

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Edgewater College

May 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Edgewater 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 2021* (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
- *Managing National Assessment, Online Teacher Assessment Information, Edgewater College 2021* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA Assessment, Student Handbook, Edgewater College, 2021* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13
- *The Edge Innovation Programme, Edgewater College, 2020/2021*.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- Assistant Principal - Principal's Nominee
- Assistant Principal - Curriculum/Assessment
- Head(s) of Learning Areas for:
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Education and Health
  - Science
  - Social Sciences
  - Visual Art
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy Principals 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.

# SUMMARY

## Edgewater College

06 May 2021

### **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.

At the request of NZQA and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2020 to 2021. The review was postponed due to the disruption to schools from the COVID-19 lockdown.

### **What the school is doing well**

Edgewater College has a shared vision to foster student agency through a focus on assessment for learning. Since the last Managing National Assessment review, senior leadership have used the flexibility of the NCEA model to more effectively meet student needs. This strategy is evident through the establishment of the EDGE innovation programme, where students have the option of selecting a personalised course assessed across curriculum subjects within a thematic context, reducing barriers to digital assessment, initiatives to improve literacy and student achievement outcomes, and providing space and support for students to complete assignments using school facilities after normal school hours.

Students are assessed when ready, where appropriate and in a number of courses are offered optional standards to meet their particular learning needs. Contexts for assessment are reviewed to better cater to student interest and abilities. The school offers clear academic and vocational pathways and uses external providers to provide learning and assessment beyond what the school is able to deliver.

Building on their Covid response, school-wide professional development has recently focused on using a greater range of strategies to gather evidence for assessment opportunities. This has included providing targeted feedback and using a variety of types of evidence of achievement and mile-stoning to reduce the need for resubmissions and further assessment opportunities. To engage students in future focused learning and assessment the school established the EDGE innovation programme, providing personalised assessment programmes for their students.

Assessment practice is consistent across all learning areas that participated in the review and was evident in student responses to interview questions. Line managers meet regularly with all Heads of Learning Areas to review assessment practice to maintain consistency, reflect on outcomes and establish clear expectations. Staff capability to deliver on these and their ownership of assessment practice is developing.

Internal moderation processes are managed effectively by the Principal's Nominee with a commitment to ensure all results reported are credible, using digital tools. High rates of consistency between teachers and NZQA moderators in external moderation

provide assurance that internal moderation processes are effective. Any identified issues are subject to an action plan with the outcomes and completion monitored by senior leadership.

Data analysis and associated reflective practice is being embedded in the school's self-review processes. Reports to the Board of Trustees on NCEA student achievement focus on future assessment and course design to better meet student needs. Effective monitoring and tracking by mentor teachers support all students to achieve and identifies the need for intervention if required.

The school effectively communicates understanding of assessment practice to teachers, students and their families. Publications for staff, students and their families are digital. Recent reviews have indicated links should be embedded in these documents to make them more accessible.

The implementation and embedding of current initiatives will continue to support student engagement and ensure credible results are reported.

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

6 July 2021

**NZQA**

**0800 697 296**

**[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)**

# 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 15 March 2017 Managing National Assessment Report** The report identified three action items that have all been addressed.

The school has developed processes to ensure reported derived and unexpected event grades are based on standard specific evidence. Late and missed assessment procedures are now consistent and have been further refined to allow more students to be assessed when ready. The monitoring of internal moderation by senior leadership to ensure all results reported are quality assured has been strengthened using digital tools.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** Heads of Learning Areas are required to develop action plans to address issues identified by external moderation reports. Line Managers and the Principal's Nominee monitor the completion of these plans and support teachers with professional development if required. Senior Leadership encourage teachers to have the grades awarded some of their samples of student work verified by subject experts in other schools to enrich their understanding of the standard requirements. Action plans are developed to address inconsistent external moderation outcomes.

**Response to data issues** Over the last two years NZQA has identified one subject as being an outlier when internal and external results are statistically compared against national patterns of performance. The school has investigated this issue and has provided a satisfactory explanation of variance.

### 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)*

Since the last review, the school, has introduced a number of initiatives to foster student agency through assessment for learning and digital assessment design. As part of this senior leaders are developing the ownership and capability of Heads of Learning Areas and teachers to further engage students in learning and assessment, utilising the flexibility of the NCEA qualification model.

Teachers are monitoring and tracking student achievement effectively, fostering access to digital devices, improving literacy and numeracy outcomes, extending evidence gathering strategies, and breaking down subject silos by providing contextualised assessment opportunities across multiple disciplines.

All teachers are mentors and meet their mentees on a regular basis. The mentor supports the student to set pathway goals and monitor and evaluate their progress in meeting these goals. The focus of this initiative is improving student well-being by establishing positive working relationships between mentor and mentee. Students

interviewed for the review described the mentor as their “go to person”. The role of the mentor teacher has been pivotal in addressing attendance issues for many students which has supported an improvement in student achievement.

The school has identified the lack of access to suitable digital devices as a barrier to both internal and external digital assessment. During the Covid lockdown response this situation was exacerbated because many students do not have a quiet individual space for study at home. As a response the school now provides ninety percent of digital devices for students to use during lessons and a homework space staffed by subject specialists at the end of the school day. Students interviewed for the review had used this facility for support to complete NCEA assessment tasks.

