

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Tauranga Girls' College

July 2017

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Tauranga Girls' 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 2017* (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
- *Tauranga Girls' College Assessment Policy June 2017*
- *Tauranga Girls' College Staff Manual 2017* (includes assessment procedures for staff)
- *Assessment 2017 A guide for Students and Parents*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students and Heads of Department for Art, Languages, Science and Social Sciences.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Senior Deputy Principal, Principal's Nominee and two other Deputy Principals 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

## Tauranga Girls' College

6 July 2017

### 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.

### What the school is doing well

Tauranga Girls' College has effective assessment and moderation processes in place to ensure credible assessment for national qualifications.

The school's review process ensures that where issues are identified, they are effectively addressed, providing on-going improvement to assessment practice that allows enhanced achievement outcomes for students.

A broader school curriculum has been developed that provides more courses with a vocational focus, and increased assessment opportunities based around student ability levels and interests. Data-driven academic mentoring assists students to set goals and keep track of their progress towards meeting these. At-risk students are supported to meet qualification requirements.

Assessment processes and procedures are effectively managed and are well understood by staff and students.

School systems ensure assessment material, whether physical or digital, is securely stored so it can be easily accessed if required for external moderation. The external moderation response process ensures that moderation issues are appropriately addressed.

The school has effective processes for ensuring the achievement data it reports is accurate and timely. Assessment-related data is effectively used to support student achievement by setting school-wide, department and individual academic goals, reflecting on student achievement to improve courses design, and tracking students' academic progress.

A range of physical and digital formats is used to effectively communicate assessment policies and procedures to staff, students and parents, helping to develop a shared understanding of school and NZQA assessment requirements.

The Principal's Nominee is experienced in the role, well supported by other members of the Senior Leadership team and respected by staff for her knowledge and support with assessment and moderation matters.

## **Areas for improvement.**

While effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee, the external moderation response process is not adequately documented. Keeping a record of the action plans developed in response to identified external moderation issues, and the monitoring to ensure their completion will ensure a more accountable and transparent process.

Internal Moderation Cover Sheets are not always completed consistently across departments or by individual assessors. Providing information on the school's expectations of what should be recorded on the cover sheets will support teacher understanding of the process and help improve consistency of practice across departments and individual assessors.

Involving Senior Leaders in monitoring internal moderation has helped reduce the Principal's Nominee's workload. However, it has reduced her understanding of the level of effectiveness of these processes in departments she does not visit. Developing a process to record the checks made during these monitoring visits will strengthen the process, make it more transparent for Heads of Department and better inform the Principal's Nominee of the credibility of internal moderation processes within the school.

Well documented cover sheets and keeping a record of departmental monitoring visits will provide evidence for the process the school needs to establish to assure Senior Leaders that all results have been through an internal moderation process before being reported to NZQA (Assessment Rule 5.6b).

External moderation for non-NZQA standards is not monitored in the same way as NZQA managed standards. The school needs to ensure that the same response process is used for all external moderation, otherwise issues identified by moderators may not be adequately addressed.

This review also identified several areas where the assessment information communicated to staff and students could be updated. These include internal moderation processes, external moderation response processes, appealing assessment decisions and student rights under the *Privacy Act, 1993*.

## **Agreed action**

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

- document the action plans developed in response to identified external moderation issues, and the monitoring to ensure their completion
- clarify internal moderation documentation expectations with staff
- ensure internal moderation monitoring is appropriately documented to confirm the reporting of credible results
- ensure a consistent response process is used for all external moderation
- update the assessment information the staff manual and student guide to reflect best practice.

Kay Wilson  
Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

3 October 2017

**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 found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)*

### Action Items from 31 October 2013 Managing National Assessment Report

Both agreed actions from the 2013 report have been addressed. Academic mentoring occurs to assist students set goals and reflect on progress, and the school uses a system, that meets NZQA requirements, to randomly select samples of student work for external moderation.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The Principal's Nominee effectively manages the external moderation response process. Where issues are identified by moderation she personally follows up with the subject area concerned, providing support where appropriate and ensuring any planned actions are completed. This process would be strengthened by documenting the actions required and the monitoring of their completion. This will ensure an accountable process that is more transparent by being recorded.

