

Managing National Assessment Report

Wellington Girls' College

September 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Wellington Girls' 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
- *2021 NCEA Information Booklet for Staff* (Staff Handbook)
- *NCEA Information Booklet for Students 2021* (Student Handbook)
- *Māori Achievement Strategy 2021-2023*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- a Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - Commerce
 - English Language
 - Science
 - Social Sciences
 - Technology
 - Visual Art
- two students.

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

Wellington Girls' College

21 September 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 four years.

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

What the school is doing well

Wellington Girls' College's mission statement is to "prepare young women to go out into the world as independent thinkers with respect for themselves and others, the confidence to accept and respond to challenges, and an enduring passion for learning." In relation to national assessment, this means that the school's focus is on meeting student needs for academic progression to tertiary study. High rates of student success at NCEA Level 2 and 3 and for University Entrance provide evidence for the efficacy of the school's approach. Students also attain endorsements on qualifications at rates well exceeding national and decile averages.

Students are well supported in achieving their pathway and attainment goals. There are many options for students, and they have an increasing degree of agency over their learning and assessment programmes. Innovative courses and the use of diverse strategies for collection of evidence for standards support students to learn and be assessed in contexts of interest to them.

The school has review systems which are proactive, effective and comprehensive. Senior leaders have clear lines of management which support departments to inquire into their practice and identify and solve problems.

Internal and external moderation processes are capably managed by the school's Principal's Nominee. She effectively communicates and oversees all processes. These are all well understood and followed by teachers and effective for assuring the quality of assessment judgements. Feedback from external moderation is followed up to ensure constructive responses are made by teaching staff and curriculum leaders.

The school has well-embedded and wide-ranging support systems which identify students at risk of not meeting their goals, then plan, share and implement interventions. The processes for this are evidence-based and supported by regular and on-going inquiry into assessment data by teachers and department leaders.

Effective communications with students and families ensure school and NCEA processes are well understood and followed. This is achieved in a variety of mediums including regular check-ins with students, staff meetings and strong school support

for Māori and Pasifika family groups. Student and staff guides are comprehensive and up to date.

There are no agreed action items. Some next steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.



Kay Wilson
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26 November 2021

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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 21 September 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

There were no agreed action items in the previous report.

Response to external moderation outcomes NZQA moderators have identified a very high level of agreement between assessor judgements and the national standard. This provides evidence of effective internal moderation practices in the school.

The processes for responding to external moderators are well communicated by the Principal's Nominee, understood by teachers, and implemented effectively. Heads of Department document their response to the external moderator's report, including any actions taken to address the concerns.

School leaders, in their role as line managers for departments, could consider strengthening the process by including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the response. Adding this refinement would complete the review cycle and provide them with further evidence that changes made have addressed issues when they arise.

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)

The school has highly effective review practices at all levels. These are evidence based, and include the use of data as well as student, teacher, and community voice to examine strategic and operational assessment policy and practice.

Since the last review the school has joined the Te Whanganui-a-Tara kāhui ako which has three achievement objectives: to embrace languages, culture and identities; support the wellbeing of all students; and students being the agents of their own learning.

Senior leaders have sought to address the objectives of the kāhui ako challenge and wider school and society concerns about student well-being. While this enquiry encompasses school life broadly, leaders and teachers have reviewed the impact of assessment practice on well-being and made changes, including:

- increasing student voice and agency over assessment planning and decision making about courses and contexts for study
- reducing the amount of assessment in courses
- focusing student engagement on deeper learning – rather than just getting through assessment tasks.

Alongside the kāhui achievement challenge, from student and whānau feedback they have identified the need to improve the way in which the school responds to the Treaty of Waitangi. A Māori achievement strategy (Te Rautaki Hikitia 2021-2023) has been developed which incorporates specific strategies to support engagement, learning and assessment for Māori and Pasifika students. These include staff professional development, new Māori and Pasifika student leadership rōpu, a new Māori Academic Advisor/Dean, and bilingual initiatives.

Teachers and departmental leaders use assessment data and feedback information to inquire into practice. This is used to strengthen teaching practice, develop new courses (the new “Project English” course, for example) and to support students to meet their goals. Students and parents have regular opportunities to provide meaningful input into school-wide planning and strategic direction. This is often led by senior leaders to ensure that student and whānau voice is at the centre of strategic review.

The Principal’s Nominee in partnership with other senior leaders actively supports subject leaders to review their departments, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and to make and evaluate changes. They act as line managers to provide oversight and accountability. The Principal’s Nominee reviews all processes for NCEA to ensure they are effectively communicated, fit for purpose and up to date.

