

Managing National Assessment Report

Vanguard Military School

June 2022

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Vanguard Military School

17 June 2022

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 2021*.

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 2020.

Actions and considerations

Agreed actions

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

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
clarify the resubmission and a further assessment opportunity policy with staff and students	Immediate
update documentation to reflect required practice	Immediate

For consideration

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

- strengthening teacher understanding of the strategic selection of samples of student work for internal moderation purposes
- providing opportunities for students to engage in digital assessments.



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5 August 2022

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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 Managing National Assessment Report Vanguard Military School opened in 2019 as a Designated Special Character School and this is the school's initial Managing National Assessment Review.

External moderation processes and response to outcomes The school has received minimal feedback on the quality of assessor judgements because NZQA did not require external moderation in 2020 and 2021 during lockdowns associated with the Covid pandemic. It has made some submissions and adopted some processes from its predecessor partnership school. Where other assessment methods were not possible, and to assist schools to make standard specific judgements on student work, NZQA supplied Evidence Gathering Templates to record student performance against the standard. In 2022 Senior Management decided to request that those standards that were not submitted for external moderation be added to the school's moderation plan. This has been actioned and feedback from external moderation will support effective quality assurance measures.

The school uses a Response to External Moderation form and teachers proactively document the actions needed to address any issues identified in the feedback from NZQA moderators, such as making changes to assessment tasks and updating assessment schedules. Teachers attend subject association cluster meetings for professional development and seek new grade verifiers where feedback from external moderators is that their judgements are not yet consistent with the standard. In addition, where this may be required teachers make changes to assessment materials before the standard is offered again. These practices are developing assessment judgements and materials that are consistent with the standard.

As a next step senior management will create a final evaluative sign-off to verify their confidence in changes made. This will support growing schoolwide understanding that external moderation needs to reflect the consistency of the school's internal moderation processes.

By clarifying in the staff handbook that selection of samples of students work for external moderation must be to NZQA requirements, with some discretion over whether samples are given at grade boundaries, teacher understanding of strategic selection can be strengthened. This section currently contains a legacy reference to random selection. The school should update this to reflect the school's current external moderation practice of strategic selection the school will develop a clearer understanding for all teachers and be compliant with NZQA rules.

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)

The school has a developing system of self-review. The Principal reviews assessment progress through a regular cycle of senior management team meetings with leaders who are line managers for departments. The Deputy Principal identifies any issues with student progress towards a qualification through the NCEA Data Tracker Programme. The Principal's Nominee reflects on internal and external moderation systems and these are discussed with curriculum leaders or teachers to make interventions as appropriate. These processes form part of a broader model of structured and distributed leadership. Within each department the school conducts an annual review of managing systems of national assessment. He summarises findings at all levels to the Board of Trustees. These systems are providing evidence-based leadership to support assessment practice that meets student needs.

Shifting to digital teaching, learning and assessment The school is continuing to review its use of digital practice for assessment purposes. At the time of the visit, and as a next step the school planned to offer Literacy/Numeracy me te Pangarau co-requisite in 2023. However, due to recent announcements this will now occur in 2024. To support students during COVID-19 the school has already provided accessible learning opportunities, shared online classes and provided devices and checking practices to ensure students can authentically complete the requirements of their NCEA.

Using the flexibility of NCEA to meet student needs Recruit handbooks, which are also shared with parents, have been modified to future-proof change practices should there be a need to rationalise courses due to unexpected events. They indicate that standards in certain courses could be changed throughout the year to meet individual needs due circumstances beyond the school's control. Regular communication between teachers and parents effectively supports any changes made to student programmes. This is supporting schoolwide understanding of the flexibility of NCEA for students.

Support for teachers new to NCEA Senior management has reviewed its systems for supporting teachers new to NCEA as part of its broader professional development processes, particularly where teachers may be new to standards-based assessment. There is now a well-established buddy and line management system to provide support for all teachers. This system develops staff understanding of NZQA's internal and external assessment and moderation requirements.

Removing barriers to equitable assessment The school is continuing to review its principles and processes to remove barriers to learning and assessment. This is because recruits are drawn from a wide geographic area and may have experienced diverse cultural and educational backgrounds before arriving at Vanguard Military School. For these reasons and to support students a No Homework Policy is provided. To mitigate this further assessment opportunities are provided where manageable, and regular, valid academic checkpoints and assessment opportunities are offered as required. This is providing students with opportunities to present their best evidence.

