

MANAGING NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Wellington Girls' College

September 2016

Managing National Assessment Review

The purpose of reviewing the management of national assessment is:

- 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 2016* (Assessment Rules); and
- 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.

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of assessment materials and of teacher grade judgements for student work selected by the school's random-selection process.
- A random sampling of aspects of assessment systems and data for review or audit on an annual basis.
- A visit to review each school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

Managing National Assessment Report

This report summarises NZQA's evaluation of how effectively the school:

- has addressed issues identified through the three components of 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
- manages and makes use of assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

In preparing this report, the School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee and the Deputy Principal responsible for Curriculum and Assessment as well as the Heads of Department for Classics, Latin, Mathematics and Technology, and a group of students.

The school also provided pre-review information and the following documents:

- *Assessment and Reporting Guidelines and Procedures, 2016, Wellington Girls' College*
- *NCEA Staff Information Booklet, 2016, Wellington Girls' College* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA Student Information Booklet, 2016, Wellington Girls' College* (Student Handbook)
- *NCEA: A quick run through* (draft student-authored booklet for students)
- course outlines for Classics, Latin, Mathematics and Technology.

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

OVERVIEW

Wellington Girls' College

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Wellington Girls' College is to be commended for the thorough administration of all matters related to NCEA assessment and qualifications. The school has an embedded culture of self-review for ongoing improvement and encourages an innovative approach to assessment practices that uses the flexibility of NCEA to deliver the best outcomes for students.

The Principal's Nominee is an effective and knowledgeable leader. He has comprehensive understanding of NZQA procedures, is clear in his communications with Heads of Department and teachers, and thorough in his application of NZQA rules and processes. His recent review of the staff and student handbooks have resulted in very good resource documents having been written.

Robust internal moderation is undertaken in departments. Heads of Department interviewed not only understood the need for moderation for compliance purposes, but had embraced these processes as professional learning for all assessors. External moderation agreement rates have been very good for a number of years and any issues identified in reports are effectively followed up. The school can have confidence in the effectiveness of these moderation processes to ensure that credible results are submitted to NZQA.

A culture of self-review is evident at all levels in the school and is modelled by senior leaders. It is data-driven and evidence-based. In support of this process, the school has recently invested in an application to better analyse NCEA results. These processes have led to a number of changes following the identification of a concern relating to student well-being caused by possible over-assessment. The most notable change is the reduction in the maximum number of credits available to students in courses at level 1 and 2. This has not reduced overall success rates in NCEA qualifications and has also led to a reduction in teacher workload.

A number of innovative initiatives in assessment practice were sighted during this review. These approaches are encouraged by senior leadership. These initiatives utilise the wide variety of assessment possibilities inherent in NCEA to best meet the needs of students and to enhance engagement and relevance. They include the use of alternative modes of assessment (for example, oral presentation), the enhancement of student choice (for example, students selecting standards to be assessed) and the sharing of student evidence across more than one standard. This emphasis on innovation is to be commended.

The use of digital tools is expanding for both administration and assessment purposes. Wherever possible, cloud-based applications are used. The school is well-placed to respond to NZQA digital developments in the future.

Students who are identified as being at risk of not achieving their NCEA goals are effectively followed up. Teachers who are concerned about a student's progress can report this through the school's student management system. These referrals are reviewed and followed up by the Dean with an appropriate support plan as required.

The students interviewed during this review confirmed that they are well-supported by the school. Information is readily available through the school's intranet and students can easily access their credit updates. Students are aware who they should approach if they have any queries about NCEA and they expressed confidence that any appeals they lodged would be fairly judged.

No significant issues This review did not identify any significant issues that would prevent the school from meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*.

Next Managing National Assessment review Based on the outcome of this assessment systems check, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within four years.

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Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

11 November 2016

NZQA

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Response to External and Internal Reviews

Previous external reviews

Evidence was sought that external review recommendations and findings have been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 3v)

Items from the Managing National Assessment Review of 18 October 2013 requiring action The school has:

- developed a sign-off process for the internal moderation audit
- revised the staff handbook
- promoted the use of the clarification documents to staff.

