

Managing National Assessment Report

Whanganui City College

April 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Whanganui City 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 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 enhance 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
- *Wanganui City College Evaluation and Reporting Staff Procedures Manual 2018* (Staff Handbook)
- *Wanganui City College NCEA National Certificate of Educational Achievement Handbook 2018* (Student Handbook)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, known at the school as the Academic Dean, three students and Heads of Department for English, Māori, Mathematics, Music, Technology and Visual Arts.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and the Academic Dean 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

Whanganui City College

11 April 2018

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 2017.

What the school is doing well

Whanganui City College has a strong culture of self-review that ensures credible assessment practice is maintained and that it utilises the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model to meet student needs.

To allow students to present their best evidence for achievement opportunities, differentiation of assessment programmes between classes and within courses is practised school-wide. To further engage students in the assessment process, departments collaborate to develop integrated contexts for assessment, which reflect their interests and passions. The range of academic and vocational assessment pathways is extended through linking with outside providers. Where appropriate, students are assessed when ready.

The school is developing effective ways to use technology for gathering achievement evidence. An increasing amount of digital evidence is gathered in the form of digital portfolios, photos, videos, digital research presentations and word-processed assignments. Gathering digital evidence, especially naturally occurring evidence, is becoming more integral to the school's burgeoning approach to integrated assessment.

Robust internal moderation processes assure senior management that only credible results are reported following the completion of internal moderation quality assurance. Responses to external moderation outcomes are documented and action plans developed when issues are identified, with their completion being monitored by senior management.

Effective communication and leadership by the Principal and Academic Dean allows teachers to take ownership of assessment and moderation processes in the school. Discussion on assessment matters at all levels of the school's organisation ensures issues are resolved and that best assessment practice is consistent across the senior school.

Student voice and achievement data from a range of sources are used to reflect on and develop assessment programmes. Data is timely and accuracy is enhanced through regular checking of results by staff, students and senior managers. Close

monitoring of achievement data, using multiple strategies, including Whānau Class Mentoring, enables the school to effectively support students in meeting their personal goals and expectations.

A range of communication systems, including digital platforms are in place to assist staff, students and whānau with their understanding of the NCEA qualification and the school's assessment policies and procedures. Senior managers work closely to ensure consistency of assessment and moderation practice across the senior school and that results they report to NZQA are robust, reliable and credible.

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11th May 2018

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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 12/13th August 2014 Managing National Assessment Report

All actions from the 2014 Managing National Assessment review have been completed.

Response to external moderation outcomes There is a high agreement rate between teachers and moderators, reflecting strong internal moderation processes. This is supported through the Academic Dean, a recently created role, encompassing the duties of the Principal's Nominee. He meets with all teachers responsible for assessment to discuss feedback from the external moderators. When external moderation outcomes are poor, a response sheet with action items is developed and the Academic Dean monitors completion of these items. Action items may include changing verifiers or modifying assessment tasks.

Internal review

Evidence for the effective use of 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)

Whanganui City College has strong internal review processes that continue to impact positively on assessment within the senior school. Since the last Managing National Assessment review many changes have been put in place with a goal to improve academic outcomes for all students, including its high Māori student population. Key changes that have led to positive outcomes as seen in a huge improvement in roll-based pass rates at all levels include:

- meaningful engagement with local iwi, involving them in school-wide strategic planning and goal setting
- consciously addressing the expectations teachers have of their students
- modifying assessment modes and learning contexts in response to whānau and student voice
- engaging with full staff professional development through consultants and the effective use of Ministry of Education resources
- introducing Whānau Class Mentoring with a focus on goal setting and monitoring progress towards achieving them
- creating a dedicated position, the Academic Dean, to support implementation of the above changes.

Strategies to improve quality of achievement Strategies are now being developed to improve the quality of achievement, with a goal to increase the number of course endorsements. The Academic Dean suggested these strategies may include:

- engaging with whānau and local iwi to emphasise the importance of endorsements such as opening doors to specialised University courses
- identifying ‘academic lead groups’ based on achievement data from the previous year, to receive extra mentoring from the Academic Dean or other staff which could involve:
 - facilitating lunchtime tutorials
 - teaching higher level research and learning skills
 - developing skills to improve external examination outcomes.

Developing template to review data The Academic Dean is working with education consultants and iwi representatives to develop a template for reviewing achievement data and improve the way it is presented to various stakeholders such as whānau and the Board of Trustees. The template will act as a guide for Heads of Department, enabling them to present information in a consistent manner that is relevant to its audience and easy to interpret. It will further enable senior managers and the Board of Trustees to effectively identify and rectify potential issues in a timely manner.

