

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Wellington High School**

**July 2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Wellington 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
- *Wellington High School Curriculum Statement, 2018*
- *Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting, Wellington High School 2018 (Staff Handbook)*
- *Procedures for Assessment for National Qualifications Student Guidelines, Wellington High School, 2018 (Student Handbook)*
- *Assessment Procedures, Wellington High School Board of Trustees, 2016*
- *Board Policies, Wellington High School Board of Trustees, 2016*
- 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 English, Health and Physical Education, and Languages and Teachers in Charge of Classics, Physics and Technology.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Deputy 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 High School

3 July 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 issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

### What the school is doing well

Wellington High School is well placed to respond to NCEA assessment and student achievement issues identified through self-review. This is achieved through an embedded culture of review that incorporates data analysis and student voice to design courses that best meet the needs of the students, implement changes and evaluate their effectiveness on student achievement.

The school has robust assessment practices that effectively meet the needs of its students and ensure results reported to NZQA are credible. A student-centred focus forms the basis of their assessment practice. This is evident in students having agency to co-construct many of their assessment programmes with their teachers and using formats to submit evidence that best suit them. The school has extended the range of qualification pathways it offers using external providers. This ensures that the needs of its diverse range of students are being well met. School assessment policy and procedures are well managed and applied consistently across the school.

A robust moderation practice is embedded as part of the school's assessment practice. Staff interviewed demonstrated a thorough understanding of the school's moderation process and provided evidence that it was being followed. Heads of Faculty and the Principal's Nominee monitor the process. Action plans are created to address identified issues and are evaluated during the review cycle with the Head of Faculty and line manager. The Principal's Nominee identifies areas of concern through longitudinal tracking of external moderation and appropriate support is given where required. Staff value external moderation feedback on their practice and are starting to use the external moderation application tool to select standards for professional development.

The school has effective processes that ensure the accuracy of data reported to NZQA. Improvements to teacher and student sign-off processes have been made since the last report to minimise late reporting and improve accuracy. Effective tracking systems are in place to identify students in the junior school who may need extra support once they begin NCEA assessments. Students identified as at risk of not gaining a NCEA qualification are monitored and mentored. Special assessment conditions applications are supported with school-based evidence and support is adequately resourced.

A range of effective communication modes keep the school and its community well informed about NCEA matters. Communication formats are fit for purpose. The school recently reviewed its publications about NCEA to ensure that they are audience appropriate. Students interviewed for this review demonstrated a thorough understanding of the school's assessment policy and procedures and how to gain a qualification. Staff are kept well informed through the Principal's Nominee about NZQA matters and updates.

### **Areas for improvement**

To maintain currency with NZQA practices, the reference to compassionate consideration should be removed from school documentation.

### **Agreed action**

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

- update documentation to maintain currency with NZQA processes.

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13 August 2018

**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 18 June 2015 Managing National Assessment Report** The four agreed action items from the 2015 review have been addressed. These were to:

- clarify staff understanding that internal verification occurs around grade boundaries
- ensure that HOF have effective systems for monitoring of moderation within their faculties
- establish a consistent method to randomly select student material for external moderation
- update information indicated in the review.

**Response to external moderation outcomes** The school has systems and processes to respond to external moderation. The Principal's Nominee and Heads of Faculty evaluate external moderation outcomes and follow through with action plans. The completion of the action plans is reported to the Senior Leadership Team, who follow up where issues are on-going.

### 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)*

Senior leadership has developed effective systems and processes to monitor and review the school's NCEA assessment practices and processes and the effect on student progress and achievement. The school can respond quickly to issues that are identified, whether from external or internal review, and make effective improvements from their evaluations.

**Wellington High School has effective self-review processes and procedures to identify areas for on-going improvement by:**

- teachers analysing and reviewing assessment outcomes and evaluating the effectiveness of their assessment programmes
- responding to issues raised from external reviews
- Heads of Faculty reviewing annual assessment outcomes and reporting findings and future actions in a faculty report
- having line manager meetings between Heads of Faculty and the Senior Leadership Team to review progress on action plans and evaluate outcomes
- having regular Head of Faculty meetings to discuss school-wide assessment matters

- the Principal's Nominee and Deputy Principal regularly reviewing school processes and evaluating their effectiveness.

The school has made improvements in assessment practice, identified through their review processes, that include:

- the communication of school assessment policy and processes in handbooks, so that they are more audience appropriate
- developing strategies for gathering evidence that allow students to choose a suitable format to submit their assessments that best meets their learning style, while maintaining authenticity
- strengthening the processes for managing missed and late assessments and extensions, so that decisions are consistent, and the number of applications kept to a minimum.

