

Managing National Assessment Report

Wellington College

September 2017

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Wellington 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
- *Assessment and Moderation for National Qualifications, Wellington College, 2017*
- *Course Selection Guides, Wellington College, 2018*
- *Academic Assessment Procedures, Wellington College, 2017* (Student information on the website)
- a sample of moderation tracking documentation
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13 (website editions).

The School Relationship Manager met with the Principal's Nominee, the Systems Adviser, the Data Manager, the Achievement Director, four students, the Heads of Department for Art, Careers and Transition, Commerce, Geography and Social Studies, History and Languages, the Assistant Head of Department for Art, and the Teachers-in-Charge of Art History and French.

There was a report-back session with the Principal and Principal's Nominee, Deputy Principal and Systems Adviser 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 College

14 September 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 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

Wellington College is to be commended for their ongoing commitment to ensure the best qualification outcomes for students. Consistently high academic results over a number of years, very good external moderation agreement rates and a clear school-wide understanding and application of the assessment and moderation requirements of NZQA, provide evidence of the effectiveness of this commitment.

Self-review, informed by the analysis of student achievement data, is widespread and has led to a number of initiatives aimed at improving student outcomes. These include the development of new courses or changes to existing courses, a reduction in the number of credits offered in each course in response to workload concerns, the proposed appointment of a Māori Mentor and a Pasifika Mentor, and the introduction of a new tool to better analyse students' achievement results.

The professional passion of teachers and their agency to innovate and adapt the programmes offered to best meet the needs of students, was a significant feature of this review. Teachers clearly felt comfortable to initiate change and were supported by senior leadership to do so.

The leadership provided by the Principal's Nominee in partnership with the Systems Adviser and Data Manager is notable.

Assessment procedures are managed according to the expectations of NZQA. Academic support for students is well co-ordinated by the Achievement Director. The proposed appointment of the two Mentors mentioned above will further enhance this support.

Moderation practices are robust and are effectively monitored by the Systems Adviser. Any issues raised in external moderation reports are effectively addressed. The high agreement rate between the assessment judgements of teachers and moderators provides confidence in the thoroughness of these processes.

Data is well-managed and any issues are effectively followed up. Communication about assessment requirements to both students and parents is clear and concise. Information is well presented on the school's website.

Areas for improvement

The school could consider reviewing its current policy that potentially prevents some students from being offered a further assessment opportunity if they have avoided the first opportunity for “unacceptable reasons” or have breached the rules.

The current section in the Assessment and Moderation for National Qualifications document that details the procedures to be followed for internal moderation (although technically accurate) must be expanded to include a reference that these samples of student work for verification should be purposefully selected, with a particular focus on grade boundaries.

Agreed action

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

- update the Assessment and Moderation for National Qualifications document to specify that samples of students’ work selected for verification processes should be purposefully selected, with a particular focus on grade boundaries.

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27 October 2017

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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 22 August 2013 Managing National Assessment Report

This report detailed three items to be actioned. These were to:

- ensure that the samples randomly selected for external moderation could not be predicted
- ensure that all staff are familiar with clarification documents
- include an annual sign-off of internal moderation processes with Heads of Departments.

These items have been satisfactorily actioned by the school.

Response to external moderation outcomes Any concerns raised by external moderation reports are effectively followed up by Heads of Department. This is monitored by the Systems Adviser.

There has been a very high rate of agreement between the assessment judgements of teachers and moderators for a number of years. This provides senior leadership with confidence in the thoroughness of processes used by teachers and in the monitoring and follow up undertaken by the Systems Adviser.

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)

Self-review informed by the analysis of student achievement data is widespread A culture of self-review aimed at improving student outcomes is evident. For example, departments prepare annual reviews that analyse students' results from the previous year. These are discussed with senior leadership and changes made to programmes if required.

A number of initiatives have developed as a result of these reviews. These include

- a reduction in the number of credits offered in each course in response to student and teacher workload, and associated stress
- the introduction of new courses in response to student need such as Construction and Infrastructure, Retail and Hospitality, and a Trades Academy
- the proposed establishment of a Māori and Pasifika Leadership Group to help guide school processes
- the proposed appointment of a Māori Mentor and a Pasifika Mentor for students
- the introduction of Science courses with largely internal assessment programmes to increase the number of students involved in STEM subjects

- seeking opportunities for students to meet literacy and numeracy requirements through programmes other than English or Mathematics
- the introduction of a new tool to analyse student achievement and qualification data.

Teachers are encouraged and supported to innovate A significant finding of this review is the professional passion exhibited by the teachers interviewed and the support they receive from senior leadership to innovate to ensure the best outcomes for students.

