

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Elim Christian College**

**23 March 2019**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Elim Christian 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
- *Curriculum Delivery and Assessment Policy, Board of Trustees, Elim Christian College, 2018*
- *Assessment for National Qualifications, Appendix 13, Elim Christian College, 2019 (Staff Handbook)*
- *Student Handbook, Botany, Golflands and Mt Albert Campuses, 2019 (Student Handbook)*
- *Student Achievement Report Summary to the Board of Trustees, Elim Christian College, 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Head of Department for:
  - Design and Technology
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Visual Arts
- Teacher in Charge of:
  - History
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Principal's Nominee and the Professional Learning Lead Careers 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

Elim Christian College has experienced a number of organisational changes which has impacted on their delivery of NCEA assessment processes and practices as outlined in this report. In 2018, the college acquired the former Hebron College and created the Mount Albert Campus in West Auckland. They also moved their junior students from the Botany Campus to the Golflands Campus to create a Middle School.

NCEA assessment at the Botany and Mount Albert campuses is under the same provider code. In the future it is intended to offer some NCEA assessment at the Middle School.

# SUMMARY

## Elim Christian College

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

### What the school is doing well

Elim Christian College has shared ownership of NCEA assessment practice, with senior management and teachers ensuring that results reported for national qualifications are credible. In establishing programmes and assessment practices across three campuses, the school has focused on effective learning design. This involves establishing coherence in NCEA assessment practice, course delivery and reporting. Strategically, senior management has identified authentic, valid assessment, accuracy of data and clear communication as the drivers behind self-review of assessment practice to facilitate these changes.

Assessment practice is consistent across all departments that participated in the review and was evident in the understanding students displayed about school assessment procedures. To meet student needs, the college has enhanced academic and vocational pathways by introducing distance learning and utilising external providers through Gateway and STAR funding. Effective monitoring and tracking of student achievement progress has led to a greater focus on personalised learning for at risk students.

Internal moderation practice is effectively managed school-wide. All teachers critique tasks, verify grades on a purposeful selection of student work and document the process. External moderation outcomes are addressed by Heads of Department who complete an action plan to resolve issues identified by moderators. Senior management is aware of historical and current concerns raised in external moderation reports, which have been addressed.

Entries and reported results are accurate and timely reflecting an effective working relationship between the Principal's Nominee and the Data Manager. Data analysis is used to track student achievement progress and inform changes to course design. Reflection on student achievement contributes to self-review as indicated in a number of recent initiatives outlined in this report.

The responsibility for managing NCEA assessment is effectively led by the Principal's Nominee and shared with a number of school managers and Heads of Departments across the school campuses. Clear communication is evident at all levels of school assessment across the organisation which is being enhanced by the increasing use of digital tools.

## **Areas for improvement**

As discussed with senior management, the monitoring process for internal moderation by senior management should be strengthened by reconciling the completed internal moderation paperwork with actual practice, to provide assurance that all reported results are credible.

Documentation needs to be updated to reflect current practice on the justification process for providing standard-specific evidence for derived grades, and the use of resubmissions.

## **Agreed action**

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

- strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation by senior management reconciling completed documentation with actual practice.
- clarify the assessment processes for the justification of derived grades and for resubmission.
- update documentation to provide clarification on current practice for derived grades and resubmissions.

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11 June 2019

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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 17 March 2017 Managing National Assessment Report** All items from the 2017 report have been actioned. Responses to agreed action items include:

- reviewing and implementing a process to manage a potential breach of the rules
- revising, implementing and documenting a random selection method for external moderation.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has a sound external moderation history with high levels of agreement between teachers and NZQA moderators.

With the support of the Principal's Nominee, Heads of Department develop action plans outlining interventions for all issues identified in external moderation reports by. Outcomes are reported to senior management as part of departmental review to monitor the completion of issues addressed.

**Response to data issues** The percentage of Excellences in internal assessment in two subjects in 2017 were considerably higher than in similar schools. Outliers occur where the pattern of internal and external results differs from the national pattern for similar schools. External moderator's feedback is used to check assessor judgments are at the standard. These are being investigated by the Principal's Nominee and NZQA expects that professional learning and further review will be undertaken if discrepancies are identified.

**Examination Centre audit** In 2018 NZQA conducted an audit of the college's examination centre. All NZQA examination procedures were followed within a caring and purposeful environment that reflected good communication between the Principal's Nominee and the Exam Centre Manager.

### 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 is developing shared ownership and effective review of NCEA assessment practice. This has been in response to the need to create cohesion in learning design and assessment practice across three campuses.

The development of consistent assessment practices results from collaboration between Heads of Department, inquiry-based professional development and the use of data to inform course design and monitor student progress.

A number of recent initiatives reflect the school's strategic direction, including:

- increasing the range of subject options by using distance learning to offer and design courses across all campuses.
- developing a mentoring programme for all NCEA students by establishing Whānau Tutor Groups and providing mentors access to current achievement data
- identifying students at risk of not completing qualifications and providing targeted support through the development of personalised learning programmes
- using a number of digital tools to deliver clear, current communication to teachers, students and caregivers across all campuses
- the introduction of a school-wide Learning Management System that engages students and allows the development of personalised learning
- inquiry based professional learning programmes for all teachers on the design of courses and assessment strategies to meet student needs.

The creation of three campuses has created the opportunity to review assessment practice and innovate, particularly with digital tools. Inquiry, consultation and identification of best practice within the school's inclusive caring special character is developing cohesion of learning and assessment school-wide.