For consideration

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

- developing a process for evaluating the effectiveness of responses to external moderation feedback.

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)

Wellington Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- providing differentiated learning and assessment programmes within courses
- partnering with external providers to offer a range of courses to meet individual student needs
- applying for special assessment conditions and ensuring that entitlements are provided for all assessments
- using a variety of methods for capturing student assessment evidence, as appropriate
- assessing when ready.

Wellington Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed and late assessment
- ensuring evidence for emergency and derived grades is collected and verifying the grades using an appropriate process
- monitoring student work for breaches of authenticity, including plagiarism using a variety of methods and digital tools
- managing student requests for extensions
- ensuring students have clear guidelines for appealing an assessment grade
- investigating appeals of grades and breaches of assessment rules
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020*.

Focus on student and community engagement promotes equity Assessment and qualification outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students are comparable to and sometimes better than achievement rates for other students. Senior leaders and teaching staff engage with students and whānau to focus on review and improvement. Hui-a-Whānau and Pasifika Fono are attended by teachers to support student access to all pathways including those in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Course planning and student agency support effective assessment practice Innovative course planning and teaching practice, alongside effective support from the Careers and Transition team, ensure that student priorities are well understood and shared, and that learners' needs are addressed. The "Project English" class is an example of innovative practice where learners at Level 2 and 3 collaborate to explore content of interest to them. This allows for student agency over the varied methods of assessment evidence collection, including for example written, oral, visual and multi-media.

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)

Wellington Girls' 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
- recording the outcomes of verification discussions, often digitally, to support future assessment decisions
- documenting the completion of steps in the process using a paper or digital copy of the *internal moderation cover sheet*.

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

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- requesting a wide range of standards to be externally moderated and negotiating appropriate changes to their plan
- ensuring samples of student work are provided by being adequately stored – in most cases digitally.

Timely confirmation of completed internal moderation process Curriculum leaders should confirm to the Principal's Nominee that internal moderation has been completed (for example, by teachers sharing with the Principal's Nominee their completed *Internal Moderation Cover Sheets*) as soon as possible for each assessment. This would assure senior leaders in a timelier manner that all results have been through the quality assurance cycle prior to them being reported to NZQA. Currently, completion of internal moderation is assured by documentation later in each assessment cycle in preparation for external moderation in the same calendar year.

For consideration

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

- ensuring completed internal moderation documentation is shared with the Principal's Nominee which confirms that moderation processes have been completed prior to the reporting of results.

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)

Wellington Girls' College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- identifying appropriate pathways for students that include courses with external providers, New Zealand Scholarship, and the mix of internal and external assessment
- evaluating courses annually to improve teaching and assessment practice
- tracking academic progress to assist with monitoring and mentoring students towards meeting their goals
- encouraging students and their parents to use the school's online portal and their NZQA Learner Login to monitor results and progress.

Wellington Girls' College reports accurate achievement data by:

- submitting data files on a regular basis
- checking the Key Indicators and responding to any issues that arise
- reporting Not Achieved as appropriate
- ensuring that correct provider codes are used by reconciling memoranda of understanding with external providers against results reported.

Comprehensive team approach supports at risk learners A highly effective team of leaders, deans and school support staff, including Learning Services and the Careers and Transition team, meet regularly to identify students at risk of not meeting qualification goals and plan interventions. Evidence from up-to-date assessment data and teacher feedback is used to centre planning on student needs. The success of this work is borne out in the high rates of attainment by all students at Level 2 and 3.

Check entries for internal assessment have results or are withdrawn Teachers should ensure that all internal assessment entries have a result by the due date for the December datafile, or are withdrawn if an adequate assessment opportunity has not been provided. Student and parents could have problems understanding the completeness of assessment plans where entries have no result reported. A thorough check of entries in the student management system combined with a check via the NZQA provider login will identify entries where action is required.

For consideration

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

- ensuring by the end of year datafile that all internal entries have a result reported or are withdrawn if an adequate assessment opportunity has not been provided.

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))

Wellington Girls' College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive comprehensive outlines for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to teachers
- supporting new and beginning teachers to understand and follow the school's assessment processes
- providing students and families with opportunities to be informed about NCEA and the school's assessment practice
- reviewing handbooks annually to ensure they are fit for purpose and current.

Wellington Girls' College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- having regular check-in sessions with students to support understanding and review processes
- providing students and families online information about NCEA, including school processes
- meeting with and supporting parent groups to better understand and to review school and NZQA information about assessment.

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.