The above examples demonstrate Whanganui City College’s effective use of self-review and evaluation processes that identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures.

No action required

No issues with the school’s response to NZQA external reviews 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 2018 5.5)

Whanganui City College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- providing differentiated assessment within courses so that assessment is appropriate to the individual and so that students who did not achieve in a previous year can be kept with their peer group
- integrated assessment between courses using common assessment contexts
- offering a mix of compulsory and optional standards within classes to reduce assessment burden and increase challenge, as appropriate
- making portfolio and research-based assessment opportunities manageable through having milestones, one-on-one conferencing, regular feedback and feedforward, scaffolding and through negotiated deadlines
- reducing the number of overall credits in a year, so that students can better cope with their assessment loads
- assessing students when ready, as appropriate
- identifying students requiring special assessment conditions and resourcing their support appropriately
- providing off-site assessment to broaden opportunities through a range of outside providers.

Whanganui City College has effective processes and procedures for:

- facilitating meaningful hui with iwi and whānau to improve curriculum delivery, resulting in the recent introduction of:
 - an Outdoor Pursuit programme
 - a Farming Skills programme
 - a trial at delivering the junior curriculum by inquiry to support transitioning to integrated assessment at senior level
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, authenticity of student work, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- requiring standard specific evidence for reporting derived grades
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, including digital and naturally occurring evidence
- effectively managing NZQA external examinations, including accommodating students from local kura
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Encouraging collegiality The school is actively encouraging departments to work together on integrated assessment development and delivery. A good example of where this approach is benefitting students is the Level 1 Integrated Sports

programme, which integrates standards from four different subjects through common themes, such as canoeing. The themes for learning, such as canoeing and assessments are planned by a group of teachers prior to delivery. The concept of this programme, arose from feedback through whānau and student surveys.

This collegial approach to integrated assessment throughout the school has contributed to improved academic outcomes, collective ownership of assessment and moderation practice and a reduction in the traditional approach of departments working in isolation from one another.

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 2018 6.4b)

Whanganui City College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment activities are set to the national standard by having modified or new assessments critiqued by another teacher
- using subject specialists, within the school or through the regional internal moderation days, to verify purposefully selected samples of marked student work at grade boundaries
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions
- Heads of Department monitoring its completion through a documented assurance process, which gives senior management confidence all reported results are quality assured and credible.

Whanganui City College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for external moderation by being adequately stored.

Developing new processes for submitting external moderation A review of the school's experience with NZQA's external moderation tool last year, has led to procedural changes that are being developed by the Academic Dean. This will involve addressing specific requirements of the online process to ensure staff can more easily submit their own work electronically. This will reduce the Academic Dean's workload through not repeating work that has already been done, or could more easily be done by the Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge of subjects. This year he plans to provide training for subject leaders so they can prepare their own material to submit for external moderation. This strategy will ensure greater depth of expertise, understanding and ownership of the school's external moderation procedures and responsibilities.

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)

Whanganui City College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - using NCEA data to inform course and programme design to meet the interests, aspirations and abilities of all students
 - using NZQA statistical reports to analyse results comparatively to reflect on, and identify, next steps
 - reporting to the Board of Trustees and Principal an analysis of NCEA achievement, including against school goals
 - reconciling Memorandum of Understanding with correct provider codes for results from outside providers

- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - timely reporting of results to NZQA
 - ensuring staff and students check results that have been reported to NZQA
 - checking variance data and following up at key times throughout the year
 - ensuring entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result or are withdrawn, as appropriate, by the published due date
 - using the NZQA Key Indicators to identify and resolve data issues.

Whānau mentor system monitors achievement progress The school has a very effective Whānau Class Mentoring system where current NCEA data is used to inform student goal setting, career pathways and their current progress towards completing qualifications. Students interviewed for this review indicated that support and advice from teachers during Whānau Class Mentoring was highly useful for keeping them on track with their achievement and understanding the school's assessment processes.

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))

Whanganui City College has effective processes and procedures for:

- engaging iwi and whānau in strategic planning and gathering whānau and student voice
- using a variety of modes to communicate assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their whānau
- ensuring all course outlines use the same template to provide consistent information to all students
- reviewing communication to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and current
- widely distributing information on financial assistance.

Whanganui City College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- facilitating shared ownership of assessment practice through NCEA discussions in meetings, marking panels and the mentor programme
- ensuring consistent school-wide practice, evident in the understanding by teachers and students interviewed for the review
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to all staff including teachers new to the school through regular professional discussions at staff and senior school meetings
- having a range of digital platforms that can be accessed by staff, students and whānau
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss anticipated changes
- knowing that students understand what they need to achieve to gain a qualification and reinforcing understanding through the Whānau Class system.

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.