Managing National Assessment Report

School of Secondary - Tertiary Studies

May 2018
What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA’s review of how effectively the School of Secondary - Tertiary Studies:

- 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 2018 (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
- Te Kura Akoranga O Vaka Moana, He ta ano, School of Secondary - Tertiary Studies. Assessment Procedures for Learners (Staff handbook 2018).
- School of Secondary - Tertiary Studies, Assessment Procedures for Learners (Student Handbook 2018)
- templates used for monitoring moderation and reporting results by mentor lecturers
- completed subject leader’s self-review templates
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal’s Nominee, three students and subject leaders for English, Food Technology, Mathematics, Physical Education and Visual Arts.

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.

Background

School of Secondary - Tertiary Studies (SSTS) provides an alternative educational pathway for students who have disengaged from mainstream secondary schools. Students enrol with SSTS at different times of the year which effects the management of programme delivery and assessment opportunities. Students are dual enrolled with their school of origin to keep open a pathway should they decide to return to mainstream schooling. Some students complete more than one NCEA qualification in an academic year and also complete standards for New Zealand Certificate Programmes when they attend the Manukau Institute of Technology.
SUMMARY

School of Secondary - Tertiary Studies

9 May 2018

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

SSTS is developing a culture of self-review of NCEA assessment practice. Central to this focus is quality assurance and meeting the range of student needs through assessment pathways within a supportive environment.

Each student's programme of study is unique, developed through an Individual Education Plan with mentor lecturers and whānau. Mentoring and tracking progress of student achievement is a real strength of the school and an important factor for engaging students in the learning and assessment programme.

Data is used to inform and design courses which change each term as a response to rolling enrolments and the needs of individuals within the current cohort.

Communication is effective, focusing on ensuring credible assessment and consistent practice school-wide. To overcome accessibility barriers, oral communication is commonly used with whānau and students through regular Home School Partnership meetings and mentoring time. Published material for students is in plain English and the staff handbook, which is reviewed each year, is current.

Since the last Managing National Assessment review senior management have strengthened the external and internal moderation processes which is reflected in significantly improved agreement rates between teachers and NZQA moderators.

NCEA assessment practice is effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee, supported by the Principal and Data Manager, who work collaboratively to ensure students are supported and achieve.

Areas for improvement

As discussed with senior management the school is investigating how to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions and resourcing that support.

Digital tools are used extensively by students in all courses to present evidence of achievement. It is recommended that the school develop a digital assessment policy to ensure consistent digital assessment practices, manage the storage of digital work and encourage digital submission for external moderation.
Agreed action

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

- ensure students requiring special assessment conditions are identified and appropriate support provided for internal and external assessment opportunities
- develop a digital assessment policy to ensure consistent practice for the collection of digital evidence, providing lecturers with the confidence to store, mark, verify and submit student work to NZQA, using digital tools.

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1 July 2018

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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 30 July 2015 Managing National Assessment Report** All action items from the 2015 Managing National Assessment review have been addressed. Moderation processes have been strengthened, credible assessment practice is more consistent, and staff and student published communication has been reviewed.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Significant improvements in agreement rates between teachers and NZQA moderators for external moderation can be attributed to more robust internal moderation processes as outlined in the report.

Issues identified by moderators are discussed with the Principal's Nominee and an action plan developed, if required. The completion of the action plan is monitored by the Principal's Nominee and the Principal.

Internal review

_Evidence found that the school is 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)

Senior management are developing a culture of reviewing assessment practice to ensure consistency, improved quality assurance, and shared ownership. Staff have accepted this direction through the strong leadership of the Principal and Principal's Nominee.

Review has been a response to the school’s strategic aim to ensure consistent and quality assured assessment practices. It has also included providing support for students to achieve and addressing historical low agreement rates for external moderation. Initiatives to achieve these outcomes include:

- regular professional development with staff as a group or individually to ensure understanding of assessment practice
- establishment of networks for all single subject lecturers with local schools, to provide access to verifiers for internal moderation and to encourage subject-specific professional discussion
- effective use of data by using student results each term to inform course design for the current student cohort and provide summative reports to the Principal and the Manukau Institute of Technology Programme Committee, which has oversight for the school’s student achievement outcomes
- requiring the central storage of all verified student work for each standard, with appropriate documentation, to provide confidence that all reported results are credible, and samples of student work are available for external moderation
identifying low numeracy achievement as a barrier to students completing qualifications, changing the standards offered and noting subsequent significant improvements in numeracy achievement outcomes

introduction of a digital readiness course for all students through the Manukau Institute of Technology Kiwi Skills programme, to prepare students to collect evidence for assessment opportunities digitally and provide useful job skills.

Through effective leadership, the school is now internally identifying assessment practices for review with the support of the majority of staff. Credible quality assurance and use of data to respond to changing cohort needs reflects an assessment culture that utilises effectively the flexibility of the NCEA model.