### 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)*

Where issues are identified, the school has processes that allow it to make changes that lead to improvements in assessment practice and enhanced achievement outcomes for students.

Examples of where review has improved assessment practice include:

- developing a process to centrally store student work produced digitally during assessment so that it is more readily accessible should it be required for external verification or moderation
- subject teachers evaluating student achievement in terms two and three, and informing parents where students are considered at-risk of not achieving their academic goals, so that courses can be appropriately adjusted and support provided
- providing Year 10 students and their parents with information on NCEA and access to the student management system's online portal, to improve their understanding and ability to view achievement data as soon as students start being assessed for qualifications.

### Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review. Senior management undertakes to:

- document the action plans developed in response to identified external moderation issues, and the monitoring to ensure their completion.

## How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

*Evidence found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)*

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

- broadening the school curriculum to include courses with a more practical or vocational focus
- improving assessment opportunities by providing:
  - multi-level courses where limited student numbers might prevent a course running
  - half-year courses, such as Self Defence and Aquatics, based around student interest
  - courses that differentiate assessment based upon student ability
- broadening vocational assessment opportunities for individual students by using external providers who deliver assessments relating to students' career choices
- providing students at risk of not meeting NCEA literacy and/or numeracy requirements with additional support and alternative pathways to meet the requirements
- engaging students by using a range of methods to collect evidence of achievement during assessment.

### **Tauranga Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring that staff are well informed of students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and providing them with appropriate support, as required
- assisting students to present authentic work using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessments, further assessment opportunities, resubmissions, and student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications.

**Academic mentoring supports student achievement** Data-driven learning conversations with tutor teachers assist students to set academic goals, and keep track of their progress. They also allow tutors to identify where support may be required to assist students meet qualification requirements. The students spoken to during the review acknowledged that the academic mentoring during daily tutorial time helps support their academic achievement.

**Collecting school-based evidence for special assessment conditions applications** The school is now gathering evidence from its junior students to identify those who may require special assessment conditions for NCEA



assessments. Previously most of the special assessment conditions applications made by the school have used evidence from reports prepared by independent registered professionals. The school has realised this limits the ability of many students to make applications because of the possible financial barrier of obtaining a professional report. This new approach will enable school-evidence based applications to be made, and help ensure that all students who require them have a chance to access these entitlements.

**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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)*

### **Tauranga Girls' College has processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- requiring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists either from within, or outside of the school to verify samples of student grades
- requiring staff to document the steps of their moderation processes on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

### **Tauranga Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- securely storing samples of student work to ensure they are available for external moderation, if required.

**Improve staff understanding of the verification process** Purposeful selection of sufficient samples of student work to be sure that grade judgements are consistent with the standard was not evident in all departments. The samples of student work selected should be close to grade boundaries, or work that the assessor is unsure of, rather than chosen randomly.

In some departments, more student work is being verified than may be necessary.

The amount selected should be determined by factors such as the number of students assessed, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars and assessor experience. There is, therefore, no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. Careful selection may result in fewer samples, which will help reduce verifiers' workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

Providing guidance in the staff manual on what constitutes best verification practice would assist staff understanding and help them to improve their own practice.

**Clarify internal moderation documentation expectations** Evidence was sighted during the review that staff are meeting the school's requirement to document their internal moderation processes. However, the information recorded was not always presented in a way that would support their assessment understanding and help improve practice. For example, in recording the verification process, the reason why specific grade decisions were made was lacking on some cover sheets. Clarifying school expectations on what should be recorded on the cover sheet, and documenting these in the staff manual, will help improve understanding and consistency across departments and individual assessors.

