

Managing National Assessment Report

Hastings Girls' High School

August 2018

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Hastings Girls' 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 2018* (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
- *School Charter: Strategic and Annual Plan for Hastings Girls' High School 2016-2018*
- *Hastings Girls' High School National Administration Guideline 1: Assessment Policy*
- *NZQF Assessment Policy and Guidelines 2018 (Staff Handbook)*
- *Internal assessment Requirements 2018 – Student Agreement (student assessment guidelines)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and Assistant Principal, three students, and Heads of Department for English, Physical Education, Science, Social Science, Technology and Visual Arts, and the Teachers in Charge of Business Studies, Digital Technology and Māori.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Assistant 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

Hastings Girls' High School

1 August 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 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

Hastings Girls' High School assessment processes are well managed and provide for credible assessment towards national qualifications.

The school is responsive to external review. It has effectively addressed the action items from the 2014 Managing National Assessment report and has robust processes in place to deal with issues identified through external moderation. Internal review is embedded and has led to improvements in assessment processes and practice; such as the introduction of Akina Groups and a professional development plan for middle managers.

Student assessment needs are well met through an expanding range of opportunities. The use of outside providers allows the school to offer improved vocational pathways. Staff and student feedback is used effectively to tailor programmes and meet the needs of its priority learners.

Internal and external moderation processes are well managed by staff and effectively monitored by senior and middle managers. This assures the credibility of student results produced by assessment within the school.

Efficient data management ensures that student information, entries and results are reported to NZQA by key dates. Students actively assist in maintaining the accuracy of this data and use it to track their progress towards meeting academic or vocational goals. Analysis of current and previous years' data supports student achievement outcomes through the evaluation of assessment programmes, setting of academic goals and identifying those at risk of not meeting qualification requirements.

School communications effectively inform the community about assessment. A range of physical and digital material in multiple languages, as well as face-to face meetings, provide appropriate information on qualifications, along with school and NZQA assessment policies and processes.

Areas for improvement

The school is considering how it can gather its own evidence to help identify, and support applications, for students who may require special conditions for NCEA assessments. Gathering school-evidence will reduce possible financial barriers. Otherwise students must get an independent report from a registered professional to support their applications.

Agreed action

The school agreed that the following action will improve the quality of their assessment systems:

- develop processes to gather school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions for potentially eligible students.

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

6 November 2018

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 1-2 July 2014 Managing National Assessment Report The school has addressed the two agreed actions from the 2014 review:

- NZQA reports are used to check the accuracy of school assessment data
- staff demonstrate a good understanding of what would constitute an adequate assessment opportunity in their subject area.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has a robust response process for external moderation. Where the outcome of moderation is other than *Consistent*, materials need modifying, or there is disagreement between assessor and moderator over any grades, the staff must document what steps they will take to address the issue. This is followed up by a member of the senior management team to ensure that actions are completed, and any required support is provided. Departments must also provide an evaluation of external moderation outcomes as part of their annual report to the Principal.

Incorrect use of Supported Learning standards NZQA analysis identified that the school had reported a larger number of results for supported learning standards than would be expected for a school of its size. The target learners for these unit standards are people with learning disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities. The school agreed that many of the students who had been assessed against these standards did not fit these categories. They have reviewed the use of the standards so that in future only those with learning disabilities will be assessed against them.

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)

Data driven self-review is a normal part of school assessment processes. Examples include:

- teachers reviewing their assessment practice to improve students' academic outcomes
- senior management considering how to achieve greater consistency through improved communication with middle managers.

The latter has resulted in increased frequency of the Curriculum Meeting for Heads of Department, as well as the implementation of a professional development plan for middle managers.

The Education Review Office noted in its November 2017 review of the school that "*increasingly reflective teachers and leaders are beginning to value and use student voice to consider how to improve teaching practice*". The use of student voice is also

evident in school-wide reviews of assessment practice. Initiatives such as the introduction of new courses to meet priority learners' needs and allowing students to decide the external examinations they will sit, prior to key dates, have been driven by student request.

The desire to improve student mentoring and academic tracking has led to the introduction of Akina Groups in 2018. The use of all staff members, including senior leaders as Akina Coaches has, together smaller groups of students, enabled the school to provide better pastoral care, academic support and mentoring. Staff and student feedback gathered during the review was very positive about this initiative.

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 2018 5.5)

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

- broadening the range of assessment opportunities available by:
 - extending the range of standards for which the school has consent to assess
 - engaging with external providers to support Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR), Gateway and Trade Academy programmes
- introducing new courses such as Māori Textiles and Pacific Studies, and modifying existing assessment programmes, based on staff and student feedback
- providing careers information and mentor support to assist with academic goal setting and subject selection
- using unit standard literacy and numeracy assessments to assist those needing support to meet NCEA requirements
- departments capping the total credits available in courses to allow a focus on the quality rather than the quantity of results they achieve
- using a range of physical and digital methods to collect evidence of achievement during assessment.

