

# Managing National Assessment Report

**King's College**

June 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively King's 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
- *Assessment Policy for Unit Standards and Internally Assessed Achievement standards, 2021*
- *King's College HOD/TIC Handbook, 2021* (Staff Handbook)
- *Course of Study Guide 2021, Kings College* (Student Handbook)
- *King's College NZQA Scholarship Exam Guide, 2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principals – Academics/Assessment
- Heads of Department for:
  - Biology
  - Economics
  - English
  - Physics
- Teachers in Charge of:
  - Drama
  - Media Studies
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Headmaster, 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

## King's College

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

This review was rescheduled from 2021 at NZQA's request because of Covid- 19 disruption.

### What the school is doing well

King's College continues to develop key policies and procedures that support student NCEA achievement, ensuring quality assessment practice. Improvements in the delivery of NCEA can be attributed to stronger leadership, higher expectations for middle leaders and greater ownership of NCEA assessment practices by all teachers.

Data driven review processes have empowered teachers to reflect on how they can design courses to meet student needs. As part of teacher appraisal processes, student voice is now used to inform improvements to the delivery of NCEA at the subject level.

Assessment practice is robust with school-wide initiatives to improve credible practice. Heads of Department discussions and changes made by assessment leaders have tightened assessment practice, and this has been communicated effectively to staff and students. Building teacher understanding and confidence in their practice has been important in ensuring consistent credibility of assessment.

Internal and external moderation processes are embedded practice with all Heads of Department following standardised practices. These quality assurance processes provide evidence that grades reported to NZQA are credible. Teachers now understand the need for all standards to be verified by subject experts before results are reported. Action plans for inconsistent external moderation outcomes are now monitored by the Principal's Nominee and reviewed to ensure not consistent outcomes are addressed.

The use of digital tools has made real time data more accessible to managers, teachers. This data is in a format that can inform school-wide decisions about improving the delivery of NCEA and allows effective monitoring and tracking of student achievement progress. The Principal's Nominee ensures entries and results reported to NZQA are accurate and timely.

The school's capacity to respond to external review findings continues to improve due to a more connected and collaborative model of assessment leadership. Expectations are now clear for senior leaders, the Principal's Nominee, middle

leaders and teachers. The Principal's Nominee is focused on practices and quality assurance and the Deputy Principals on ensuring student academic capability, including systems for supporting and monitoring their progress and achievement.

### **Areas for improvement**

The monitoring of internal moderation needs to be further strengthened by the Principal's Nominee reconciling completed internal moderation cover sheets with actual practice to provide confidence to senior leadership that all results reported to NZQA have been quality assured.

Sole subject teachers need to be made aware that a justification process can be used to ensure evidence used to report derived and unexpected grades is based on standard-specific evidence'

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

### **Agreed action**

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

- ensure single subject teachers report derived and unexpected grades following a justification process.
- reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice to provide confidence that all reported results are credible.

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15 September 2021

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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 3 November 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has actioned all the action items from the 2017 Managing National Assessment report. However as outlined in this report, internal moderation monitoring could be further strengthened.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The rate of agreement between teachers and NZQA moderators has improved over the last three years, with outcomes indicating greater consistency of assessment decisions with the requirements of the standard. This reflects the greater focus on monitoring the completion of formal action plans that address external moderation outcomes. Senior leadership is now aware of the subjects where inconsistencies have been identified and during the review Heads of Department explained the strategies, they have developed to address these issues.

### 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)*

Senior Leadership have moved the focus of internal review from responding to compliance to reflecting on how processes could be improved to support student achievement. They have supported middle leaders to make improvements to the delivery of NCEA and provided teachers with the confidence to take ownership of these processes.

Senior Management through Heads of Department discussions have encouraged professional collaboration between departments in the form of learning groups. These discussions have supported a number of initiatives to improve student achievement using the flexibility of the NCEA qualification.

The teacher appraisal process requires the development of teacher as inquiry projects using student voice, which include NCEA student achievement. The introduction of Power BI as a data digital tool has made informative data accessible, to help drive assessment practice improvements. Teachers now reflect on their delivery of standards and make consequent changes to course design. This data is also valuable for monitoring student progress and has supported the development of a mentoring programme for all students. Teachers meet with students weekly and discuss achievement progress and wellbeing. The accessibility of data has also supported teachers to take more ownership of the delivery of their NCEA assessment programmes and justify changes to meet student needs.

