

Managing National Assessment Report

Hāwera High School

July 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Hāwera 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.

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 2019* (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
- *Hāwera High School: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting – Staff Procedures Manual 2019*
- *Hāwera High School Student Assessment Booklet 2019*
- Departmental Report to Board of Trustees – Template and English Department report
- *Response to NZQA issues of concern in external moderation reports 2018*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Deputy Principal – Curriculum/Assessment
- Head of Department for:
 - Art
 - Commerce
 - Digital Technologies
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the 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.

SUMMARY

Hāwera High School

31 July 2019

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

The Hāwera High School mission statement "Inspiring students to be passionate lifelong learners," infuses their process of self-review and strategic planning. The school's goal is that all students will find meaningful pathways within the courses the school offers and then on to further study and employment.

School leaders review NCEA assessment processes and structures and are willing to change these to ensure they that meet the needs of students and staff. They have developed templates for the review of departments and external moderation to ensure consistent practice, deepen the level of analysis of data and increase accountability. This ensures that courses meet school goals and student needs.

The numbers of students being identified as eligible for Special Assessment Conditions has increased in recent years. The SENCO and the Principal's Nominee work closely together to ensure that identification processes are effective and that students receive their entitlements for all assessment.

Internal and external moderation processes ensure that there is a high level of confidence in assessor judgements. Assessment tasks are critiqued appropriately, and subject experts verify samples of student work at grade boundaries. Staff follow a recently developed process for responding to feedback from external moderators which focuses on creating an action plan for change. The Principal's Nominee monitors the response and supports Heads of Departments in making the necessary changes.

The school manages its assessment data effectively, including regular reporting to parents and students so that they can monitor progress. The school uses assessment data to identify and support priority learners and to evaluate courses and units of learning. Senior leadership ensures that programmes of learning which do not meet expected achievement outcomes are reviewed. Staff spoken to were pleased with the increased depth and accountability of this process.

Students interviewed for this review were well informed about NCEA and their own progress and pathway. The school communicates this information in a variety of ways including consistent course information, a student handbook which is emailed to all students and available online, and reinforcement in year level meetings and by subject teachers. Parents and students have access to assessment data and

pathway planning tools online which add to their ability to self-monitor progress and make appropriate course decisions.

Areas for improvement

The Principal's Nominee ensures internal moderation occurs for all results reported. To provide confidence that all results are credible, and that expected processes are well understood and embedded in departmental practice, the school should reconcile the internal moderation documentation with actual practice.

Agreed action

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. This is to:

- develop a process for reconciling internal moderation documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all results reported are credible.

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Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

14 October 2019

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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 17 August 2016 Managing National Assessment Report The action items from the 2016 Managing National Assessment review have been addressed. The school has reviewed its processes for Special Assessment Considerations and made changes to address the issues identified. They have also updated their staff handbook as required.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has maintained a satisfactory level of agreement between its assessors and NZQA moderators. Where NZQA moderators have identified inconsistencies, appropriate staff respond to the information provided and make changes to teaching plans, assessments or marking schedules, as required. They outline the issues and the action plan to the Principal's Nominee on a new form as part of her regular monitoring of assessment with subject leaders each term. Heads of Department include an analysis of their external moderation, and the response made, in their annual departmental review.

The final step in this review cycle is for senior leaders to ensure that the changes made resolve the identified issue. This could include using the internal moderation critiquing or verification processes to confirm the effectiveness of the change, or by requesting a standard be included in a subsequent external moderation cycle. The Principal's Nominee could then provide a summary of the outcomes to senior management as part of the regular reporting cycle.

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)

Changes to internal review processes Senior management has strengthened the internal review process by increasing the depth of the analysis of assessment data and the level of accountability of subject leaders to school leadership.

New templates have been designed for making evidence-based decisions when reviewing units and reporting in depth about courses to the Board of Trustees. They include evidence of how departments:

- analyse performance against department and school-wide goals
- assess external moderation feedback and address concerns with action plans
- evaluate programmes for progress and achievement by students
- meet the needs of high priority students

The Principal meets with each Head of Department to discuss the next steps for the department based on its self-review.

Review of timetable and assessment processes In 2018 the school changed its timetable structure to a 4-period day with two 90 minute and two 60 minute periods. The school identified that learning focus could be improved by increasing the time spent in class, thereby reducing movement between lessons and encouraging student enquiry. School management are evaluating the effectiveness of the timetable changes this year.

The school's "Te Wera" programme incorporates project-based, cross curricular learning at Year 9. The school plan to extend this programme over coming years, into Years 10 and 11, with the goal of improving NCEA outcomes for all students.