External moderation processes and results are sound The consistently very good agreement rates for externally moderated standards provide confidence in the school's internal moderation system. The Principal's Nominee responds to any issues raised through external moderation reports. There are clear expectations of Heads of Department to address these concerns and to report the actions taken. Heads of Department show a commitment to both address and resolve any concerns raised.

Internal review

Evidence was sought that the school was 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)

Culture of self-review is evident During this review, evidence was sighted of self-review, supported by data analysis, occurring at all levels within the school. This is an embedded and valued process that is modelled by senior leadership. The particular intent of more recent self-review processes is a focus on "quality over quantity". A number of changes have been introduced schoolwide and at departmental level as a result of self-review. Examples of these changes are:

- Student assessment load has been reduced. Senior leadership had noted concerns about the impact on student wellbeing and staff workload relating to possible over-assessment. As a result, courses at Level 1 and Level 2 have been capped to only offer a total of less than twenty credits. This has resulted in the removal of at least one standard from each course. The initial response to this initiative has been positive from both students and teachers. The school has noticed no deterioration in NCEA achievement as a result of this change.
- Homework policy has been amended. As a result of the same concerns that informed the decision to reduce the assessment workload, the school's homework policy has been reviewed. Teachers can now only set homework if it directly relates to NCEA assessment thus reducing the workload for students after school hours.
- The procedure to withdraw from a standard has been reviewed. For similar reasons, the procedure for a student to follow to request to be withdrawn from an internal standard has been altered. Previously, the process had to be

initiated with the relevant Head of Department. Now, it is initiated with the student's Dean to ensure that any concerns about the student's wellbeing are also considered during the decision-making process.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

Assessment Practice

How does the school's assessment practice allow for the effective management of assessment for national qualifications? (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6, 3)

Wellington Girls' College has effective assessment processes and procedures for:

- ensuring grades submitted are valid, authentic and verifiable
- providing one further opportunity for assessment when appropriate
- providing suitable opportunities for resubmissions
- granting or declining extensions for students when assessments are either late or missed
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993
- investigating any possible breaches of the assessment rules
- responding fairly to appeals by students of assessment decisions made by teachers
- ensuring that students who have been granted Special Assessment Condition entitlements can use these entitlements for all assessments.

Innovation in assessment is encouraged The school encourages and supports departments to be innovative in their approach to assessment and evidence gathering. Not only is this approach engaging for students, but it uses the flexibility inherent in the NCEA model to good effect. Examples of this innovative approach include:

- a Level 3 course in which students select the standards they wish to enter from a menu of possibilities following introductory teaching of a few weeks
- a Level 1 measurement standard in which the evidence is presented orally. This mode of assessment is now being shared with other interested schools.
- collaboration between two subjects where common evidence is being used towards achievement in a standard in each subject area
- investigation into the possibility of credible evidence for an individual student being generated through groupwork.

Students well-supported to achieve NCEA goals Information about achievement progress is regularly made available to students and parents through the issuing of NCEA credit updates. In addition, ongoing information is available through the online portal into the student management system. Teachers identify students who they believe may be at risk of not achieving NCEA success and note this using the student management system. These referrals are monitored and followed up as needed by the relevant Dean. The students interviewed stated that they are well-supported by staff, know who to approach if they have any queries and believed that any concerns (e.g. appeals) would be handled fairly.

Teachers are experienced in NCEA processes A significant proportion of the teaching staff have current or recent experience as markers, panel leaders, writers or moderators for NZQA. In addition, the school encourages teachers to become involved in their subject associations. As a result, there is a pool of high level

understanding of the assessment requirements for NCEA which can be shared with lesser experienced teachers to the benefit of all.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

Moderation

How effectively does school internal and external moderation assure assessment quality? (CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 3)

Wellington Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for managing:

- internal moderation. Teachers ensure that:
 - assessment tasks are critiqued by another teacher prior to the teaching and assessment of the standard, to ensure validity
 - students' results at grade boundaries are verified by another subject specialist. If a suitable subject specialist is not available in the school, a specialist from another school is used for the process
 - internal moderation coversheets are used consistently to document the moderation procedure
 - grades are only submitted to NZQA when the internal moderation processes have been completed
 - all student work is securely stored and a random sample is available for external moderation if required.

