

# Managing National Assessment Report

## Wairarapa College

June 2021

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Wairarapa 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 2021* (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
- *Student Guide to Assessment Procedures 2021*
- *Staff Guide to Assessment Procedures 2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Managers met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Faculty:
  - Agriculture
  - Commerce
  - English
  - Science and Physics
- Three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal's Nominee at the end of the review visit and a phone call to the Principal the following week, to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

# SUMMARY

## Wairarapa College

2 June 2021

### 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.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2019, and again in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### What the school is doing well

Wairarapa College offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses to support students' interests and aspirations. The school farm gives students opportunities to engage in both vocational and academic pathways, and courses not offered by the school can be accessed through e-Learning or Te Aho o Te Kura. Vocational pathways are supported by outside providers through STAR and Gateway.

Heads of Department follow the procedures for missed and late assessments, appeals and extensions given in the Staff Guide to Assessment Procedures produced by the Principal's Nominee. This ensures all students are treated fairly and students confirmed that these procedures were being applied consistently.

The school is using data to inform their practice. This ensures the courses they offer are meeting student needs. By effectively tracking student progress, they identify students at risk of not gaining qualifications. Ako teachers mentor these students, helping them to set goals and work towards their chosen pathways.

Communication to students, whānau and staff about NCEA procedures and policies is updated regularly and reflects the current NZQA rules and procedures. Students understand assessment processes and regularly use the school's student management system to check entries and results to monitor their progress.

### Areas for improvement

Learning areas would benefit from being reviewed regularly by the Principal's Nominee and/or the senior leadership team to confirm their internal moderation processes are following the guidelines given in the Staff Guide to Assessment Procedures and that these actions are happening in learning areas before results are confirmed and submitted to NZQA.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

### **Agreed action**

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

- Monitoring quality assurance processes regularly and recording the outcomes.

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Manager  
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

10 August 2021

**NZQA**

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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 16 March 2016 Managing National Assessment Report** The school has made progress in addressing the three action items from the previous review by ensuring:

- student work is being stored in learning areas and is available for external moderation. The Principal's Nominee has access to this and to any work stored digitally on departmental drives
- samples of student work for grade verification are purposefully selected at grade boundaries and meaningful conversations about these are being recorded, with benchmark samples identified and stored for future reference
- most internal entries have a result reported or are withdrawn by the December datafile.

There are some further improvements identified later in this report which would strengthen these processes.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** A good rate of agreement between NZQA moderators and school assessors exists and any issues are followed up with a written feedback form outlining the steps to be taken. The Principal's Nominee speaks with each Head of Department individually, checking these steps have happened. This process can be further strengthened by adding a final step to confirm that these changes have resolved the issue.

### 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)*

With a new Principal at the time of this review, Wairarapa College is yet to fully determine review priorities. In 2020, the acting Principal and Board of Trustees had identified some areas to act on this year.

Using research findings, it was felt that streaming and pre-requisites for courses might be barriers for students when selecting their course of study. In 2021 these were removed, and the emphasis is now on meaningful conversations with students about suitable courses to meet their pathway aspirations. Students found these conversations and the information in the subject selection booklet helped them to make their subject selections for the following year.

Since the introduction of a digital core class at Year 9 in 2017, the number of digital classes has increased, with the school introducing BYOD in 2021 for Years 9 and 10, and optional in the senior school. This has led to more students confidently completing assessments digitally and engaging with digital NCEA examinations. The

use of devices has reduced the need for some students to apply for Special Assessment Conditions in 2021.

As more courses have moved to longer term portfolios for gathering evidence for internal assessments the school found it difficult to track student progress towards qualifications as there were no final reported results until later in the year. Whānau also found this a problem when monitoring their child's progress. Adding 'progress towards' grades for these standards on the school reports has helped students and whānau see the progress being made. These grades are not final grades.

Staff and student Guides to Assessment Procedures are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they reflect current practice and any changes in NCEA rules. The latest changes to the rules about resubmission and Course Endorsement for Achieved have been communicated to staff, students and whānau.

#### **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.

#### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in external review and self-review of assessment, the school is encouraged to consider:

- strengthening the follow up of external moderation by checking the actions put in place have resolved the issue identified
- developing sustainable review processes, analysing the success of any changes and looking at the next steps.

## 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 2021 5.1 – 5.7)*

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

- providing further assessment opportunities where appropriate
- providing a broad range of subject choices to cater for students' abilities and interest
- ensuring that student literacy and numeracy needs are identified and met
- assessing when ready.

### **Wairarapa College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- consistently managing missed and late assessments
- enabling students to appeal an assessment grade
- ensuring evidence for derived grades is authentic and standard-specific
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

**Meeting student needs by offering a wide variety of courses** Wairarapa College offers an extensive range of courses to engage students and support their desired pathways. Courses are offered through e-Learning and Te Aho oTe Kura if they are not able to be taught at the school. By engaging with outside providers, the school is able to extend its capacity to provide a range of vocational assessment opportunities through Gateway and STAR courses.

