

Managing National Assessment Report

Whangārei Girls' High School

April 2023

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Whangarei Girls' High School

27 April 2023

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 2023.

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 highly 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 2022.

Actions and considerations

Agreed action

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

Action	Timeframe
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
develop a process for ensuring all internal entries have a result or are withdrawn.	Before 1 December 2023 and ongoing

For consideration

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

- sharing ownership for monitoring internal moderation with Heads of Department and Teachers-in-Charge.



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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 5 September 2019 Managing National Assessment Report

Whangarei Girls' High School has resolved most of the agreed action items from the 2019 report as follows:

- The Principal's Nominee has implemented a process to ensure external review recommendations and findings are followed up. This provides effective closure to the moderation cycle.
- All Memoranda of Understanding with external providers are now held with the Principal's Nominee, who reconciles the results before reporting them to NZQA. This ensures that the results for students doing external pathways are credible, reported in a timely manner and against the correct provider code.
- Practice examination grades are quality assured, so that valid grades can be submitted to NZQA in the event they are needed for derived grades.

Although processes for checking the accuracy of entry and results data were reviewed, they still require some improvement. The percentage of entries without a result has remained the same each year since the last report. This needs to be addressed, so the school can meet NZQA's expectation that every entry has a result or is withdrawn, as appropriate, and ensure that all achievement is accurately reported.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school has strengthened its response to external moderation feedback process to support the continuous improvement of assessor judgements and the credibility of results reported to NZQA. The Principal's Nominee requires a formal response from Heads of Department and Teachers-in-Charge where assessor judgements are not consistent with the standard. The response is discussed by the Head of Department and their Senior Leadership line manager. This good practice has added rigour to the school's quality assurance process. In addition, teachers make effective use of local subject clusters to evaluate the effectiveness of changes they have made to their assessment practice. We encourage the school to maintain these relationships to support good practice.

The Principal's Nominee is aware of subjects with a pattern of low consistency of judgements against the standards assessed and has used the response process effectively to effect continuous improvement in external moderation outcomes over the past three years.

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)

Whangārei Girls High School's is very well placed to identify areas for ongoing improvement. The school leadership can have confidence that they and their staff are able to identify and address any quality assurance concerns and evaluate their systems for ongoing improvement. Changes made to the school's assessment practices through internal review have strengthened their quality assurance

processes but also addressed equity issues, so that students have fairer and better access to assessments, and to pathways for meaningful qualifications.

Meetings with middle management informs school improvement priorities

Shared leadership is continuously being developed, strengthening the school's capability for self-review. In 2022, to build leadership and review capabilities in the middle management team, the school initiated meetings twice a term between Heads of Department and their senior leadership line manager. Heads of Department are encouraged to reflect on, evaluate, and challenge practices in their learning areas or from across the school. This provides an opportunity for senior and middle leaders to identify areas for improvement and action them.

Course design to support student achievement and well-being The school has addressed an issue of students potentially being over assessed. Analysis of course design identified that many courses were offering far more credits than needed to meet the qualification requirements. The school has limited the number of credits a course can offer to a maximum of 20. In some cases, this is less than half the number originally offered. Fewer assessments allow more time to focus on quality teaching and learning, better time management and improved well-being for both teachers and student.

Students interviewed for this review commented that their workload was very manageable. They also enjoy their agency in determining the assessment standards that they will attempt in their courses.

By not offering NCEA Level 1 the school has already reduced the overall assessment workload for students.

Access to special assessment conditions improved Whangārei Girls' High School has more than doubled the number of special assessment conditions applications to NZQA in the last three years, ensuring more students have equitable access to fair assessment and NCEA qualifications. The 2019 report asked the school to consider using more school-based evidence applications for special assessment conditions, as there potentially could be students not receiving their entitlement. Previously, most applications were from parents who had paid for the assessor reports.

The school has actioned several steps to remove barriers. Benchmark testing done in Years 9 and 10 is followed by deeper testing for those identified as potentially needing support. Referrals from teachers, specialists and parents help to further support this. Parents are informed about special assessment conditions through information evenings for whānau, so that they can make referrals. Volunteers supporting the school's increased provision of special assessment conditions have been sourced from the community.

