

Managing National Assessment Report

Excellere College
September 2022

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Excellere College

28 September 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 these two actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Strengthen the external moderation process by ensuring the actions taken to address external moderation issues have been effective	Immediate
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Develop a school-wide process for monitoring and documenting that all school-based evidence for potential derived grades have been quality assured.	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:

- developing processes to identify and support eligible students for Special Assessment Conditions before they reach Year 11
- developing schoolwide systems for storing digital work that may be required for external moderation
- reviewing the staff handbook to ensure there is a shared understanding and ownership of schoolwide processes and practices.



Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

22 November 2022

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 28 September 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

Excellere College has addressed the agreed actions from their last review. The school is now monitoring and documenting actions to address external moderation outcomes. Teachers are purposefully selecting student work for internal verification at grade boundaries and keeping student results private when handing back work. The school has standardised course outlines and these are available digitally for students and whānau. The Principal's Nominee has reviewed the assessment documentation for students and is in the process of updating staff assessment processes and practices to ensure they are fit for purpose.

External moderation processes and response to outcomes Overall, the external moderation result history for the school shows that the assessment judgements of most teachers are consistent with the standard. The Principal's Nominee follows up with all learning areas, requiring an action plan to be completed if the external moderation feedback identified any issues with assessor judgements.

Learning areas use the external moderation feedback to inform and improve assessment decisions and practice. To strengthen the process the next step is to check that the actions taken have effectively addressed the issues identified. Learning areas with 'Not Yet Consistent' and 'Not consistent' outcomes may need more support in making assessor judgements at the standard and could be directed to the support available through Pūtake and their subject associations.

The feedback received from external moderation is being shared with grade verifiers, including those in other schools, to enable them to improve their ability to make assessor judgements at the standard.

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 strong focus on self-review, with learning areas completing a termly evaluation of how they are tracking toward meeting schoolwide goals in each focus area identified in the strategic plan. This self-review informs any changes needed for the following year, such as what option choices are offered and any adjustments needed to timetable structures to support this. One change that has occurred recently as a result of the review process was Science, English and Mathematics becoming compulsory at Year 11 to keep pathways open for all students as they progress through the school.

Reviewing systems and processes The Principal's Nominee is new to this role and her focus has been to update the student and staff handbooks to ensure they accurately reflect expectations and established assessment processes. She is introducing systems for storing digital work needed for external moderation as more student work is being produced digitally. Her next step is to evaluate the current

systems for monitoring and documenting internal moderation completion and the responses to external moderation feedback to see if they can be further streamlined.

When the staff handbook is updated, she intends this to form part of the induction process with new staff and to look at ways of formalising this process to ensure it is clear who is responsible for which parts, especially for teachers who start part way through the year or are new to NCEA.

This year, she introduced a digital assessment calendar to help teachers with planning the timing of assessments. This has been beneficial with reducing the need to shift assessments and has helped to monitor student workload and coordinate assessments with the days students are out of school on other activities. This is shared with students and parents digitally.

Supporting pathway choices To support informed pathway decisions by students, and lift academic rigour, the school has been encouraging students to choose subjects they are good at and enjoy rather than basing choices on maximising the number of credits they can gather quickly. This has seen an improvement in the balance between academic and vocational pathways being selected by students that better meets their needs and aspirations, instead of credit accrual.

Preparing for NCEA changes The school has engaged with some digital practice examinations and digital examinations this year which will see them well placed for the digital first approach for external assessment when the NCEA Change Programme is implemented in 2024. They are also considering becoming an examination centre next year. This is enabling them to create processes that support digital assessment opportunities for students and to gain confidence in the school's systems to manage this mode of assessment.

The school has been reviewing Year 10 programmes and this year students have completed some Mathematics and English NCEA standards to help familiarise them with NCEA assessment processes. This will be reviewed for 2023. The school has used this as an opportunity to also prepare for the NCEA changes in 2024.

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)

Supporting students entitled to special assessment conditions The school has good systems for identifying students in Year 11 eligible for special assessment conditions for NCEA assessments, using school-based evidence to make applications. Teachers report that students with an approved entitlement are well supported and they are informed of what the entitlements are for each student by email at the start of the year and through the school's student management system.

A suggested next step is to identify students who may be eligible for these conditions prior to year 11. This would give teachers the opportunity to trial possible special assessment conditions and gather more evidence on the effectiveness of these interventions before the students start higher stakes assessments for NCEA. Applications can be made from late September for Year 10 students, enabling confirmation of entitlement for when they begin assessment for qualifications in Year 11.

Verifying results sent to NZQA for external standards The school needs to develop a process to ensure results from practice assessments for external standards have been verified or justified before being sent to NZQA as possible derived grades at scale for an unexpected event. The Principal's Nominee should document and monitor the quality assurance that occurs to confirm that this process is robust and meets NZQA requirements. This will help ensure both the school and NZQA are confident they are valid and reliable if they are needed to be used should students' external assessment performance be impaired by circumstances beyond their control.

Reviewing the staff handbook The Principal's Nominee agreed that the staff handbook needs to be regularly reviewed and that this is overdue. Teachers are informed of any recent changes to NZQA rules and NCEA process in meetings and by email and these need to be included in the staff handbook. This will ensure it remains up to date and accurately outlines the processes required for quality assurance and the school policies to be followed, such as for missed or late assessments, granting extensions and checking for authenticity.

She intends to gather feedback from learning areas regarding the current school policies and whether they are fit for purpose or need to be adjusted. This will give teachers an opportunity to familiarise themselves with these policies, discuss why they are important and help to ensure they are consistently followed by all teachers. Any changes will need to be added to the student handbook.

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)

Monitoring and documenting internal moderation The Principal's Nominee has effective systems in place for monitoring and documenting the completion of internal moderation processes outlined on the *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* before credible results are reported. She supports all learning areas to review these processes to ensure they are being consistently applied, valuing their feedback on any improvements.

Teachers provided evidence of the connections they have with colleagues both within the school and other schools to verify samples of their assessor judgements. Discussions are held both face-to-face and by email. Teachers select samples purposefully for verification to include work at grade boundaries as required and record brief notes on the reasons for assessment decisions as part of the verification process. This assists with future judgements and helps assure the Principal's Nominee that the quality assurance process is sound.

Developing a school-wide system for storing work digitally The Principal's Nominee recognises the need for a school-wide system for storing work produced digitally, guaranteeing it is accessible by her and others when needed. As the school increases its online capacity, a system that is easy for learning areas to use will be important, ensuring past work is available for reviewing benchmark samples and accessing work for external moderation requirements.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Excellere College 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
- 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.

Excellere College 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
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Excellere College 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.

Excellere College 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
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Excellere College 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.

Excellere College 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.

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

Excellere College 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.

Excellere College 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 Excellere 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 whānau.

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
- *Excellere College Board or Governance Manual 2015*
- *Excellere College Staff Induction Handbook 2021*
- *Excellere College NCEA Student Handbook 2022.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - Arts
 - English
 - Food Technology
 - Physics and Mathematics
 - Sciences and Biology
 - STAR and Gateway
- 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.