

Managing National Assessment Report

Nelson College For Girls

April 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Nelson College For Girls:

- 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
- *NQF Student Handbook, Nelson College for Girls, 2021*
- *NQF Staff Procedures Handbook, Nelson College for Girls, 2021*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Managers met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Head of Learning Area for:
 - English
 - Social Sciences
- Head of Department for:
 - Music
 - Physical Education, and
- three 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

Nelson College For Girls

9 April 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 effectively identify and respond to 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 2019 to 2020. The review was postponed a further year due to the disruption to schools from COVID-19 lockdown.

What the school is doing well

Nelson College for Girls has an embedded culture of self-review enabling continuous improvement to meet student needs and the school's strategic goal of being future focussed. The school has shared ownership of NCEA assessment practice ensuring that results reported to NZQA for national qualifications are credible. The programmes and courses delivered meet the learning needs of a diverse range of students.

The school has a well-developed capacity for sustained self-review, evident in the distributed ownership of systems for review. This allows the school to proactively identify potential risks to quality assurance and to develop initiatives that lead to enable ongoing improvements in assessment practice.

Student-centred assessment practice is a strength of the school. Meeting student needs is foremost for any change to assessment practice or course design. By encouraging student agency to determine contexts for learning and standards for assessment, teachers can provide personalised programmes for students, where possible. The school's assessment policies and procedures are consistently applied across the school.

Nelson College for Girls moderation system is robust and ensures that only credible results are reported to NZQA. The school has maintained a very high agreement rate between teacher and NZQA moderator assessment judgements. This attests the effectiveness of the internal moderation system. Their digital-based system allows the school to effectively complete the internal moderation process, including its monitoring by Heads of Learning and the Principal's Nominee. Teachers value the feedback that external and internal moderation provides to improve assessment judgements.

The school manages data processes effectively to ensure that student entries and results reported to NZQA are accurate and submitted in a timely manner. Data is used at all levels of the school to inform future planning and practice.

The school's community is well informed with appropriate, fit for purpose communications. The ārahi mentoring programme is a school strength that supports student achievement. Strong relationships between the Kaiārahi and student provides an effective platform for mentoring students and supporting them to achieve their qualification goals.

Areas for improvement

To effectively track students progress towards their qualification goals Kaiārahi need access to accurate entry data. The school agrees that they should strengthen their process of ensuring that all students are entered early in the year for the standards that they plan to undertake. Currently this requirement is not consistently met across all Learning Areas which hinders the effectiveness of Kaiārahi when mentoring their students.

Some other steps for the school to consider are detailed in the body of the report.

Agreed action

The school agreed that an action will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are:

- ensure that early in the year, all teachers have entered students into the standards they plan to undertake.

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24 May 2021

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 6 April 2016 Managing National Assessment Report

The six action items from the 2016 report have been effectively addressed. Staff and student handbooks have been updated as required. Heads of Learning Area clearly understand and follow the school's moderation process. The monitoring of this process has been strengthened and documented. Supported Learning standards are now only offered to students when appropriate, as determined by the school SENCO. They are not being offered at the time of this report.

Response to external moderation outcomes

The school has strengthened its process to respond to external moderation following the 2016 report. Action plans are implemented when necessary and completed in a timely manner. This process is documented in a shared document. Teachers report to their Head of Learning about their outcomes, which is then included in the annual Achievement Report to Senior Leadership. The school supports teachers to seek advice from subject experts and associations outside of the school to improve assessment judgements. The school has maintained a very high overall external moderation agreement rate between teacher and moderator judgements, which reflects its robust internal moderation process.

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)

Nelson College for Girls has a high capacity for sustained self-review of assessment practice and procedures. This is due to effective structures that are in place to support self-review and the shared ownership across school leadership.

The school's 3-year review of all Learning Areas supports sustainable assessment practice. Conducted by the Senior Leadership Team, it provides assurance that the school's policy and procedures are being followed and identifies areas for improvement. It also allows the school to eliminate potential risks to quality assurance. Learning Areas are provided with a report highlighting strengths and areas of development.

Several working groups have been established that contribute to the ongoing improvement of assessment practice. These groups focus on different aspects of improving school capability and comprise staff from all levels of school leadership. Focus areas of these groups include cultural responsiveness, evaluative capability (school data), school strategy, coherence, and reporting. Initiatives, like the Reporting Plan, are implemented following group inquiry and demonstrate the school's ability to proactively identify areas of improvement. The inclusion of staff who sit outside of Senior Leadership and are not Heads of Learning ensures that the ownership of self-review is spread across the school and improves capacity.

The school strategy of developing a curriculum that is future focussed to better meet student needs anticipates future changes to assessment. New learning areas are being developed in the junior school following a curriculum review. The review is continuing into the senior school with the intention of mapping changes with the upcoming NCEA Change. This will align the student-centred curriculum with assessment to take advantage of the flexibility that NCEA provides.

Developing potential capacity and capability for sustainable self-review

The school has identified a need to develop further capacity for self-review to ensure its future sustainability. The school enjoys stable assessment practice through shared leadership among experienced staff. Changes in leadership and/or staffing could affect this stability.

This review visit identified two potential areas for the school to consider. First, the 3-year review could be restructured. Heads of Learning Area could take ownership of the review process and be involved in conducting it rather than just the Senior Leadership. This would improve their knowledge of quality assurance practices and potentially provide other insights for improving practice.