Improvements in moderation practice and data management are discussed later in this report.

### **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)*

### **Wellington High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:**

- using school-based testing to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions, and making applications appropriately
- ensuring that staff are well informed about students with approved special assessment conditions, that appropriate assistance is readily available when required, and reviewing if the assistance is effective
- providing differentiated assessment programmes within courses and across classes in the same subject and, in some courses, offering optional standards
- making portfolio and research-based assessments more manageable using milestone checks and templates
- supporting teachers to collect a range of evidence of achievement, particularly using digital technology and naturally occurring evidence
- assessing students when they are ready or withdrawing them from the standard, where appropriate.

### **Wellington High School 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
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions and breaches of assessment rules
- ensuring derived grades are based on valid, authentic and standard specific evidence
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have not submitted work
- meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1993.

**Student-centred assessment practices** Wellington High School has effective structures and processes to deliver student-centred programmes that meet the diverse needs of its students. These are met through flexible assessment programmes that allow for student choice and co-construction of assessments, effective use of data to match student needs with appropriate pathways and using external providers to extend assessment opportunities. For example, the Arotahi programme identifies learners in Year 10 who will need targeted support to complete Level 1 NCEA. Through that support, a greater number are engaging in Trades Academies and STAR courses to achieve higher qualifications through vocational pathways. The programme has been extended into Year 12 due to its success.

### **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 2018 6.4b)*

### **Wellington High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:**

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- staff reviewing standard clarifications, and using NZQA and school exemplars to improve assessor judgements
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- documenting the internal moderation process by using a standard *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- requiring Heads of Faculty to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their faculty, prior to reporting results to NZQA
- thoroughly reviewing departmental moderation processes during the faculty review cycle.

### **Wellington High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- adequately storing samples of student work to ensure material is available for external moderation.

**External moderation used to improve assessment practice** The school values external moderation to identify areas for improvement and support professional learning and development. The Principal's Nominee has created a tool for longitudinal tracking of external moderation outcomes. Standards that may be of concern are identified and teachers are given appropriate support if required. The Principal's Nominee and teachers selected over a third of the standards externally moderated in 2018, to gather feedback on specific standards of interest to the school. The query and appeal functions of the external moderation application are used to gather feedback, when required, and further develop teacher understanding and delivery of standards.

### **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 for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)*

### Wellington High School effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - annually reviewing course assessments to inform teacher inquiry and modify teaching and learning programmes as necessary
  - identifying Year 9 and 10 students who need additional literacy and numeracy support to access Level 1 when in Year 11
  - enabling Rōpū Teachers and Deans to track, monitor and mentor students in their progress toward NCEA qualification and personal goals
  - annually reporting to the Senior Leadership Team an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions
  - using school-based evidence to support applications for special assessment conditions
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes
  - reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
  - ensuring all students attest that their internal assessment entries and results have been entered correctly
  - actively encouraging students to monitor their progress using the student portal on the student management system and the NZQA learner login
  - using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors.

**Data accuracy improved** The school has strengthened its processes for reporting accurate data to NZQA. To minimise the number of late entries for external assessments, students are required to check their entries and sign-off that they are correct. Teachers have received training and information about removing student entries for internal and external assessments from the student management system when students transfer out of a course. These processes are ensuring that all entries have a result reported against them.

### 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))*

### **Wellington High School has effective processes and procedures for:**

- reviewing communications to ensure they are fit for purpose and current
- ensuring students receive assessment information for all courses they undertake
- communicating consistent NCEA information, assessment policy and procedures through:
  - staff and student handbooks
  - the school website
  - the Future Focus course selection evening
  - the whānau NCEA evening
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system
- informing staff of updates to NCEA information throughout the year via emails and staff meetings.

### **Wellington High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- publishing for students a timeline of assessments in a personalised online calendar
- holding student assemblies to inform them of school assessment policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes and expectations
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- Heads of Faculty meeting regularly throughout the year to discuss assessment related issues.

**Documentation requires updating** To maintain currency with NZQA processes, the reference to compassionate consideration in the school's *Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting* document, requires removal and updating. Under the Derived Grade process grades must be based on pre-existing authentic, standard specific evidence. The use of the former nomenclature can create confusion for staff, particularly as it can be misunderstood to mean a potential grade.

### **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:

- update documentation to maintain currency with NZQA processes.