

Managing National Assessment Report

Buller High School

March 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Buller High School

19 March 2025

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is effectively meeting the requirements of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022.

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.

As a school with effective assessment systems and practices for national qualifications, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2022.

Actions

Agreed actions

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems and practice for national qualifications. These are:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Use external moderation outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of internal moderation processes	Within 6 months
Review assessment-related communications to ensure they are accurate and fit for purpose	Within 2025
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Ensure that valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades, and that these grades are reported to NZQA	Before the start of external examinations

Submit accurate and timely data files to NZQA so that NZQA holds up-to-date data and to enable effective tracking of student progress	At least once per month
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External and internal review

External review

Evidence of external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 26 June 2019 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has completed two of the four agreed actions from the previous review, while the other two actions require further attention, as detailed later in this report.

Internal assessment materials are now available to submit for external moderation as needed. They are stored either in shared digital files or in a secure filing cabinet that can be checked by the Principal's Nominee. All required materials have been submitted for moderation in recent years. Students now have a clear understanding of the school's appeal policy thanks to clear verbal communication from teachers.

While the school generates grades for use as potential derived grades, these must be submitted to NZQA prior to the beginning of external exams after having undergone documented quality assurance. While students receive course assessment information at the start of the school year, a more consistent approach is needed to avoid inaccuracies and ensure that communications are fit for purpose.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes

Review of standard-specific feedback Buller High School has an effective system in place to ensure that feedback from external moderators is used for teacher reflection and the generation of action plans to resolve identified issues. Teachers complete a response form for each standard that has not received "Consistent" as their feedback. The forms are discussed with the Principal's Nominee who follows up the completion of planned next steps with relevant teachers during the year. Action plans typically include liaising with subject associations, reviewing assessment tasks, and reviewing teaching and learning programmes. As a result of this practice, the school can be confident that teachers are using external moderation feedback to improve their assessment practice with identified standards.

Extending review to include moderation practices with departments The school needs to ensure that any ongoing patterns of inconsistency identified through external moderation feedback are resolved effectively. This process should include evaluating whether feedback received for individual standards indicates that a broader review of moderation practices is required within a department. This review could be included in regular meetings between Heads of Department and senior leaders, or in Curriculum Team Leaders' meetings. Where further action is required, senior leaders would then be well placed to assist teachers implement actions such as seeking appropriate verifiers outside the school or accessing professional learning opportunities. A more strategic approach to following up external moderation feedback will support more credible results for students and more robust assessor judgements.

Internal review

Evidence of 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)

Systematic course and department review Buller High School individual teacher reflection, department-level review and whole-school review are aligned to ensure that both good practice and strategic goals are shared. The review process begins with teachers' "Professional Growth Cycle" goals and evidence of development. Departmental reviews of student achievement and curriculum run parallel to this and include NCEA assessment programmes, including the extent to which planned courses need to be adapted to meet the needs of the current cohort. Teachers have worked to ensure that they are prepared to assess against new and reviewed Achievement Standards. At the time of this review, annual department goals were still to be finalised, incorporating school-wide goals and achievement targets.

Specific review of assessment communications needed The school should implement a regular cycle of assessment communications review to ensure that they are both accurate and fit for purpose. While there are few errors in existing assessment handbooks, there are some areas that require clarification and others that require development. These include rules regarding resubmission and further assessment opportunities, the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in assessment, the generation of derived grades, and special assessment conditions. In addition, clearer and consistent templates for course outlines would remove conflicting advice and make these documents more user-friendly. A review of communications would help to identify areas where there may be inconsistent understanding across the school and where explanations of processes could be more accessible to students and staff.

Credible assessment practice to meet student needs

Evidence of assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Courses cater for student needs and interests Buller High School offers a diverse range of programmes in which the flexibility of NCEA is used to cater for a broad mix of student pathways. Students engage in learning and assessment with external providers including online learning, Trades Academy courses, cross-curricular and short courses. Students interviewed during this review were pleased to have access to learning and assessment that meets their aspirations and interests despite the school's small size and location. Students identified as at risk of not achieving a qualification as well as those who are gifted and talented may have negotiated Individual Education Plans tailored to their needs. These plans can include adapted assessment programmes to support them to complete their goals at school.

Practice examinations and derived grades The school must ensure that valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades, and that these grades are reported to NZQA. There is currently variable practice across departments in the development of practice examination tasks, the conditions of assessment provided, and the quality assurance of grades. It is a requirement that grades submitted to NZQA as potential derived grades are generated from a school managed assessment that mirrors the external examination of each standard. This requirement ensures grades are credible and that students are able to present their best evidence for assessment. To ensure the accuracy of reported grades, teachers

must document a quality assurance process that is then monitored to give senior leaders assurance that all grades reported to NZQA are credible. When grades generated as described are submitted to NZQA it ensures that students who are unexpectedly prevented from attending an examination are not disadvantaged.

