

MANAGING NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Odyssey House
School**

July 2016

Managing National Assessment Review

The purpose of reviewing the management of national assessment is:

- 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 2016* (Assessment Rules); and
- 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.

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of assessment materials and of teacher grade judgements for student work selected by the school's random-selection process.
- A random sampling of aspects of assessment systems and data for review or audit on an annual basis.
- A visit to review each school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

Managing National Assessment Report

This report summarises NZQA's evaluation of how effectively the school:

- has addressed issues identified through the three components of 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
- manages and makes use of assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

In preparing this report, the School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and teachers of numeracy and information communication technologies.

The school also provided pre-review information and the following documents:

- *Odyssey School Teacher Handbook*
- *Odyssey School Student Handbook*

There was a report-back session with the Principal who is the Acting Principal's Nominee and the teachers at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies and next steps and to agree on any action required.

OVERVIEW

Odyssey House School

5 July 2016

Background

Odyssey House School is a special residential school for young people presenting with substance abuse and addiction problems. Some students have spent long periods of time out of school before coming to Odyssey House. Education is the key component of the holistic treatment approach of the therapeutic community model. The length of time in the school varies significantly from a few weeks to six months or more. Education programmes offered include literacy, numeracy and information communication technologies.

Areas of strength

Flexible assessment is offered to accommodate students' complex needs, and achievement information is used effectively to plan students' individual assessment programmes. Students are assessed when they are ready. The use of digital technology to collect this evidence will enhance these assessment practices.

The school has robust quality management systems to ensure the reporting of credible results. Student entries and results are reported to NZQA on a timely basis and data from individual assessment plans are used to monitor each student's progress and inform next steps. Effective communication, appropriate to the student needs, ensures a common understanding of assessment practice by students, parents and teachers.

Areas of improvement

Teachers share and support the school's goal for internal assessment processes to be transparent, systematic and consistent. Recording the essence of the verification discussions would strengthen the robustness of the internal moderation verification process, and will also inform future assessment decisions.

A significant challenge for the school to consider is how to best manage the ongoing impact of staff changes on maintaining quality assurance practices, including the training of new Principal's Nominees and any new teachers assessing for qualifications.

With changing personnel and building on the learning from school review, regular evaluation of assessment documentation will ensure continuity of assessment quality assurance knowledge when staff leave.

Next Steps

No significant issues This review did not identify any significant issues that would prevent the school from meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

Agreed action However, NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to further refine assessment practices. Senior management undertakes to:

- review assessment policies in the light of the potential digital collection of assessment evidence
- provide evidence of verification discussions
- review and document the outcome of external moderation with teachers
- include information in the school assessment documentation as detailed.

Next Managing National Assessment review Based on the outcome of this assessment systems check, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

Kay Wilson
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School Quality Assurance and Liaison

23 September 2016

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Response to External and Internal Reviews

Previous external reviews

Evidence was sought that external review recommendations and findings have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 3v)

Action Items from 18 June 2013 MNA Report The two agreed action items have been addressed. These were to ensure that internal moderation is complete before sending results to NZQA and to update documentation.

External Moderation Teachers have an effective process for addressing issues identified through external moderation. Management agreed to formally review and document the outcomes of external moderation with teachers. This will ensure that any issues that have been identified are addressed in a timely manner, and improve the robustness of the process through closer monitoring.

Internal review

Evidence was sought that the school was 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)

School review improvement focussed Odyssey House are currently questioning aspects of their practice to identify what is working well, and what they could do better. Their aim is to improve assessment practice and student achievement. The school reported that they have engaged the support of the Ministry of Education to assist with this review.

The review includes discussing and exploring options to ensure that the schools continues to deliver a sustainable and effective education service to their unique student population. One outcome will be to that ensure the range of assessment opportunities they offer include academic and vocational standards appropriate to student strengths and interests.

Managing the challenge of staff changes The school agreed that ensuring the continuity of assessment quality assurance knowledge, independent of changing personnel, and building on the learning from their review is a significant challenge. This has been effectively managed to date by two long serving teachers. They are to be commended for their continued commitment to promoting best assessment outcomes for students and carrying out on a large portion of the Principal's Nominee role. As part of the current review, the school needs to consider how to best manage the ongoing impact of staff changes on maintaining quality assurance practices including the training of new Principal's Nominees and any new teachers assessing for qualifications.