**Strengthening internal moderation monitoring processes** Senior Leaders inspect departments' internal assessment and moderation processes as part of Middle/Senior Leadership liaison meetings. By spreading responsibility for monitoring

department moderation processes, the other Senior Leaders have helped reduce the Principal's Nominees workload and improved their collective understanding of the effectiveness of the school's assessment and moderation processes. However, as the documentation of these visits can be varied, the process has reduced the Principal's Nominee's understanding of the level of effectiveness of assessment systems within the departments she does not visit. Developing a specific requirement for the records that must be kept during this monitoring will strengthen the process, provide the Principal's Nominee with more consistent feedback, and make the process more transparent for Heads of Department.

Because these department checks happen mid-year, Senior Leaders cannot be confident that all results have been quality assured before they are reported to NZQA in the end-of-year file submission (Assessment Rule 5.6b). A process to confirm that all reported results have been through the school's internal moderation processes has to be established. Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring the internal moderation that happens within their departments. An attestation from each Head of Department confirming the completion of moderation processes within their departments could provide this assurance.

**Ensure consistent external moderation response processes** For standards externally moderated by NZQA, a common response process is in place. The Principal's Nominee could not confirm that the same response process is used for standards moderated by Industry Training Organisations. This could mean that issues identified by this moderation are not adequately addressed. The school has agreed to ensure a consistent response process is used for all external moderation.

### **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:

- clarify internal moderation documentation expectations with staff
- ensure internal moderation monitoring is appropriately documented, to confirm the reporting of credible results
- ensure a consistent response process is used for all external moderation.

### **For consideration**

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- strengthening staff understanding of the verification process and sufficiency requirements.

## How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

*Evidence found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### Tauranga Girls' College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - setting school-wide and department achievement targets based upon longitudinal and comparative analysis
  - teachers analysing previous years' achievement data to inform current year course and/or programme designs
  - supporting students to establish achievement goals and track their NCEA progress
  - Senior Leaders, Deans and tutor teachers tracking student achievement to identify students who require extra support, such as additional assessment programmes at the end of the school year
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - regular and timely reporting of results to NZQA
  - checking for, and correcting, errors shown up by the Key Indicators and data file submission reports from NZQA
  - Heads of Departments ensuring that results are appropriately entered in markbooks on the student management system once internal moderation processes have been completed
  - having students sign-off on the accuracy of their results
  - only withdrawing student entries from internally assessed standards after staff have verified that the students have not had an adequate assessment opportunity
  - reporting results against the correct provider codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding
  - assisting students to register for their Learner login and encouraging them to use this, and the online portal to the school's student management system, to check the accuracy of their reported results.

### 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 found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)*

### **Tauranga Girls' College has processes and procedures that are effective for:**

- ensuring students receive outlines for all course they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedures using a range of physical and digital formats
- reviewing communications to ensure they are current.

### **Tauranga Girls' College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- Year 11 tutor teachers reviewing the assessment guidelines with students, and asking parents to confirm that they have also read them
- providing staff with easy access to NZQA *Assessment Matters* circulars and other updates by storing copies on the school's shared network drive and in Google docs
- discussing departmental processes on resubmission, further assessment opportunities and managing authenticity at recent Head of Department meetings.

**Improve assessment information for staff and students** The following information should be provided to assist staff to improve their assessment practice, and inform students of their rights:

- Staff:
  - what constitutes best internal moderation verification practice
  - school expectations of how internal moderation should be documented
  - requirements of the school's external moderation response process
- Students. The right to:
  - appeal any assessment decision, not just those relating to grade judgements
  - expect the privacy of their information to be respected and to be asked for permission to use of their work as exemplars, in line with the Privacy Act, 1993.

**Provide consistent course assessment information** The course outlines provided to students contain most of the basic information on the standards that will be assessed, although in a variety of formats. Providing students and parents with consistent course information, using a common format, will make assessment programmes easier to understand. Information should be included on:

- standards that meet literacy and numeracy requirements
- each standard's registered number, rather than its subject matrix identifier.

Standardised assessment statements can be generated by the student management system, and these would address most of the issues. It is recommended that the school consider making these statements available to students and parents.

**Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- update the assessment information the staff manual and student guide to reflect best practice.

**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:

- standardising the course assessment information provided to students and parents.