Schoolwide development of equity principles ensure that all students have access to achievement opportunities through “being better than you were the day before”, that supports a growing sense of purpose for students in working towards their qualification. To support this principle the school uses its developed pastoral care network requiring responsive communication with whānau. This principle, coupled with the school’s structured support network, is ensuring collective confidence in the ability to deliver NCEA to best meet student academic and vocational pathway.

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)

Unique pedagogy and pride in attitude The school’s structured training ethos effectively supports students to meet their vocational and/or academic pathways. Student wellbeing is prioritised by balancing physical training, academic and vocational needs to ensure students achieve their best. Some programmes include military content with room for individualised learning to be agreed between parents and Deputy Principals where a specific standard may support a student’s chosen pathway. The school’s values provide clear expectations and habits that support each student to concentrate and take pride in their work. The Principal explained that while there are “no excuses” recruits are supported and are “not afraid to get things wrong and learn from this”. The school’s Section Leaders (form teachers) mentor students and support any changes needed to student pathways.

Data informs practice for Māori and Pacific students The school uses its results data to identify achievement for Māori and Pacific students to ensure they can meet their assessment goals. Culturally responsive pedagogy and student goal-setting support a clear sense of purpose for students. Senior leaders explained that a number of students had not experienced success in other educational settings and that the school has identified a need to provide support and valid opportunities for success in assessment events. Ownership of data by teachers and students shows that Māori and Pacific student attainment in one or more STEM subjects at Year 13 is an area of success for this school. Students are provided with one further assessment opportunity and academic call backs. These strategies and the provision of further teaching and learning develop student readiness to be assessed. The school attributes student success to ensuring recruits understand the relevance of contexts, and the engagement with an ethos of military discipline, to their pathways.

Update documentation on resubmission and a further assessment opportunity Students interviewed need to develop greater understanding of the difference between a resubmission and one further assessment opportunity to ensure required and consistent assessment practice that aligns with NZQA requirements. The school has undertaken to reiterate this with staff so that students have clarity on these requirements. It has immediately updated the process to reflect NZQA policy, using the NZQA Mythbuster to support understanding. By ensuring consistent messaging, all teachers can reinforce correct advice to students that resubmission can only provide access to an achieved grade, and that a further assessment opportunity must be offered to all students after further teaching and learning has occurred; but need not be taken up by all students. This will improve assessment practice.

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 materials monitored to provide quality assurance The school has developed an increasingly robust internal moderation system which is led by Heads of Department. The Principal's Nominee checks that department folders containing all steps of the internal moderation process have been completed before quality assured grades are reported to NZQA. A system of centralised folders includes assessment materials and clarifications, internal moderation cover sheets, critiqued assessment materials, verified samples of student work and grade acceptance sheets. These folders are available to teachers for reference to develop their ability to understand requirements of standards and for external moderation submission as required by NZQA. This provides confirmation to all school leaders that internal moderation is credible.

Possible reduction in grade verification Some teachers choose to verify grades for more samples of student work than is required by NZQA to develop ownership through purposeful selection. Further professional development over the purpose of internal moderation to provide confidence that the assessor judgements are at the standard will strengthen teacher understanding that there is no set number of samples required for internal moderation and that strategic selection of samples of work for each teacher should be based on the experience of the assessor, external moderation history, and the previous use of the task. This could reduce teacher workload in some instances.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Vanguard Military School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate 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
- engaging in Review of Achievement Standards pilots to prepare for future assessment
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Vanguard Military School 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

Vanguard Military School 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.

Vanguard Military School 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
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Vanguard Military School 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.

Vanguard Military School 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
- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

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

Vanguard Military School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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.

Vanguard Military School 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 Vanguard Military 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.

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 2021* (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 2022* (Assessment Rules).

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
- *Teacher Handbook, Managing National Assessment, Vanguard Military School 2022* (staff handbook)
- *Student Handbook, National Qualifications, Vanguard Military School College 2022* (student handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - History
 - Mathematics
- Heads of subject for:
 - Business Administration and Computing
 - Defense Force Studies
 - Engineering
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and three Deputy Principals 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.

Background

Vanguard Military School was established in February 2014 as a Partnership School. With the discontinuation of Partnership Schools, the school transitioned to Vanguard Military School in 2019 as a new Designated Special Character School. The school provides education to students (recruits) from Year 9 to 13.