A range of Achievement Standards and Unit Standards are offered supporting vocational and academic pathways. The school farm is well used for Agriculture courses and many students engage in these hands-on programmes. This learning area is well supported by the standard setting body Primary Industry Training Organisation.

There is flexibility to individualise programmes to support the students' learning journey. This is especially evident for students needing more support in Literacy and Numeracy, with specific classes at Year 11 for this. These lead on to classes at Year 12 and 13, such as Financial Literacy and General Maths.

Students are supported and mentored in vertical Ako groups, including a Whātonga group for Māori students and another for Gifted and Talented students. If students are identified at risk of not achieving, the Ako teachers will help students set goals and work towards improving their progress.

**Effectively ensuring authenticity and educating students about plagiarism** The staff know their students and use conferencing and checkpoints for giving feedback, helping to keep student work relevant and authentic. Students are aware of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it and know that their work will be checked for this using online plagiarism trackers.

**Identifying students for Special Assessment Conditions** School-based evidence is used to identify students and support applications for those who may benefit from special assessment conditions for their NCEA assessments. Wairarapa College has a very experienced SENCO who supports the students requiring special assessment conditions. Staff can see the students eligible for this on KAMAR and the students themselves are proactive at reminding staff of their needs before assessments.

**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 2021 6.4b)*

### **Wairarapa College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process, including conversations about grade boundaries to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- storing and using benchmarked samples of work for future grade boundary decisions.

### **Wairarapa College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation using a valid random selection process
- ensuring samples of student work are provided for by being adequately stored
- using a response form to document and monitor completion of actions undertaken to address issues identified in external moderation reports.

**Monitoring of the internal moderation process needs to be strengthened** The school needs to develop a process to give senior management documented assurance that all standards are moderated each year. A record of this follow up between senior management and departments will give a clear picture of moderation practice and mitigate possible continuity issues due to any personnel changes. Evidence was seen that the internal moderation process was being followed, however, this is reliant on a high trust model between the Principal's Nominee and the Heads of Departments.

**Focus on reducing assessor workload by considering verification requirements for sufficiency** Learning Areas 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. There is an opportunity here for Heads of Departments to discuss and share good practice and focus on the grade boundaries to improve understanding of the requirements of the standard.

**Storage of student work** Student work is stored securely in department areas, is available when requested and accessible by the Principal's Nominee. This has significantly reduced the number of instances where materials are not available for external moderation.

Physical storage limitations can be overcome by storing all work digitally. A school-wide system for storing work that has been produced digitally is being developed. Where Physical storage space is at a premium, learning areas may like to consider

storing only the random sample required for external moderation, and benchmark samples for reference during the marking process. This sample should be kept until a new sample of work is available to replace it, or for two years, to ensure work is always available for external moderation purposes.

### **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:

- monitor and document that internal moderation processes are happening consistently across all departments.

### **For consideration**

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

- sharing good practice for choosing marked samples for verification of assessor judgements to reduce assessor workload
- streamlining the storage of physical and digital student work.

## **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)*

### **Wairarapa College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**

- encouraging students and family to access the student management system online where they can check on progress towards qualifications
- tracking student progress to identify and support students at risk of not gaining a qualification
- using grade predictions to inform interventions to support students identified at risk of not achieving a qualification

### **Wairarapa College reports accurate achievement data by:**

- regularly submitting internal assessment results and external assessment entries to NZQA
- correcting any errors from each data file submission
- managing memoranda of understanding with external providers, including the use of correct provider codes.

**Ensure internal assessment entries have a result or are withdrawn** The school's expectation of staff to ensure internal entries have a result or are withdrawn before the December data file submission needs to be embedded in departmental practice. This ensures all results are reported and reflect the assessments undertaken by students. The number of entries without results has improved but there was an increase again in 2020.

### **For consideration**

To extend good practice in managing and making use of assessment-related data, the school is encouraged to consider:

- developing a consistent process to ensure all internal assessment entries have a result or are withdrawn.

## **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))*

### **Wairarapa College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- ensuring students receive a comprehensive subject selection handbook with outlines for all courses they may wish to undertake, using a common template
- communicating assessment policy and procedures through assemblies, Ako groups and class teachers
- supporting teachers new to the school with an induction programme, and a buddy within their learning area, to help them understand and correctly use school processes
- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current each year.

### **Wairarapa College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- maintaining the currency of assessment policy and procedures
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and whānau using a range of methods and media
- ensuring that students understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification by explaining this in assemblies and during Ako classes.

**Providing access to staff and student guides to assessment procedures** New staff and Year 11 students are all given a paper copy of the school assessment procedures. The student version is also available on the school website for students and whānau, and the staff version on departmental drives. These are updated each year to include any changes to NZQA procedures. Some thought needs to be given to how students and staff who start part way through the year are informed of changes to these guides.

### **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:

- informing students and staff who do not receive an updated paper copy about any changes to the guides to assessment procedures due to the review process.