very compliance focused, so the Principal's Nominee has moved to a more supportive process of open discussion and an annual document backed up by the submission of an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* as each standard is completed.

The Principal's Nominee identified that in some cases resubmissions were starting to become student driven and possibly causing inconsistencies in their application. This affected the effort some students were putting into their first attempt and impacting on teacher workload. In response to this, the Principal's Nominee worked with Heads of Department to clarify the process with staff and students and ensure the process met NZQA's expectations.

The Senior Leadership Team undertake in depth triennial department reviews. Each review group also includes the head of another department, which helps develop their ability to undertake self-review and the sharing of good practice.

### **For consideration**

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

- recording the completion of actions from external moderation to ensure senior management are fully informed and assist with continuity planning.

## 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)*

### **Fiordland College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- extending assessment opportunities using external providers, including online courses supported by a Distance Learning Dean
- using formative assessment activities, milestone checks and feedback to prepare students for assessment opportunities
- using school-based evidence to support special assessment conditions applications to remove the potential financial barrier of requiring an independent assessor's report for students with a possible specific learning disorder
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance
- using a learning management system to ensure students have access to all assessment related materials
- offering a homework club and regular informal tutoring outside class time.

### **Fiordland 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
- ensuring student evidence for derived grades is standard specific and verified
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Focus on providing assessment to meet student needs** Teachers consider cohort and individual students' needs. In discussion with students, they tailor the standards assessed, context and assessment style to help them achieve their best assessment outcome. The school will run mixed level classes to help ensure, where possible, that the school offers courses within school to match students' desired pathways.

**Māori and Pacific student engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects** The school has small numbers of Māori and Pacific students, but averaging results over the last five years shows there is little difference between the success rate of Year 13 students of different ethnicities achieving one or more STEM subject at Level 3. For three or more subjects the difference is greater. All students study a Level 2 Mathematics course at Year 12 to give them a pathway to study Level 3 Mathematics and/or Statistics. Progress towards equitable outcomes in STEM subjects ties in with the school's strategic goals around priority learners and encouraging academic pathways.



**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)*

### **Fiordland 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, within and outside the school, to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- documenting the quality assurance process on a physical or digital *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

### **Fiordland College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- teachers requesting standards for external moderation and negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is available for submission by the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of the materials
- the Principal's Nominee continuing to increase the number of standards submitted digitally.

**Robust systems ensure sound internal moderation practice** For each standard every department has either a physical or digital best practice folder that is updated annually. This ensures that staff keep their understanding current and refer to the standard documentation, clarifications, moderator newsletters, past moderation, and exemplars of student work and assessor judgements before starting to assess a standard.

To help manage workload, departments are moving from verification of work at grade boundaries to strategic selection based on previous evidence of the quality of the assessor's judgements with the standard. This is being monitored through the department's *Quality Assurance Management* document. This is completed annually and shared with the Principal's Nominee. It contains questions that ensure departments review their practice. As well as saying who verifies student work it is used to justify their strategic selection, including describing how they maintain their understanding of the standard.

All internal moderation cover sheets are submitted to the Principal's Nominee. She checks the information recorded and responds to the teacher, including querying any anomalies. The teacher can then enter results into the student management system. This ensures that all results reported to NZQA have been quality assured.

### **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)*

### **Fiordland College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- subject areas analysing results, with a focus on cohort progression and next steps, which informs the modification of courses and teaching practice
- ensuring all entries are recorded in the student management system before the June data file to NZQA, ensuring a student's full assessment programme can be considered when tracking progress.

### **Fiordland College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- the Principal's Nominee matching entries with course outlines
- submitting data files to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate
- having student and teacher checks and a sign-off process when results are recorded in the student management system
- using the Key Indicator Checklist and Data File Submission reports to identify and resolve data issues, and submit a corrected file
- closely managing withdrawals from standards and 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 effectively tracked and interventions put in place to improve achievement outcomes** The school effectively uses data to track student progress, with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes. Teachers attend regular year-level meetings where students who are at risk of not achieving to their potential are identified and actions discussed. The Dean follows up with a student interview and puts in place any necessary support. Form teachers also access student assessment results and can use those, along with the weekly homework and effort grades to initiate supportive conversations and any other necessary actions.

The Assistant Principal tracks students' progress towards gaining literacy and numeracy requirements for NCEA certificates. The Dean follows up with teachers of literacy and/or numeracy rich subjects for any students of concern.

**Further support student access to functions provided through 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, they cannot apply for reconsiderations and/or reviews for external assessments, order certificates and their New Zealand Record of Achievement or check their personal details and the reporting of results to NZQA.

Over recent years close to 100 percent of students registered their Learner Login, but although still relatively high, this dropped in 2018 to below 90 percent. The introduction of the facility for students to access their data in the student

management system appears to have impacted on the number registering their NZQA Learner Login.

The school encourages students to register both their NZQA Learner Login and use the student portal in the student management system to track their progress and check entries and results.

**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 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))*

### **Fiordland College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive clear outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to students and their families using a range of methods
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with the school's expectations for assessment and moderation processes.

### **Fiordland College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using extended form times led by the Principal's Nominee at key points in the year to explain and remind students about assessment policy and procedures
- assessment policy and procedures being reinforced by class teachers, referring to consistent information in course outlines
- presenting NZQA and school assessment expectations at the parent and student subject option evening
- posting the student handbook to parents along with a letter explaining who they can contact if they have queries and requiring them to return an acknowledgement of receiving the information.

**Update staff and student handbooks** The staff handbook should include the response to external moderation process and guidelines for the storage of digital assessment materials, particularly student work. The Special Assessment Conditions section in both the staff and student handbooks should be updated to reflect current practice. Students and their parents should be made aware of the option of using school-based evidence to support applications based on specific learning needs.

The Principal's Nominee updates draft handbooks throughout the year as issues arise, such as updating how to deal with incidents of plagiarism. Changes are shared with Heads of Department to get feedback before a revised handbook is published at the start of each year.

Students' knowledge of assessment related processes mainly came from verbal information shared in meetings and through discussions with staff. The school should consider writing the student handbook using 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 full and current information.