Some students entering the College are well below their chronological age for writing and reading comprehension. The school resources intensive intervention to ensure that by Year 11 students are ready to engage with Level 1 NCEA assessment. The success of this initiative is evident in the improving level 1 literacy achievement rates since 2018 which are now well above decile and national levels which students need to complete their NCEA qualifications.

In 2019 the school introduced the EDGE innovation programme to engage students in learning and assessment by developing future focus skills such as adaptability, leadership and, when appropriate, collaboration and creativity. This initiative promotes the breakdown of subject silos by providing contextualised assessment opportunities across multiple disciplines. Heads of Learning Areas interviewed for this review were very supportive of this initiative and in 2021 the first EDGE students will be completing NCEA Level 1.

These initiatives illustrate that the school is addressing equity issues by empowering teachers to take ownership of student learning and assessment opportunities. This approach increases the school’s capacity to deliver NCEA programmes that meet their student needs.

### **No action required**

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

## **Assessment practice: 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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

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

- using a range of methods during assessment to gather evidence for achievement
- contextualising learning and assessment tasks, to be more relevant and better engage student interest
- linking courses and standards to pathways to clarify alternative options for students
- fostering Māori and Pacific student achievement in STEM subjects by focusing on engagement in these subjects in Years 9 and 10.

### **Edgewater College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice for late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- conducting practice assessments to generate valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived and emergency grades
- investigating appeals following the principles of natural justice
- ensuring student work is authentic by using a variety of strategies
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993 by ensuring student results remain private and permission is sought to use or share student work.

**Gathering evidence addressing changes in resubmission rules** In response to the recent changes to resubmission rules, the school has developed formative assessment strategies that support students to be more prepared for the summative assessment opportunity.

These strategies include monitoring milestones carefully, tailoring feedback to not compromise authenticity, being explicit about what is required at Achieved, Merit and Excellence levels, and providing checklists to build students' confidence on what they need to prepare for summative assessments.

**Supporting students for Special Assessment Conditions** The school has identified that it needs to provide resources to support students requiring special assessment conditions. They currently collect school-based evidence to support applications, but the relative number of students identified is below the decile average. To support and confirm all needs are identified, a Special Needs Coordinator has been appointed to conduct more testing and provide coordinated support for both internal and external assessment opportunities.

**No action required**

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

## 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 2021 6.4b)*

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

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use to confirm that they are valid and fit for purpose
- using subject specialists to verify a selected sample of student work at grade boundaries
- documenting the completion of each step in the internal moderation process using the standard Internal Moderation Cover Sheet
- senior leadership monitoring the completion of internal moderation for each standard before results are reported, by reconciling documentation with actual practice
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements and ensuring material is available
- ensuring samples of student work are adequately stored encouraging teachers to submit samples of student work digitally.

**Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on conducting 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 number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor expertise with the standard, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

Learning Areas currently 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.

### **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)*

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

- using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results to inform decisions about future course content and design
- modifying assessment programmes as a response to teacher inquiry
- celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition.

### **Edgewater College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- timely reporting of results to NZQA
- ensuring that internal results are reported with a result or withdrawn as appropriate
- using Key Indicators to identify and correct data errors
- ensuring all teachers and students attest that entries and results are entered correctly
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA Learner Login

**Comprehensive Learning Area Review** Heads of Learning Areas review their student achievement outcomes annually to inform future learning strategies and make changes to the collection of evidence and course design. Each Learning Area prepares a report using data prepared by the school. This data is both longitudinal and comparative and includes gender and ethnicity. Outcomes are measured against Learning Area and school strategic goals and next steps are identified.

Positive achievement outcomes and areas for improvement are presented by all Learning Areas at a meeting with the Board of Trustees. This allows sharing of ideas and strategies for improvement across the school, further enhancing improvements in NCEA assessment practice school-wide.

**Reconciling Memoranda of Understanding with external providers** The school needs to reconcile Memoranda of Understanding with results reported using external provider codes. Currently Memoranda of Understanding are managed by a number of learning areas with no oversight that current subcontracting arrangements are in place before results are reported. To ensure credible results are reported it is recommended that these documents should be held centrally and reconciled with results when a results file is submitted to NZQA.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- holding current Memorandum of Understanding with external centrally providers and reconciling them with results reported.

## 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))*

### **Edgewater College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and processes through:
  - online publication of the Edgewater College staff and student assessment practices and student course selection information
  - student assemblies
  - informal discussion in mentor classes of NCEA practices and processes
  - Whānau NCEA and career evenings
- informing staff on updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings
- reporting on student progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to parents on information held on the school's management system.
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

### **Edgewater College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- checking whether teachers and students are following processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- ensuring that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

**Line Managers support assessment and moderation practice** The active role that all senior managers take in supporting their Heads of Learning Areas maintains consistent assessment and moderation practice school-wide.

Line Managers meet with their Heads of Learning Areas fortnightly. A common focus of these discussions is NCEA assessment and moderation practice and the monitoring and tracking of student achievement in their subjects. A recent discussion has been around the management of the new resubmission rules where strategies approved at the Head of Learning Areas meeting were reinforced.

These meetings allow senior leadership to identify issues, reinforce the school's strategic direction in learning and assessment and support consistent practice school-wide. Heads of Learning Areas reported how these meetings helped develop their understanding of assessment practice and provided them with confidence to introduce new initiatives.

### **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.