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 2018 5.5)

SSTS has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- planning programmes each term to meet the assessment needs of the current student cohort who enrol at different times of the year
- developing Individual Education Plans for each student, who is assessed when ready
- focusing on individual programmes that include core skills, interest electives and vocational pathway courses at the Manukau Institute of Technology, designed specifically for SSTS students
- developing strong relationships between students and lecturers as an important contributing component to engagement in learning and assessment
- offering external standards to a small number of students, where appropriate
- providing catch-up opportunities for students to complete qualifications, particularly at the beginning and end of the year
- supporting students to meet numeracy and literacy requirements.

SSTS has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on resubmissions, further assessment opportunities, breaches and appeals
- developing the use of digital tools to ensure the authenticity of student work
- using standard-specific evidence to report derived grades, if required
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Identifying students requiring special assessment conditions The school has identified that when students enrol there is a lack of information on any specific learning disorders which may be a barrier to their achievement progress. To ensure appropriate support for these students, it is recommended that the school investigate using school-based evidence to identify students requiring special assessment conditions for internal and external standards. Due to financial barriers students, enrolling at the school have not been assessed by independent assessors for special assessment conditions and they often have incomplete records from the school of origin.

Digital assessment policy for collective of evidence and management of student work Digital tools are used extensively by students in all courses to present evidence of achievement. Senior Management agreed that the school should develop a digital assessment policy to ensure consistent digital assessment practices school-wide.

This would provide lecturers with the confidence to mark and store work digitally and transfer work for verification and submission to NZQA for external moderation. At
present one hundred percent of work submitted to NZQA for external moderation is physical.

**Agreed action**

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

- ensure students requiring special assessment conditions are identified and appropriate support provided for internal and external assessment opportunities
- develop a digital assessment policy to ensure consistent practice for the collection of digital evidence, providing lecturers with the confidence to store, mark, verify and submit student work to NZQA, using digital tools.
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 2018 6.4b)*

SSTS has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- verifying student work which includes purposefully selected samples of student work at grade boundaries
- establishing networks with local schools to ensure all student work is verified by a subject specialist
- documenting the process using an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

SSTS has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored.

**The school has strengthened the internal moderation process** Since the last review the Principal’s Nominee requires all verified student work to be stored centrally before results are reported. Senior managers check that all documentation is completed for each standard and discuss inconsistencies with lecturers if necessary. The school is now confident that all results reported are credible.

**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)

**SSTS effectively:**

- uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:
  - informing the development of Individual Education Plans for each student
  - tracking individual student progress toward completing qualifications or moving to the next stage in their vocational pathway
  - preparing reports from summary data of overall student achievement progress for the Principal and the Manukau Institute of Technology management
  - celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition.

- reports accurate achievement data by:
  - timely submission of entries and results to NZQA
  - ensuring that all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly, and addressing any anomalies identified
  - ensuring memoranda of understanding for external providers and dual enrolled schools are held centrally and reconciled with results where appropriate
  - providing access to the student management portal so students and whānau can check accurate entries and results
  - mentor lecturers encouraging students to use their NZQA login to check progress towards completing qualifications
  - ensuring no late entries are made for external standards.

**The school effectively manages the withdrawal of entries**  Due to absenteeism and rolling enrolments, lecturers have found it difficult to know when to remove entries before results are reported. The Data Manager, using the student management system, is very proactive in checking all entries have a reported result or the entry is withdrawn.

**Effective mentoring and reporting of student progress**  The school has developed effective mentoring, tracking and reporting processes to analyse student progress and inform course design.

Using a common template, mentor lecturers are required to report at the end of each term on the progress of each student in their mentor group and the suitability of standards offered for the current student cohort. A summary of this information is used by the Principal to inform course design and timetabling for the next term. This means courses are tailored to meet specific student needs to further engage them in the assessment process. Newsletters with these summaries are also published for whānau.
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))_

**SSTS has effective processes and procedures for:**

- reviewing staff and student handbooks to ensure they are current
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- widely distributing information on financial assistance to cover all students who are eligible
- ensuring student work and results are stored when staff leave the school.

**SSTS assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking whether teachers and students are following processes through monitoring by senior management and mentor groups
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes at frequent staff meetings
- mentor lecturers ensuring that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification
- having a common template for course outlines across subject areas, ensuring consistent assessment information
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes and expectations.

**Communication is appropriate**  Communication strategies used by the school are designed to be appropriate for the students and whānau focusing on oral information rather that published material.

NCEA assessment information for students is mainly disseminated by oral discussion with mentor lecturers and subject teachers. The student handbook uses plain English and is formatted as a series of common questions and answers to make the information more accessible.

SSTS maintains regular contact with whānau through Home School Partnership meetings held each term. These are used to inform parents about expectations, requirements for qualification completion for their student and, where appropriate, NCEA assessment rules and procedures.

**No action required**

No issues with the way in which the school maintained the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicated them to staff, students and families were identified during this review.