

Managing National Assessment Report

Waimea College

August 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Waimea 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 2019* (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
- *Waimea College Policies and Procedures, Board of Trustees, Waimea College 2019*
- *Assessment Policy and Practices for National Qualifications, Waimea College 2019 (Staff Handbook)*
- *National Qualifications (including NCEA), Waimea College 2019 (Student Handbook)*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Associate Deputy Principal
- Heads of Department for:
 - Chemistry
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Education
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Associate 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

Waimea College

20 August 2019

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 three years.

At the request of NZQA, and with the school's agreement, this review was rescheduled from 2018.

What the school is doing well

Waimea College is effectively managing national assessment and has well-embedded processes to continually review procedures that lead to improvement. The Principal's Nominee ably manages all assessment-related matters and is well supported by Senior Leadership. Comprehensive procedures supported by thorough quality assurance requirements are well-embedded. Senior Leaders are confident that results submitted to NZQA are credible.

The school's self-review follows the *Waimea Way* of shared ownership. This supports the reviews, data analysis and evaluations that occur at all levels. The success of this approach is evident in the school's continual improvement to meet the assessment needs of its students. Senior Leaders are confident that any concerns relating to assessment practices will be identified and addressed.

Data analysis strongly informs self-review. Teachers engage with data to inform their practice, Heads of Department analyse student achievement and submit annual reports, and Senior Leaders evaluate these analyses to inform a schoolwide strategic focus.

Student data is effectively managed, results submitted to NZQA in a timely manner and any issues are identified and efficiently resolved. The school's data analyst tracks student progress towards NCEA qualifications and identifies student at risk. The Achievement Team supports these students through academic interventions and mentoring to endeavour to reach their achievement goals.

Procedures to complete internal and external moderation are robust, well-understood by teachers and consistently followed. Any issues raised in external moderation reports are followed up and monitored to ensure the needed changes are made. Feedback from external moderation is valued for improving teacher assessment judgements. An historically high rate of agreement between NZQA moderators and teachers' judgements attests to the robustness of the school's internal moderation system.

The school community is well informed about school assessment policy, procedures and NCEA information. School documentation is fit for purpose and conveyed using a range of effective methods.

Areas for improvement

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

Kay Wilson
Manager
School Quality Assurance and Liaison

16 October 2019

NZQA

0800 697 296

www.nzqa.govt.nz

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 20 May 2015 Managing National Assessment Report The school has adequately addressed the four action items from this report. These were to:

- develop an application form for extensions and identify who has responsibility for granting these
- clarify that internal moderation verification should involve a selection of work at grade boundaries and be sufficient to give confidence that assessor judgements are consistent with the standard.
- complete ESL registration for Heads of Department to provide them with access to the school's NZQA Provider Login
- update the staff handbook to reflect school practice.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school's process to respond to external moderation ensures that any identified issues are effectively addressed. The Principal's Nominee shares reports with Heads of Department and follows this with a discussion where an issue has been identified. An action plan to address the issue is then required. External moderation outcomes and the completion of action plans are tracked and monitored using a spreadsheet that the Principal's Nominee has developed. The longitudinal tracking of external moderation outcomes also assists to evaluate the effectiveness of plans for improvement and to identify any ongoing areas of concern.

This is a comprehensive process and Senior Leaders are confident that concerns raised in external moderation reports are being addressed effectively.

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)

Self-review is a school-wide shared practice at Waimea College using its *Waimea Way* model. The model builds upon the school's strategic goals and focus areas using data analysis, evaluation and self-review processes to raise achievement. There is shared ownership of the school-wide goal of *Equity in Excellence in Student Outcomes* beginning with subject teachers. Teacher data analysis, evaluation and reflection informs the changes in practice that occur in departments and onward to the school-wide reviews undertaken by Senior Leadership. Through its review practice the school has identified areas for improvement, which have then been actioned. These include:

- opening the entry into the top Level 1 Mathematics class to all students. Students can now choose to enter this course where this was previously school determined. This has increased the number of students participating

- adjusting the timetable structure to enable more flexibility for conducting assessments
- providing professional learning and development around assessment for staff to ensure a consistency school-wide. This is detailed in the assessment practice section of this report
- developing the Trades Academy and Gateway courses so that they provide a coherent vocational pathway for students in Years 12 and 13.

The school's self-review processes are effective in identifying areas to improve student engagement in assessment that lead to raising achievement outcomes.

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 2019 5.5)

Waimea College 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
- making portfolio and research-based assessments manageable by using milestones checks and templates
- extending assessment opportunities by using external providers, such as the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) and Whenua Iiti, to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against individual standards related to career pathways
- assessing when ready, where appropriate.