Teachers displayed very good knowledge of the requirements of NZQA and were implementing these. However, it was clear that their commitment extends well beyond simple compliance. All displayed an active approach to self-review that was aimed at improving their programmes, and teaching in response to students' needs.

In this they were both enabled and supported by senior leadership. There was a clear sense of agency displayed by all the teachers interviewed.

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)

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

- designing programmes of learning that are focussed on their interests, needs and abilities
- offering varied opportunities for the collection of evidence of achievement, including digital evidence
- providing differentiated assessment within courses
- providing academic support and mentoring co-ordinated by the Achievement Director
- providing vocational pathways opportunities through school-based programmes and by using outside providers
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and providing resources for internal assessment where appropriate
- where appropriate, assessing students when they are ready.

Wellington College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring grades awarded are valid, authentic and verified
- providing one further opportunity for assessment when appropriate
- providing suitable opportunities for resubmissions
- investigating appeals by students of assessment decisions
- ensuring evidence for derived grades has been quality assured
- monitoring the authenticity of student work submitted
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Support offered to students is expanding The recent proposal to appoint a Māori Mentor and a Pasifika Mentor is expected to further enhance support for students. These mentors will provide academic support, act as advocates for students and liaise with families.

The school already has an effective process to support students who are at-risk of not achieving their qualification goals. The Achievement Director uses both historical and current achievement data to prepare a list of these students and he co-ordinates appropriate interventions to support them.

An academic conferencing system comprising parents, students and teachers held twice a year involves all students. Qualification results at all levels of NCEA and University Entrance provide testament to the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Review of further assessment opportunity policy could be considered The school could consider reviewing its current policy that potentially prevents some

students from being offered a further assessment opportunity if they have avoided the first opportunity for “unacceptable reasons” or have breached the rules. This approach may be contrary to the principles of natural justice.

No action required

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

For consideration

To extend good practice in meeting student needs and supporting assessment practice, the school is encouraged to consider:

- reviewing the policy that potentially prevents some students from being offered a further assessment opportunity.

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)

Wellington 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 selected sample of student work
- documenting the process using *internal moderation coversheets*
- keeping benchmark exemplars to inform future assessment decisions
- monitoring that robust procedures are occurring in departments
- ensuring that standards owned by Industry Training Organisations are treated in the same way as NZQA administered standards.

Wellington 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
- ensuring Heads of Department respond effectively to external moderation outcomes.

Management and monitoring of moderation processes is effective The Systems Adviser has developed very effective processes to ensure that departments are following robust and thorough internal moderation processes. He meets with Heads of Department at various times during the year to both physically check the materials used and to discuss any concerns. Notes of these meetings are held.

A similar approach is taken with external moderation outcomes. The Systems Adviser meets with Heads of Department to discuss any concerns raised and to agree to an action plan which he monitors. Notes of these meeting are also held.

The actions of the Systems Adviser to confirm good practice in departments provides confidence to senior leadership about the robustness of these practices.

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)

Wellington College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
 - accessing NZQA statistical reports to analyse results in order to track students' progress and to inform decisions about future course content
 - monitoring and tracking student progress during the year
 - evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure they allow students to meet their achievement goals
 - the timely review of the effectiveness of each assessment throughout the year.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
 - ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner
 - checking reports such as the Key Indicators to identify and resolve any errors
 - reconciling reported results from external providers with memoranda of understanding on an annual basis.
 - ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
 - using a sign-off process with students to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades to be reported to NZQA
 - supporting students to use their NZQA Learner login to track their NCEA progress and identify errors
 - submitting financial assistance applications on time.

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)

Wellington College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring all course assessment outlines use the same template to provide consistent information for students
- communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families
- ensuring a memorandum of understanding is held for all outside providers against whose codes grades are reported.

Wellington College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- publishing a staff document and an online student document containing assessment procedures.
- using Head of Department and staff meetings to clarify changes of procedures and expectations, and facilitating discussion on good assessment practice
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- providing well presented, accessible and comprehensive information on the school's website.

Documented internal moderation procedures must be expanded The current section in the Assessment and Moderation for National Qualifications document that details the procedures to be followed for internal moderation must be expanded to include more information about how samples of student work are to be selected for verification.

The current general statement (although accurate) would be enhanced by qualifying that these samples should be purposefully selected by staff, with a particular focus on grade boundaries. This would ensure that actual current practice is mirrored in the staff handbook as well as being a clear statement to all staff for the future.

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 the Assessment and Moderation for National Qualifications document to specify that samples of students' work selected for verification processes should be purposefully selected, with a particular focus on grade boundaries.