Hastings Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- reporting Not Achieved where a student has presented evidence that is not at the standard, or has had an adequate assessment opportunity and submitted no work
- assisting students to present authentic work by using a range of suitable strategies during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessments, further assessment opportunities and resubmissions, and student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules
- ensuring the collection of credible evidence to support derived grade applications
- assisting with the management of the Examination Centre
- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act, 1993 when handling students' assessment information, and the Copyright Act 1994 when using student work as exemplars.

Collecting school-based evidence for special assessment conditions

applications The school is reviewing its processes for gathering evidence to help identify students who may require special conditions for NCEA assessments. This will allow it to make appropriate school-evidence based applications, ensuring that all

students who require them have a chance to access entitlements. Recent applications have used evidence from reports prepared by independent registered professionals. Using school evidence will eliminate the potential financial barrier to families of obtaining a professional report.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- develop processes to gather school-evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions for potentially eligible students.

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)

Hastings Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- critiquing assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and provide students with the opportunity to present evidence at all grade levels
- using exemplars and standard clarifications to inform grade judgements during the marking process
- using subject specialists from within and outside of the school to verify samples of student grades
- staff documenting their moderation processes on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- monitoring teachers' internal moderation processes, including collecting and collating copies of all cover sheets.

Hastings Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation using a random selection process that meets NZQA requirements
- providing all staff with access to the NZQA external moderation application that enables them to assist with the submission process, and view and query moderation reports
- storing physical assessment material securely so it is available for external moderation
- requiring all external moderation to follow the same process, regardless of the standard-setting body.

Encourage staff to strategically request standards for external moderation To date the school has made only a small number of requests to include specific standards on its external moderation plan. Encouraging staff to strategically request moderation will help ensure feedback is received for standards:

- with historical issues
- assessed by new staff
- newly added to assessment programmes
- not recently moderated.

Provide guidance on storing digital assessment material Developing a policy and protocols for the storage of digital assessment material would assist staff to ensure that student work is stored securely and can be easily accessed if required. Staff indicated that the amount of assessment material being produced by students in a digital format is increasing. However, there is no clear guidance on how, or where, digital material should be stored.

Clarify verification sufficiency with staff The school could consider providing staff with further guidance on the selection of student work for grade verification. Staff assure the quality of the grades they award by including work at grade boundaries for verification. However most of those interviewed verify more than this because the school policy requires that a fixed number of samples be verified.

NZQA has no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size should 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. Removing the school's requirement for a specific amount of verification and allowing staff to strategically select the samples of student work has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

For consideration

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

- encouraging staff to strategically request standards for external moderation
- providing staff with guidance on the storage of digital assessment material
- clarifying verification sufficiency with staff.

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)

Hastings Girls' High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - setting school-wide academic goals based upon the comparative analysis of achievement data with national statistics
 - departments annually analysing student achievement outcomes to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of assessment programmes
 - the Academic Dean tracking student achievement to identify those at risk of not achieving qualification requirements
 - Akina coaches working with students to monitor their progress towards meeting their academic goals

- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - frequent and timely reporting of results to NZQA
 - checking for, and correcting where necessary, errors shown up by the Key Indicators through the school's Provider login
 - removing internal entries where students have left or changed courses, to ensure all entries have a reported result
 - confirming the accuracy of external entries prior to key dates to reduce late entries
 - having students take ownership of their results by signing-off on the accuracy of their grades
 - encouraging students to use the online portal to the school's student management system and their Learner login to check the correctness of their assessment data held by the school and NZQA
 - reporting results for standards the school has consent for, or against the correct codes of outside providers with whom the school holds current memoranda of understanding.

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))

Hastings Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive course outlines for every course they take
- communicating information on qualifications, and assessment policies and procedures to the school community through:
 - various digital and physical formats, including a Hastings Girls' High School App for mobile devices
 - multi-language versions of school newsletters, and NCEA booklets from NZQA
 - hui for Māori and Pasifika parents, supported by NZQA facilitators.

Hastings Girls' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- providing new staff with an introduction to the school's assessment processes and procedures
- sharing staff assessment guidelines digitally, as well as in hard copy
- giving teachers information on assessment best practice and offering them opportunities to discuss changes in assessment processes and requirements at staff, department and Curriculum Group meetings
- the Principal's Nominee explaining NCEA requirements and school assessment processes to students at school and year level assemblies.

Students should have access to internal assessment information The students interviewed demonstrated a good understanding of school expectations. However, they did note that while they are provided with copies of the internal assessment requirements at the beginning of the year they must sign these to indicate they have read them, and then hand them back to their Akina Coaches. As this information is not provided in any other way, the school should consider how it can make these requirements always available to students throughout the year.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment is accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- ensuring internal assessment information is always available to students.