Practice examinations provide students with confidence Students are better prepared to attempt external examinations with the changes made to the school's practice examinations. The school has changed its practice examinations to model the same conditions as the NZQA externals at the end of year. The school's review of the decision to stop offering NCEA Level 1 found a degree of trepidation across the school community about performance at higher levels. By changing this assessment practice for Levels 2 and 3, students are better prepared, as they are familiar and comfortable with the process and environment.

NCEA Change Programme readiness Whangārei Girls' High School is well prepared for upcoming changes to assessment. The school has offered digital end of year and practice examinations, as well as piloting new achievement standards and the literacy and numeracy assessments. In 2022, a third of all external examinations were conducted digitally. Ninety-nine percent of all students had an external examination and 80 percent of these were assessed digitally.

Internal review identified the need to actively increase the number of teachers who can use the NZQA digital platform to ensure capability across the school and support the digital first approach of the NCEA Change Programme. Teacher professional development is continuing.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for schools, TEOs assessing Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023)

Maintaining authenticity of evidence for assessment The school can be confident in its processes to ensure students produce authentic evidence for assessment. As more evidence is created digitally, steps have been taken to raise awareness of what constitutes plagiarism and breaches of assessment rules. Students are reminded about these in class and at assemblies. Those interviewed for this review commented that this is a common theme. Referencing of evidence has been introduced into teaching and learning programmes, so that students correctly acknowledge material from other sources.

Programmes of learning and assessment focus on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations Whangārei Girls' High School is responsive to the assessment and qualification needs of its community. Student voice informs and influences the decisions and actions taken by the school to meet their needs. An example is the creation of four academies focussing on local industries and culture that provide programmes of study and qualification pathways important to students and the local community. In the future, the school is looking to develop a new academy with a sports focus.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for schools, TEOs assessing Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023)

Effective internal moderation system cornerstone of credible assessment Effective improvements have been made to the internal moderation system to ensure the ongoing credibility of reported results. The Principal's Nominee, with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, requires teachers to include a comment on the moderation coversheet for every verified grade decision, as this was not a consistent practice. The comments add to the professional integrity of the assessment judgements by capturing the conversation and reflective thoughts of both the assessor and grade verifier. Furthermore, it strengthens the understanding of the assessment criteria, especially for those teachers who are new to assessing against standards for the award of NCEA. The Principal's Nominee follows up where coversheets are incomplete and records their completion on a spreadsheet. Only

then are the moderated results reported to NZQA. Evidence is stored digitally with the links provided on the coversheet.

The strength of the system is reflected in the improvement of the external moderation outcomes and the very high agreement rates reported by NZQA moderators.

To further assure how moderation is happening within the school, the Principal's Nominee and the Senior Leadership Team will occasionally visit departments. However, as moderation meetings are not scheduled as part of the regular meeting cycle these visits may not provide an opportunity to observe the practice. Teachers interviewed for this review suggested that this could be improved if they were to provide the times for their moderation meetings to the Principal's Nominee. Visits could be done by the Principal's Nominee, a line manager, or another Head of Department or Teacher in Charge, which would further strengthen quality assurance across the school. The school is encouraged to consider this suggestion from the teachers.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Whangārei Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students / student 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
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- 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.

Whangārei Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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

Whangārei Girls' High 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.

Whangārei Girls' High 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
- using external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Whangārei Girls' High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- 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.

Whangārei Girls' High 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

- 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 families about assessment

Whangārei Girls' High 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.

Whangārei Girls' High 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 to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Whangārei Girls' High 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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards, and Candidates 2023*.

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
- *Senior Assessment Guide Year 11, 12 & 13, Whangārei Girls' High School 2023* (Student Handbook).
- *Assessment Procedures for Teachers: Assessment Rationale & Strategies to Avoid Predicted Failure and Optimise Success, Whangārei Girls' High School 2023* (Staff Handbook)

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- the Acting Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - Art
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Music
 - Science
 - Technology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Acting 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.