

Managing National Assessment Report

Hillcrest High School

June 2024

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW Hillcrest High School 19 June 2024 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 2022.

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 2022.

Considerations

For consideration

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

- encourage use of NZQA's Assessor Practice Tool in Pūtake to strengthen assessors' grade judgements
- strengthening checks of students' entries to decrease late entries for end of year examinations.

No action required

The school has no action items relating to the quality of their assessment systems.

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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 28 June 2019 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no action points from the last Managing National Assessment review

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The Principal's Nominee has established and embedded robust systems for responding to external moderation and promotes a culture of reflective practice. Teachers value the feedback from external moderation and use it to improve assessment practice.

At the start of each year, the Principal's Nominee meets with each Subject Leader and Head of Faculty to conduct a subject review alongside a review of assessment and moderation processes, including revisiting actions from the previous year's external moderation. This process supports the induction of new staff as well as identifying potential areas of concern where assessor support is needed.

As part of the senior leadership team, the Principal's Nominee has developed shared ownership of assessment leadership within the group. Senior leaders discuss assessment and moderation during their regular meetings with Heads of Faculty, incorporating reflections on feedback from external moderation. Teachers are positive about the learning gained from moderator feedback and use it to identify changes that need to be made. There has been increased use of the clarification process to support this learning.

The Principal's Nominee investigated Internal-External outliers in one subject in collaboration with the Head of Faculty. The teachers in the faculty used the process to analyse results to check what had led to the situation, and although there was a plausible and acceptable reason for the disparity, some issues were uncovered and the department is addressing these.

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)

Investing in digital capacity Hillcrest High School has built on previous engagement with its piloting of the literacy and numeracy Common Assessment Activities to develop the school's digital assessment capacity. This has prompted changes in the logistics of conducting digital assessments. The school is now exploring ways to extend these changes to gather authentic evidence for derived grades, particularly in light of the increasing challenge posed by generative artificial intelligence.

Implementing the reviewed NCEA Level 1 standards The school has introduced the new NCEA Level 1 standards across the Year 11 curriculum. The driving body for the curriculum and assessment changes is the Board of Studies, a group consisting of the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Faculty. Heads of Faculty lead

implementation to develop shared understanding by faculty teachers of the principles of good assessment and subject-specific requirements.

To support the assessment of the submitted standards, the Senior Leadership Team has utilised the school's Learning Management System to develop an assessment calendar. This will support teachers' awareness of student workload during the assessment period. To augment the work already done, the school is planning how it will manage students' submission of their work and monitor teachers' verification processes that the work submitted is authentic.

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 against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Independent learning encouraged Students at Hillcrest High School are supported to take ownership of their learning in a digital environment. They engage with the school's Learning Management System regularly. They can use this to access achievement data and are well-informed about their progress towards achievement and career goals. Students regularly log into the Student Management System and to NZQA's student portal.

Tracking and mentoring student progress The Hauora class is central to the effective communication of assessment practice and tracking student progress towards their qualifications and goals. This is where students learn about assessment and the qualifications system.

The school utilises regular checks of assessment data to develop student awareness that they are on the right track with the appropriate standards for their achievement and career goals, and to verify they have access to enough standards to gain their qualifications. There is ongoing development with students around setting their aspirational aims higher so they can achieve certificate and course endorsements.

The school uses a process called SARONA (Students At Risk Of Not Achieving) to collect data from teachers, aiding Deans in working with identified students and keeping students informed about any assessment issues. Teachers adapt courses and assessments for identified SARONA students, alongside other priority learners. Processes for supporting students with identified educational needs are embedded in the school and provision of Special Assessment Conditions is seamless. A Cultural Liaison teacher tracks the progress of international students (including refugees). Students commented on the effectiveness of the weekly tutoring sessions targeted towards Pasifika students, which are extended to any students who wish to attend. These sessions are effective in providing support in areas requested by students and teachers across the school.

Data monitoring distributed across the school The Principal's Nominee works closely with a support staff member who monitors data in the school. Most departments in the school have a designated teacher who liaises with this Data Administrator. The school's leadership can be confident that only quality assured results are reported to NZQA. Focused monitoring of teachers' checking of student entries would address late entries in some subjects. This has led to some students not having personalised papers for the end-of-year examinations.

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 against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Assessor support for teachers The Principal's Nominee provides purposeful support to middle leaders, helping them enhance their own assessment capabilities and develop the skills of other teachers in their subject area. Including NZQA assessor support in teacher assessment and moderation, development could further strengthen teacher assessment capability. NZQA's Learning Management System, Pūtake, has modules to support new assessors. The Assessment Practice Tool (APT) allows teachers to build their confidence in making accurate grade judgements.

Teachers interviewed expressed confidence in the assessment support provided by the Principal's Nominee and his development of consistent assessor practice across the school. The feedback from external moderation was used as a tool to reflect on this.

Streamlining monitoring of internal moderation The Principal's Nominee has set up a shared drive for storing assessment materials, moderation information and storage of student work. Teachers have been supported to use this according to their processes for managing assessment in their subjects. The shared drive gives the Principal's Nominee another mechanism for checking on quality assurance in the school, streamlining the monitoring of completion. It has the added advantage of making the material available should a teacher leave.

Teachers have a shared understanding of the school's moderation process from developing and critiquing the assessment through to marking and verification. The introduction of the shared drive makes it easier to complete the quality assurance processes and then review each standard's assessment before assessing again.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Hillcrest High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its 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 standardspecific 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
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Hillcrest High School 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
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Hillcrest 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
- 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.

Hillcrest 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

Hillcrest High School 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.

Hillcrest 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
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year
- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding
- seeking NZQA approval through a subcontracting agreement to engage with a non-consented provider to deliver specific standards.

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

Hillcrest High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- 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.

Hillcrest 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 in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Hillcrest 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 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 2022* (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 NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024*.

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:

- assessment and moderation process information for teachers.
- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Hillcrest High School NCEA Info for Parents and Students 2024* (Student Handbook)
- *Hillcrest High School NZQF Procedures - Staff Handbook 2024* (Staff Handbook)
- *Hillcrest High School Policies* for curriculum and assessment

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Heads of Faculty for:
 - English
 - Chemistry
 - Languages
- Assistant Head of Faculty
 - Physical Education and Health
- Heads of Department for:
 - Engineering & Wood
 - Sociology
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Principal's Nominee and the Acting Principal's Nominee (for the second half of 2024) 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.