Agreed action

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

- review and document the outcome of external moderation with teachers.

Assessment Practice

How does the school's assessment practice allow for the effective management of assessment for national qualifications? (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6, 3)

Odyssey House School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring authenticity by assessing students on a one to one basis when they are ready
- developing flexible individual student assessment plans upon enrolment and reviewing these regularly to reflect their needs and aspirations
- where appropriate, using external providers to extend the assessment opportunities offered to students
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Gathering evidence of achievement and integrated learning When a young person enters the Youth Residential component of treatment, they are often disengaged from education and may have had negative experiences. The school recognises that there are many aspects to their treatment journey that lend themselves to providing opportunities to gain NCEA credits outside of the classroom. For example, assessment evidence for health assessment standards can be gathered from aspects of the personal well-being programme. Examples of literacy can also be collected from written journal work required during the programme.

To facilitate evidence gathering and lead the development of integrated learning within the Odyssey therapeutic setting, a 'Lead Educator' (yet to be appointed) will take the role of Principal's Nominee.

Increasing assessment opportunities The school is investigating portfolio assessment and skill-based unit standards. Supported learning standards and other New Zealand certificates are also being considered, as appropriate.

Collecting digital evidence As the school considers the use of digitally enabled assessment practice, review of assessment policies to reflect possible changes including the checking of authenticity and storage of assessment material is needed. Presently, the school's task designs require written evidence from the students. The digital recording of skills-based or naturally occurring evidence would involve the student more in the assessment process and potentially increase the range of standards the school could assess.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- review assessment policies in the light of the potential digital collection of assessment evidence.

Moderation

How effectively does school internal and external moderation assure assessment quality? (CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 3)

Odyssey House School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal and external moderation by:

- ensuring that standards are verified before reporting to NZQA
- submitting completed Internal Moderation Cover Sheets to the Acting Principal's Nominee prior to sending results to NZQA
- submitting assessment material to NZQA prior to the submission date for external moderation
- having effective storage systems and providing all materials and samples requested for external moderation
- valuing moderation feedback and participating reflectively in any follow up
- ensuring any required changes as a result of external moderation are made before an assessment is used again.

Capturing internal moderation verification evidence While there are subject experts within the school to verify grades, teachers regularly engage with colleagues in other schools to minimise the impact of possible professional isolation. Recording the essence of the verification discussions would strengthen the robustness of this process and will also inform future assessment decisions. The verification part of the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* can be used to record this information. The school agreed that this would be useful practice.

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 evidence of verification discussions.

Data Quality and Use

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 2.7, 3)

Odyssey House School effectively:

- manages assessment-related data by:
 - systematically recording student achievement
 - having appropriate checks to ensure reported results are accurate
 - reporting results to NZQA on a regular and timely basis.
- makes use of assessment-related data to:
 - analyse student goals and evaluate the effectiveness of tracking processes, mentoring and achievement progress
 - provide a cycle of annual reporting and review by teachers to the Principal and Board of Trustees.

Analysis of results used for improvement Changes to assessment programmes are made in order to meet the needs of the student cohort each year. Data from individual assessment plans is used in conjunction with holistic judgement to monitor each student's progress and inform next steps to support achievement.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

Communication

How effectively does the school maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, and students and their families?
(CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6, 2.7ii, 3)

Odyssey House School has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families
- reporting appropriately and regularly to staff, the school community, students and their families.

Teachers have a good understanding the school's assessment practices, which indicates effective communication. They share and support the school's goal for internal assessment processes to be transparent, systematic and consistent.

The small size of the school means that documentation of processes and procedures is essential to assure continuity of assessment quality assurance knowledge when current staff leave. Regular review and consolidation of documentation will also help.

Modification to the staff and students handbooks required To ensure consistent school wide understanding, the following needs to be included in documentation.

The process for:

- withdrawal of entries from internal assessment, with relevant forms
- monitoring external moderation processes
- ensuring all assessment information is accessible and stored as part of staff exit procedures.

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:

- include information in the school assessment documentation as detailed.