School leadership have assessed that accelerated Mathematics and English courses no longer meet the pathway or attainment needs of students and will be discontinued in 2020.

For consideration

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

- developing a process to ensure that changes made in response to external moderation feedback resolve the identified issues.

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 2019 5.5)

Hāwera High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- designing differentiated courses in learning areas in order to meet the learning needs of groups of students
- partnering with external providers to offer a range of courses to meet individual student needs
- using a variety of methods for capturing student assessment evidence, as appropriate
- using milestones and feedback to help students present their best work and manage their deadlines
- incorporating student voice into decisions about assessing when ready
- providing consistent resubmission practice, in line with NZQA expectations, across departments.

Hāwera High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment, and applications for extensions
- investigating appeals of assessment decisions
- identifying and responding to breaches of assessment conditions
- ensuring standard-based evidence is collected to report unexpected event and derived grades
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Identifying students requiring Special Assessment Conditions The school has improved its processes for identifying students eligible for Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) and ensuring that they access their entitlements. The appointment of a SENCO, who works closely with the Principal's Nominee, and the acquisition of a range of appropriate assessment tools has led to a direct increase in the number of SAC applications and entitlements.

Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at Level 3 The Senior Management team at the school has noted the lower participation and achievement in STEM subjects for Māori students than for students of other ethnicities. The school is addressing the differences through Otago University-led professional learning and development in the relevant departments. This has led to greater retention of students taking senior STEM subjects in the last two years. The school will also evaluate the success of this professional learning against equity goals.

Two other initiatives for Māori students have a focus on increased engagement and retention for students at senior levels in STEM subjects. This year senior students have participated in a whole day event, Ko Māui Hāngarau – Māori Technology and Innovation. This event for Māori students focused on inspiring and engaging Māori

students in technology and the digital world, while embracing Māori culture and cultural knowledge. The “Wai Ora” programme for Māori students is a partnership with the local District Health Board which encourages and expands on Science learning.

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 2019 6.4b)

Hāwera High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify grades on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- identifying, storing and using benchmarked samples of student work
- monitoring the completion of internal moderation by collecting *Internal Moderation Coversheets* for each standard before results are reported.

Hāwera High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- requiring teachers to select standards for external moderation where issues have been identified
- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored.

Focus on reducing workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency The school should consider providing Heads of Departments with further guidance on 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.

Departments 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.

Process for reconciling departmental practice to confirmation of moderation

The school has agreed to reconcile the information on a random selection of *Internal Moderation Coversheets* to actual practice for each department. Currently, the Principal's Nominee ensures that internal moderation has been completed by matching departmental assessment plans to a copy of the *Internal Moderation Coversheet* for each standard. Reconciling the information on the documentation to actual practice, including critiquing and verification processes and moderated student work, will provide school management with confidence that processes are embedded practice in every department and that reported results are credible.

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:

- develop a process for reconciling internal moderation documentation with actual practice to provide senior management with confidence that all results reported 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)

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

- regular reporting of results and credits gained to parents so they can monitor student progress
- giving students online access to their assessment information so they can monitor their progress independently
- evaluating programmes of learning by analysing assessment results in order to make decisions about improving course design, teaching and assessment.

Hāwera High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting regular datafiles to NZQA
- checking Key Indicators and resolving issues as they arise
- having students and parents use the student management system and their NZQA logins to check the accuracy of entries and grades.

Assessment tracking and course planning Tracking of student assessment information leads to supportive interventions for senior students. From 2019, a wrap-around pastoral care team identifies students at risk of not meeting their attainment goals and supports them in finding appropriate study and employment pathways. This is done as early as possible and in consultation with parents to ensure that a common understanding of pathways is agreed. The school uses a careers information tracking tool to assist students and families with pathway planning and course selection.

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))

Hāwera High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive consistent and informative outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating information about NCEA and expected assessment practice
- supporting teachers new to the school
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Hāwera High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- sending an electronic copy of the student handbook annually to all students via email and reinforcing key points at year-level meetings
- reinforcing important information to students in subject and form classes
- ensuring regular, direct communication between the Principal's Nominee and Heads of Departments.

The Principal's Nominee leads the professional development of all staff about NCEA Regular, in-school professional development, led by the Principal's Nominee, develops the capacity of all teachers to understand NCEA practice, and ensures that consistent quality assurance processes are embedded across departments.

The school has a 3-week cycle for professional development where the Principal's Nominee has a regular session for informing teachers about assessment best practice and ensuring that they have an opportunity to discuss changes. She schedules regular face-to-face meetings with Heads of Departments to follow up on key processes including entries and the scheduling of assessment and completing and responding to moderation.

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.