Waimea College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring credible results through consistent school-wide practice on late and missed work, extensions, resubmissions, and further assessment opportunities
- investigating and resolving potential breaches of assessment rules and student appeals of assessment decisions
- ensuring evidence for derived grades and unexpected event grades is valid, authentic and standard-specific
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act* when handling students' assessment information.

Teacher understanding of assessment policy and procedures ensures consistent practice The school has improved teacher capacity by developing teachers' understanding and ensure robust school-wide practice. The Principal's Nominee provided staff with professional development and learning in aspects identified as requiring clarification or being inconsistently followed. These included clarifying:

- the process for granting an extension to an assessment deadline
- the guidelines for offering students a resubmission
- the process and necessity for generating evidence for a derived or unexpected event grade and recording this in the school's student management system
- the literacy requirements for NCEA Level 1 and University Entrance and what standards contribute when designing assessment programmes.

Staff interviewed at this review demonstrated a good understanding of the school's assessment policy and procedures and provided evidence that it is consistently applied.

Increasing the opportunities for students to participate in digital assessments

Waimea College regards using digital tools as necessary to meet the future needs of its students and is increasingly using them for internal and external assessments. Students are actively encouraged to bring their devices to school to use in their subject areas and can opt to use them for assessments. The students interviewed for this report described sitting online external examinations as a positive experience and a natural progression from using their devices within the classroom.

Equity The school has analysed its data on equity and is committed to ensuring equitable outcomes for Māori and Pacific students. The school is developing culturally inclusive practice and staff receive professional development to assist this. Equity of outcomes in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects for Māori and Pacific students in Year 13 is also being addressed through the shared school-wide goal of Equity in Excellence.

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 2019 6.4b)

Waimea College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all assessment materials are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose
- 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
- Senior Leaders monitoring that internal moderation occurs for all standards
- reviewing departmental moderation processes during the faculty review cycle.

Waimea College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- selecting samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- annually checking that assessment materials and student work are stored and readily available if selected for external moderation
- valuing external moderation feedback for the clarification of grade boundaries, assistance with understanding of the standard and to confirm the robustness of the school's internal moderation
- actively encouraging teachers to suggest appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan.

Complete internal moderation coversheet documentation to strengthen moderation Teachers recording discussion on a grade decision on the internal moderation cover sheet will strengthen the school's moderation process. Not all teachers are recording how decisions were reached for awarding grades from the verification process. This is useful for future reference to help teachers to make accurate assessment judgements when used with benchmarks to determine a grade. It can also help improve teacher understanding of a standard if it is selected for external moderation, as teachers can compare the reasons for their decisions to those of NZQA moderators. This is more useful for improving their understanding of a standard than just comparing grades when analysing external moderation reports.

For consideration

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

- ensuring teachers record the decisions made to verify student grades.

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)

Waimea College effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- informing programme design so that the standards offered match student strengths and interests
- annually report to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement, to inform strategic goals and actions.

Waimea College reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- ensuring all students attest that their entries and results have been entered correctly
- actively encouraging students to monitor their own progress using the student portal on the student management system and their NZQA learner login
- using the Key Indicators and data file submission reports to identify and resolve data errors
- reconciling results from external providers with which they hold a current memorandum of understanding, to ensure results are reported with the correct provider codes.

Monitoring academic progress identifies students requiring support Students At Risk Of Not Achieving (SARONA) are identified from effective data analysis and the school endeavours to provide them with appropriate support to achieve their qualification goals. SARONA are well supported by the Achievement Team who use the data to create an individualised plan for each student. Team members mentor students and monitor their progress. The school's review of the intervention programmes determined that they have significant impact on the number of students gaining an NCEA qualification.

Recording of student entries and results has improved Providing staff and students with clearer guidelines about when a Not Achieved grade is reported has improved the accuracy of the data reported to NZQA. Updating these guidelines in the staff handbook was an agreed action item from the 2015 review. Students now have a process so that they can withdraw from a standard before the assessment begins if they do not wish to attempt it. Staff understand this process and only record a Not Achieved grade if the student has had an adequate assessment opportunity but submits no work.

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))

Waimea College has effective processes and procedures for:

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

Waimea College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- using a school NCEA quiz to check teacher and student understanding of NCEA qualifications and school assessment policy and processes
- informing teachers about assessment best practice and providing opportunities to discuss changes
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes and expectations.

Improved communications to better inform the school community The school has introduced further methods to communicate information about school assessment practice and NCEA to teachers, students and parents. Policy documents are now available to staff online so that they are easily accessible. An assembly at the beginning of each year informs them before they start NCEA assessment programmes. All students receive further information during Ako sessions from their teachers. Digital versions of school documentation are available. Opportunities for parents of Year 9 and 10 students to gain an understanding have been increased through an information session at a Parent Teacher Association evening. The new methods for communication, along with those previously established, are ensuring that the school community is well informed about assessment for qualifications.

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.