The next step is to embed these improvements in NCEA assessment practice.

#### **No action required**

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.



## 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)*

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

- developing differentiation within courses and across classes to meet the range of student abilities
- allowing students to withdraw from assessment against specific standards if appropriate
- extending assessment opportunities for students by engaging with external providers
- linking standards and courses to academic and vocational pathways
- scaffolding and contextualising assessment tasks so that they are more relevant and better engage student interest
- collecting school-based evidence to support applications for Special Assessment Conditions and providing appropriate support.

### **Elim Christian College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work and further assessment opportunities
- developing school-wide strategies to ensure the authenticity of student work
- collecting standard-specific evidence to report derived and emergency grades if required
- investigating breaches of the rules and appeals following the principles of natural justice
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

**Empowerment Wall to support Māori and Pacific students to succeed** The college, through the creation of an empowerment wall, is focusing on supporting Maori and Pacific students to succeed, particularly in STEM subjects.

The school recognises that students will engage in learning and assessment if they have positive relationships with their teachers and the confidence to succeed. On the wall each student is identified by a photograph and, in discussion with the co-ordinator, records successes and issues they have in each of their subjects.

Based on the philosophy, “you can’t teach me unless you know me” the co-ordinator discusses any identified issues with each student’s teachers and how they could be resolved through interventions such as the development of personalised learning plans, extra tutoring or a change in teacher or course.

The wall also allows the co-ordinator to identify patterns in assessment experience for individuals and groups of students. Initial feedback has led to the establishment of alternative Mathematics and Science courses at Level 2 to better meet the needs of these students.

**Clarification of assessment practice** Senior management have agreed to clarify two assessment practices.

Rather than using external verifiers and to help manage workload for sole teachers, justification of derived grades can be used to ensure these grades are based on standard-specific knowledge.

Teachers interviewed for the review were familiar with the requirements for resubmissions, but the practice should be clarified in the documentation.

**Consistent NCEA Assessment Practice across three campuses** Heads of Department are responsible for assessment practices for their subject(s) at all campuses. Internal moderation verification is completed through site visits or the use of digital tools. A senior teacher responsible for NCEA practice under the guidance of the Principal's Nominee has been appointed for the Mount Albert campus to ensure consistent assessment practice.

### **Agreed action**

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

- clarify the assessment processes for the justification of derived grades and resubmission.

## 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)*

### **Elim Christian College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject specialists to verify a selected sample of student work
- documenting completion of the steps in the internal moderation process using an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions

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

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored
- introducing a Learning Management System across all campuses which encourages teachers to submit digital samples of student work for external moderation.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Learning Areas assure the quality of grades awarded by including work at grade boundaries when verifying assessor judgements. However, most of those interviewed verify more samples of student work than this. The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection 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 student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

**Strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation** The monitoring of internal moderation by senior management should be strengthened by reconciling documentation with actual practice.

Senior management have developed a robust internal moderation process which requires a completed internal moderation check list to be submitted to the Principal's Nominee before results are reported. To strengthen the process and provide senior management with the confidence that all reported results have been verified, an annual audit process that reconciles completed documentation with stored student work for each subject should be instigated. This would allow senior management to be confident that all results reported are credible.

**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:

- strengthen the monitoring process by senior management of internal moderation by reconciling documentation with actual practice.

## 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)*

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

- reviewing course achievement to inform teaching as inquiry and modify assessment programmes as necessary
- annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA and student achievement to inform strategic goals and actions
- celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition
- using assessment data to inform and manage student workloads.

### **Elim Christian College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- timely reporting of results to NZQA and addressing error reports as necessary
- ensuring that internal results are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- requiring all teachers and students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA learner login
- reconciling Memorandum of Understanding with external providers with actual results reported, to ensure the correct provider code to report results is used.

**Monitoring and tracking of student achievement progress** The school has developed very effective processes for monitoring and tracking the progress of all NCEA students and identifying learners at risk of not achieving qualifications.

All NCEA students meet weekly with their tutors in their Whānau group to discuss goals, assessment issues and review progress. This process has been extended to include three-way conferences between caregivers, the tutor and student to further support students in achieving success.

Students at risk of not completing qualifications or meeting literacy and numeracy requirements are tracked by pastoral leaders. A mentor teacher is assigned to each identified student who supports them to reach their academic goals through interventions which include extra tutoring and development of personalised learning programmes.

### **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))*

### **Elim Christian College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through staff and student handbooks accessed on the school website
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via email
- moving to a digital format for all NCEA publications to ensure currency
- distributing information on financial assistance to all students who are eligible
- ensuring student work and results are stored when staff leave the school

### **Elim Christian College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- holding an NCEA information meeting for all students annually along with regular assemblies to reinforce assessment practice
- targeting career and NCEA information specifically for Maori and Pacific Whanāu
- having an online template for course outlines across subject areas which is reviewed and updated annually ensuring consistent assessment information
- inducting new staff through departments to ensure they are familiar with the school's assessment processes and expectations.

### **Update documentation to provide clarification for some assessment practices**

Documentation needs to be updated to reflect current practice for the following assessment practices:

- using a justification process to support sole teachers verify to evidence to report derived and emergency grades
- publishing the requirements for resubmissions to reinforce understanding for all teachers
- the role of senior management in monitoring internal moderation as outlined in the report.

**Clear communication across school campuses** Senior management has reviewed all communication methods to ensure consistent and credible NCEA practice across the three school campuses.

### **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 documentation to provide clarification on current practice for derived grades and resubmissions.