

Managing National Assessment Report

Upper Hutt College

June 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Upper Hutt 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 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, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report 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 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
- *NCEA Assessment Policy 1.5, Upper Hutt College Board of Trustees*
- *Assessment for National Qualifications, Policy and Procedures, Guidelines for Staff, Upper Hutt College, 2017*
- *Assessment Guidelines for Students, Upper Hutt College, 2017*
- Notes of Moderation Review Meetings, 2017 (sample)
- Department Annual Report, 2016 (sample)
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, three students and Heads of Department for Biology, English, History, Japanese, Mathematics and Physical Education.

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

Upper Hutt College

08 June 2017

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 anticipate, identify and respond to issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

What the school is doing well

Upper Hutt College demonstrates an effective culture of self-review, to ensure the credibility of assessment and utilise 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 engage students in the assessment process, the context of assessment tasks is changed to reflect their interests. Where applicable, students are assessed when ready.

Effective communication and leadership by the Principal's Nominee has allowed teachers to take ownership of assessment processes and practices in the school. Discussion on assessment matters at all levels of the school's organisation ensures the resolution of issues and school-wide understanding and consistency of practice. Digital platforms are increasingly being used to make information current and more accessible.

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.

Data analysis and student voice inform self-review, allowing teachers to annually reflect on course design. Student entries and the reporting of results is complete and accurate. Student progress is monitored and tracked effectively to ensure students are meeting personal goals and expectations.

Assessment practices in the senior school are effectively managed by the Principal's Nominee. She fosters discussion on NCEA issues and manages a robust assessment review process. She is supported in her work by the Principal and Senior Management Team who work collaboratively to support student success.

Areas for improvement

As discussed with senior management, documentation should be updated to clarify processes for reporting derived grades, requirements for resubmissions and further

assessment opportunities, and the procedures for purposeful selection of student work for verification, as part of the internal moderation process.

Agreed action

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

- clarify assessment practices in the documentation, as outlined in the report.

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13 July 2017

NZQA

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence found that external review actions have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3v)

Action Items from 4 March 2013 Managing National Assessment Report The last review had no items to be actioned.

Response to external moderation outcomes Response to issues identified in external moderation outcomes are documented for all departments on a standard template. Heads of Department discuss action plans with the Principal's Nominee and adequate resources are provided to support improvement in practice. An overall summary is provided to the Principal and Board of Trustees as part of the department's annual report. This thorough process has resulted in a sound agreement rate between teachers and moderators and has facilitated the identification of learning areas that need support to improve practice.

Internal review

Evidence found that the school is effectively 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)

The school has an effective culture of self-review to ensure credible assessment and fully utilise the flexibility of the NCEA assessment model to meet student needs. As a consequence of the self-review process, a number of assessment strategies have been introduced to improve current practice and enhance student achievement. These include:

- supporting Māori and Pasifika students by developing assessment tasks with an appropriate cultural context
- using student voice to inform course design when reviewing programme effectiveness
- developing a tool to check authenticity when collecting digital evidence to ensure consistent understanding of this assessment practice school-wide
- creating school management system "self-help sheets" to increase teacher capability to use data effectively to inform review and track student achievement
- introducing targeted programmes to identify students at risk of not achieving and creating an expectation that all form teachers should track and monitor the progress of these students
- moving documentation onto a digital platform to improve accessibility by all stakeholders and maintain currency
- linking standards and courses to vocational pathways to encourage alternative pathways for students

- reviewing the use of digital tools for assessment and encouraging the sharing of best practice to extend capability school-wide.

These initiatives indicate that the school has the capacity to respond effectively to review and improve its NCEA assessment practices to meet student needs and enhance student achievement. Robust discussions on best assessment practice, strong leadership and a willingness to innovate is fostering school-wide ownership and consistency of effective NCEA assessment practice.

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 found that assessment practice is meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6 I & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 5.5)

Upper Hutt College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the needs of their students by:

- providing differentiated assessment across classes and offering a selection of optional standards within classes
- making portfolio and research-based assessment opportunities manageable by “chunking and scaffolding” assessment tasks
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready
- managing teacher and student workloads and focusing on quality assessment by establishing credit limits for courses
- offering Work and Study Unit Standards to support students to complete Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements
- identifying students requiring special assessment conditions and resourcing their support appropriately.

Upper Hutt College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- managing student appeals of assessment decisions and breaches of assessment rules
- requiring standard specific evidence for reporting derived grades
- using a range of strategies to ensure student work submitted is authentic
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly through the use of digital technology and naturally occurring evidence
- effectively managing NZQA external examinations
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

Developing alternative pathways The school is actively encouraging students to follow alternative pathways to university study. From surveys of student leavers, Senior Management has identified that an increasing number of students do not aspire to attend university, even if they have achieved University Entrance.

Strategies to encourage students to investigate alternative vocational pathways include:

- linking standards and courses to vocational pathways in documentation
- introducing a careers/vocation week of seminars for senior students to inform discussion about alternative pathways
- extending consent to assess to develop skills-based vocational courses

- establishing stronger links with external providers to develop a seamless transition from school to tertiary study with a vocational focus
- upskilling form teachers to act as mentors to advise students on suitable pathways.

This approach illustrates the school's ability to respond to changes in student aspirations and review practices to meet student needs.

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 found that internal and external moderation are ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2017 6.4b)

Upper Hutt 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 assessment critiqued by another teacher
- making assessment judgements consistent with the national standard by having a subject specialist verify purposely selected samples of marked student work at grade boundaries
- recording the completion of moderation processes *on Internal Moderation Cover Sheets*
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions
- monitoring the completion of the school's moderation procedures for each department by using a documented assurance process that senior management is confident all reported results are quality assured.

Upper Hutt 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.

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 found that data management and use supports student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Upper Hutt 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
 - actively encouraging students to use their NZQA Learner login and the student portal on the student management system to monitor their progress
 - reconciling Memorandum of Understanding with the provider codes for externally reported results
 - providing professional development to all staff on using data to reflect on best assessment practice and course design
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - timely reporting of results to NZQA
 - ensuring entries submitted to NZQA have a reported result
 - using the NZQA Key Indicators to identify and resolve data issues.

Mentoring students to improve achievement outcomes The school is developing a very effective mentoring system using current NCEA data 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 Form Teachers under the current system can be variable. The school, as part of their review processes have identified this issue and intend providing more training and time for NCEA mentoring to ensure all form teachers are resourced to provide adequate support.

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 found that school communication ensures understanding about assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7iib)

Upper Hutt College has effective processes and procedures for:

- using a variety of modes to communicate assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their whānau
- managing teacher and student workloads through the publication of an assessment calendar
- ensuring all course outlines use the same template to provide consistent information to students
- reviewing communication to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- widely distributing information on financial assistance
- celebrating success through Principal and Academic Assemblies.

Upper Hutt 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 of best practice by teachers and students interviewed for the review
- actively encouraging teachers to gain assessment experience and understanding by becoming NZQA markers and moderators.

Clarification of assessment practice in documentation As discussed with senior management, documentation needs to be updated to clarify the following assessment practices. Even though teachers and students interviewed for the review articulated good practice in these areas, documentation should:

- state that all commercial tasks used to generate evidence to report derived grades are to be kept secure
- make a clear distinction between resubmissions and further assessment opportunities
- not include a minimum number of selected standards for the purposeful selection of samples of student work for verification.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- clarify assessment practices in the documentation as outlined in the report.