The second consideration is to further develop staff capability in analysing data to evaluate the effectiveness of their assessment practice, particularly the ability to disaggregate data for Māori and Pacific students. The school is already providing professional learning and development in the effective use of data. However, by developing and including this ability, teachers will be able to better evaluate the effectiveness of the changes being made to their programmes to address equity.

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.

For consideration

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

- developing further capacity for self-review by reviewing the 3-year review structure and process
- developing staff capability to disaggregate data for Māori and Pacific students.

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)

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

- implementing strategies to address inequity in STEM subjects
- using local contexts to adapt assessments for genuine and authentic learning and engage student interests
- using school-based testing to identify students requiring Special Assessment Conditions and making applications appropriately
- providing differentiated assessment programmes within courses and across classes in the same subject and, in some courses, offering optional standards
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways
- assessing when ready.

Nelson College For Girls has effective processes and procedures for:

- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring credible assessment through consistent school-wide assessment practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunity
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence for derived and emergency grades
- efficiently managing NZQA external examinations
- complying with the requirements of the Privacy Act, 1993 when handling students' assessment information.

Student-centred assessment practice is a school strength Assessment practice is student-centred to meet their assessment and qualification needs and is a strength of the school. Learning Areas endeavour to give students agency to choose their learning contexts and topics, and the standards they will attempt. This approach allows teachers to offer personalised programmes, where possible, and improve student engagement in their assessments.

In 2019, Learning Areas reduced the number of credits offered in each subject to reduce student assessment workload and support student well-being. This has changed student focus from amassing credits to achieving higher grades and endorsements.

The number of students participating in digital external examinations has increased rapidly in the past few years with the school developing its future focussed approach.

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 6.4 & 6.5)

Nelson College For Girls has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- staff reviewing standard clarifications, and using NZQA and school exemplars to improve assessor judgements
- critiquing all assessment materials prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- documenting the internal moderation process by using a standard *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify the grades awarded on a purposefully selected sample of student work
- requiring Heads of Learning Area to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their learning area prior to reporting results to NZQA
- keeping benchmark exemplars and verification notes to inform future assessment decisions
- thoroughly reviewing moderation processes during the school 3-year review cycle.

Nelson College For Girls has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- randomly selecting samples of student work for external moderation to NZQA requirements
- adequately storing samples of student work to ensure material is available for external moderation
- encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan.

Moderation underpins credible assessment Nelson College for Girls robust moderation system assures that all reported results are credible and teacher judgements are consistent with the standard. There are two key aspects that achieve this: a digital-based record system that is monitored at different levels, and a culture of improving assessment judgements through moderation feedback.

A digital system streamlines the moderation process, assists teachers to manage workload and help ensure timely completion of moderation tasks. Most internal moderation processes are now done online, including the storage of student material. This allows all stakeholders to have the visibility that tasks in the process are being completed correctly and in a timely manner. Heads of Department, Heads of Learning, and the Principal's Nominee all monitor that moderation is happening.

Teachers actively seek feedback from moderation to affirm and improve their assessment judgements. Many use subject specialists from other schools as

verifiers, which is good practice. They also use verifiers and subject association members to critique changes made to their practice, following feedback from external moderation. This helps to ensure that the changes made meet the standard and there is continued improvement.

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)

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

- annually reviewing course assessments to inform teaching inquiry and modify teaching and learning programmes as needed
- monitoring academic student progress to identify learners at risk of not achieving their goals
- annually report to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions
- analysing results comparatively and longitudinally to inform course design and set strategic direction.

Nelson College For Girls reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- 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
- ensuring that internal entries are reported with a result or withdrawn, as appropriate
- ensuring all students check that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- holding current memoranda of understanding with external providers and reconciling them with entries.

Ensure all students are entered into all standards early in the year The mentoring of students is supported by early entry into all the standards they plan to undertake. NZQA and the school agreed strengthening their process to ensure that all Learning Areas meet this timing for student entries will ensure accurate data is provided to Kaiārahi.

Teachers are required to complete student entries into standards, to ensure the school's traffic light report identifies those who are not entered in enough credits to gain a qualification. Kaiārahi can then accurately track student progress and mentor them to achieve their NCEA goals. However, this requirement is inconsistently followed, diminishing the accuracy of the traffic light report and impacting on the effectiveness of the mentoring.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that early in the year, all teachers have entered students into all the standards they plan to undertake.

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))

Nelson College For Girls has effective processes and procedures for:

- annually reviewing staff and student handbooks to maintain current best practice and ensure consistency of practice school-wide
- ensuring students receive assessment information for all courses they undertake
- regularly communicating assessment policy and procedures to staff, students and their families using a range of methods and media
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing online access to the information held on the school's student management system.

Nelson College For Girls assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- holding student assemblies to inform them of school assessment policies and procedures
- having a standardised template for course outlines across subject areas ensuring consistent assessment information, which are reviewed and updated annually
- improving parental understanding of NCEA and assessment procedures through targeted evening meetings
- publishing to staff and students a timeline of key NZQA and school assessment related dates in an online calendar.

Ārahi programme provides effective support for students The relationship students have with their Kaiārahi is crucial for building their confidence to meet their NCEA goals. Kaiārahi mentor students and provide them with effective support to gain NCEA qualifications. This includes helping them understand the requirements to achieve a qualification, advise on school policy and procedures, tracking and monitoring progress towards their goals, and academic conversations about how to achieve them.

The value and benefit of these strong relationships was evident in 2020 when the challenges of school disruption from COVID-19 meant students had to be well supported. Students interviewed for this review attested this was a strength of the school.

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.