The school has identified that Māori and Pacific student achievement needs to be supported by a greater focus on cultural inclusiveness. A Māori and Pacific Advisory Board with external representation has been established to inform this initiative. In

terms of STEM the school has made sound progress particularly for Pacific students. Year 13 Māori and Pacific students achieve above other students in Level 3 STEM subject achievement. Since 2016 Pacific student achievement for one or more STEM subjects has increased from 26.7% to 58.3%.

Currently senior leadership is making significant changes to the processes of reporting to parents. Traditional written reports are being replaced by real time data that allows parents and teachers to respond more quickly to potential assessment related issues allowing more timely interventions.

These initiatives reflect the school's improved leadership in NCEA assessment practice and developing the capacity for middle leaders to support teachers to take ownership for improving student achievement.

**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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

### **King's 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
- milestone checking to support students to track their own progress towards completing assessment
- 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

### **King's College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice for late and missed assessment, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions 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.

**Improving student accessibility to assessment** The school has developed a number of strategies to support students to follow academic pathways.

Special assessment conditions are offered to 28 percent of NCEA students. As identified in the NZQA Special Assessment Conditions Review, the school contributes considerable resources to the management of these conditions for students for both external and internal assessment opportunities.

Senior leadership is exploring options for providing a greater range of vocational choices for students who wish to follow that pathway and, within their context, discussing the appropriateness of assessing when ready for individual students.

**Justification process for reporting derived grades** A justification process should be used by single subject teachers to ensure reported derived and unexpected grades are based on valid standard-specific evidence.

Teachers interviewed for the review displayed a good understanding of the requirements to report derived and unexpected event grades only after a verification process had ensured they were valid and authentic. This verification process mainly occurred with marking panels made up of subject experts in the school.

However, single subject teachers did not always use verifiers to ensure derived and unexpected grades were quality assured. In this situation single teachers can use a

justification process where a teacher with standard specific knowledge can verify that the exam task and marking schedule were based on the achievement criteria of the standard being assessed. This decision can be supported by the accuracy of historical grades awarded previously for this standard, if assessed by that teacher.

### **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 single subject teachers report derived and unexpected grades following a justification process.

## 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)*

### **King's 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 grades awarded to 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*
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions.

### **King's College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- randomly selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements and ensuring material is available
- ensuring samples of student work are adequately stored and 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 how to conduct 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.

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.

**Strengthening the monitoring of internal moderation** To further strengthen the monitoring of internal moderation documentation needs to be reconciled with actual practice.

Since the last review, the Principal's Nominee has required all completed internal moderation cover sheets to be filed with her before results are reported. The reconciliation of a sample of this documentation with actual practice for each subject annually would provide senior leadership with confidence that all reported results are credible.

Senior Managers are investigating moving the internal moderation process onto a digital platform which would provide even more transparency.

**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:

- reconcile internal moderation documentation with actual practice to provide confidence that all reported results are credible.

## 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)*

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

- using NZQA statistical reports and analysing results to inform decisions about future course content and design
- celebrating student achievement through student awards and recognition.

### **King's 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 reported to NZQA
- actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA Learner Login.

### **Effective tracking and monitoring of student achievement progress**

Strategically, in the last three years the school has focused on using data tools to provide a real time view of student achievement progress at school, department, subject, student and standard level.

Data tools support the mentoring programme. Each student meets with their mentor on a weekly basis to discuss their progress. Students interviewed for the review were very positive about this initiative and particularly the focus on wellbeing in conjunction with discussions about their NCEA academic progress and pathways

**Data tools inform school review** Departments now use data views to complete an in depth analysis for reporting on annual goals at school, subject and course level. The accessibility of this data has meant that discussions about improvements to student achievement are more informed and transparent at all levels of the school's operation.

### **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))*

### **King's College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and processes through:
  - physical and online publication of the staff and student handbooks and student course selection information
  - student assemblies
  - informal discussion between mentors and students about NCEA practices and processes
- 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.

### **King's College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- informing teachers through regular meetings 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 through documentation and assemblies

**Streamlining course information booklets** The assessment detail in course information booklets should be reviewed so there is one source of information.

All departments produce comprehensive course booklets to inform students on course assessment requirements. Some of these booklets reproduce generic NCEA assessment practice information provided to students in the Course Selection Booklet and online. Assessment information from one source for students would ensure consistency of practice and understanding school wide. The amount of information in the course booklets would be reduced and therefore become more accessible to students.

Assessment information in a course booklet should be subject specific, such as standards offered, calendar of assessment events including any further assessment opportunities offered, checkpoints for assessment tasks, and any standards that contribute to literacy and numeracy.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- consider the benefits of removing generic assessment practice information from course information booklets so there is one source to support consistent assessment practice school wide.