- external moderation. Teachers ensure that:
 - they respond effectively with an action plan to follow up issues identified in the external moderation reports.

Senior leadership monitors moderation process Each department is allocated to a member of the senior leadership team who has the responsibility of monitoring that internal moderation processes are occurring. To do this, they receive all internal moderation coversheets prior to results being submitted to NZQA. They are also responsible for generating the random list for the submission of external moderation materials. This is an effective process that enables members of the senior leadership team to have direct and current involvement in both the assessment and the moderation processes of each department.

Annual check of moderation procedures The Principal's Nominee meets annually with each Head of Department to review the processes used by that department to undertake internal moderation and to make a physical check of the documentation and the storage of assessment materials. This process enhances the monitoring undertaken by senior leadership during the year and provides an opportunity for Heads of Department to clarify any issues of concern. Heads of Department interviewed valued these meetings as an opportunity to confirm practice and as a professional learning opportunity.

No action required

No issues with the school's internal and external moderation were identified during this review.

Data Quality and Use

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?
(CAAS Guidelines 2.6, 2.7, 3)

Wellington Girls' College effectively

- **manages assessment-related data by:**
 - reporting students' results to NZQA in a timely manner through the submission of a monthly data file
 - using Key Indicators and other NZQA reports to monitor the accuracy of submitted data and to resolve issues
 - ensuring that Heads of Department check that entries and results have been entered correctly
 - ensuring a low number of late entries for external examinations
 - withdrawing students who have not had an adequate assessment opportunity.
- **makes use of assessment-related data to:**
 - analyse NCEA results
 - inform data analysis to justify future course content
 - monitor and track student progress.

Data-based evidence informs decision-making There is a commitment at all levels in the school to the analysis of data to inform decision-making and reporting. A common template has been developed for departments to report achievement results to the Board of Trustees, thus streamlining this process and providing consistency.

Senior leadership is actively seeking ways to improve the analysis of achievement data and has a commitment to use cloud-based solutions wherever possible for efficiency. A new tool has recently been acquired that enables more detailed analysis and display of achievement data than is possible in the school's student management system. These approaches enable the school to make decisions about the content of courses based on sound evidence.

School is well-prepared for digital development During this review, evidence was sighted of teachers using digital tools to gather evidence for assessment purposes and in the administration of departmental work. Students are increasingly using digital devices for assessment purposes. The school is well-placed to expand the use of digital options in the future in response to digital developments by NZQA.

No action required

No issues with the school's management and use of assessment-related data were identified during this review.

Communication

How effectively does the school maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, and students and their families?
(CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6, 2.7ii, 3)

Wellington Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and parents
- maintaining the currency of assessment policy and procedures
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- issuing students with an outline of the learning and assessment programme for each of their courses of study
- ensuring there is a current, signed memorandum of understanding with any outside providers.

Staff handbook informs teachers The Principal's Nominee has created a staff handbook. This is comprehensive and accurate and is written in a style suited to teachers of this school rather than being generic. It is a very effective and accessible resource for teachers about all school-wide expectations concerning NCEA requirements and procedures to be followed.

Student handbook informs students The student handbook has also been revised and contains comprehensive information on NCEA procedures applicable to students. It is written in easily accessible language for students. In addition, the school has a draft version of a student booklet compiled by a student which includes additional advice for students about what they can expect from NCEA programmes. This will be made available to students from next year.

Students are well-informed about NCEA The students interviewed confirmed that they were well-informed about NCEA processes in the school. General information about NCEA, as well as specific information about their own progress, is available both in hardcopy and through the school's intranet. School assemblies are also used at certain times of the year to inform and reinforce messages to students about NCEA matters. These are effective practices.

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.