Timely and accurate data requirements The school is required to submit at least one data file per month and ensure that each submission is checked for accuracy. There were three months in 2024 in which the school did not submit a data file. Regular and timely submission ensures that students are able to monitor their progress on the NZQA website, that the school can check that entries and results have been reported accurately, that transferring students are not disadvantaged, and that any errors can be resolved before they have an impact on qualifications, tertiary entrance, and external assessments.

There were a considerable number of internal entries without results remaining in the school's records at the end of 2024. All internal entries should be as accurate as possible throughout the year, and any entries without results removed before the December data file is submitted. This enables students to more easily check their results are complete, and for students, whānau and Deans to monitor student progress and that students are eligible to be awarded a qualification.

Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results

Evidence of internal moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2024)

Established moderation practices Each department has effective practices for ensuring that internal moderation procedures are completed. There is a good common understanding of the importance of critiquing assessment materials before use, particularly when there are changes to standards, clarifications and other supporting documents. The moderation process is documented on the Internal Moderation Cover Sheet, with one copy stored in the department and another submitted to the Principal's Nominee.

Verifying samples of student work Each department has a good understanding of the selection requirements for verifying student work, where a purposefully-selected range of samples is checked by a suitably qualified second pair of eyes. Where there are teachers new to the school, subject, or standard, then Heads of Department work closely with them and check a wider range of samples. As discussed in the external moderation section above, a regular review of department moderation processes would help to establish steps to strengthen them.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Buller High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of its students by:

- designing coherent programmes of learning and assessment that are culturally appropriate focussed on student interests, needs, abilities and aspirations
- broadening assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers and extending the school's Consent to Assess if required
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- assessing students when they are ready
- using a range of methods for collecting assessment evidence, to meet student needs
- ensuring teachers are aware of individual students with special assessment conditions entitlements, and resourcing their support
- providing opportunities for digital assessment including digital exams
- identifying and providing support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Buller High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- managing missed or late assessment
- managing resubmission and further opportunities for assessment
- investigating student appeals of assessment decisions
- investigating possible breaches of assessment rules
- monitoring the authenticity of student work using a range of strategies
- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but have submitted no work
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Buller High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring assessment tasks are critiqued prior to use to ensure they are fit for purpose
- using clarification documents, exemplars, verification notes and professional learning opportunities to inform assessment judgements
- using subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a strategic selection of a sufficient sample of student work
- using grade verifiers from outside the school
- documenting the completion of steps within internal moderation processes
- monitoring and documenting completed internal moderation processes to ensure only quality assured results are reported to NZQA.

Buller High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- ensuring samples of student work are available for submission by being adequately stored
- selecting sufficient samples of student work to NZQA requirements
- responding effectively to external moderation outcomes and providing support for assessors where appropriate
- monitoring and documenting actions taken to address external moderation feedback.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Buller High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- monitoring and tracking student progress
- evaluating the effectiveness of assessment programmes to ensure these allow students to meet their assessment goals, and inform changes to courses and standards offered
- gathering student voice to evaluate courses and assessment workloads to inform changes to programmes, contexts, and standards
- reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an annual analysis of NCEA achievement to inform strategic goals and actions.

Buller High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- checking Key Indicators and NZQA reports to identify and resolve any errors
- conducting student and teacher checks of entries and results at key times during the year.

- reporting results against the correct provider codes of providers with which the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective communication to inform staff, and students and their whānau about assessment

Buller High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive outlines for courses they undertake
- supporting students to monitor their achievement
- discussing assessment policy and procedure with staff, and providing updates of NCEA information throughout the year
- reporting on students' progress towards qualifications, including providing opportunities for parents to discuss their children's NCEA goals, progress, and achievement
- supporting teachers new to the school through an induction programme to understand school and NZQA assessment processes
- celebrating students' success.

Buller High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- communicating assessment information, such as holding NCEA information evenings for parents and NCEA assemblies for students
- informing students about suitable learning pathways
- supporting students to understand what they need to achieve in order to gain a qualification.

Appendix 2: Overview

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA’s review of how effectively Buller 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 whānau.

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 effectively meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2022* (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 *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025*.

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- identifying the effectiveness of the school’s review processes, assessment practice and quality assurance
- 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’s consideration 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 five 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
- *Operational Manual 2025 Draft – Buller High School*
- *2025 Assessment Booklet – Buller High School*
- *2025 Governance Manual - Buller High School.*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English
 - Food and Fabric
 - Mathematics
 - Pathways
 - Performing Arts
 - Science
- 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.