

# **Managing National Assessment Report**

## **Ellesmere College**

**August 2018**

## What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Ellesmere 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 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
- *Ellesmere College 2018 National Qualifications Framework Staff Assessment Procedures*
- *Ellesmere College – Summary of Students’ Rights and Obligations with respect to NCEA assessment 2018 – Information for Students, Parents and their Whānau*
- *Guidance for Ellesmere College students completing NCEA internal assessment (Authenticity and Referencing advice and guidance)*
- *Ellesmere College – Reporting Policy*
- 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 Learning Areas for Business Studies, English, Health and Physical Education, Science, Social Science and Technology.

There was a report-back session with the Principal, Assistant 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

## Ellesmere College

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

### What the school is doing well

Ellesmere College provides a range of academic and vocational assessment programmes and pathways to reflect students' interests, aspirations and meet the needs of those staying longer at the school. Extensions to the school's consent to assess, use of external providers and the introduction of new courses extend the range of courses offered to support those looking to transition to work. Differentiation within a subject allows students to negotiate the standards they are assessed against and reflect their abilities and interests.

The Principal's Nominee, who is new to the role, has conducted a number of assessment and quality assurance reviews this year. Processes for derived grades, management of authenticity and external moderation follow-up have been strengthened in response to identified potential risk and ensure fair and valid assessment practice school-wide. Good assessment practice that ensures credible results are reported has been confirmed.

Internal moderation processes are understood and followed and provide assurance to Senior Management that all standards assessed have been quality assured. An effective procedure for following-up on external moderation ensures required actions are documented and their completion monitored. The effectiveness of the actions is externally evaluated by the standards being selected by the school for external moderation in the future.

Communication is open and transparent and serves to ensure all staff have access to up-to-date relevant information. The introduction of the School App provides timely alerts and has enhanced the range of methods used to communicate NCEA information to staff, students and whānau.

Student achievement is supported using a multi-pronged approach. Analysis of student NCEA progress identifies students at risk of not achieving a qualification. Deans and the Academic Coordinator negotiate changes to a student's assessment programme to support their ongoing achievement. Learning conferences and contact by the Academic Coordinator with whānau further supports students identified at risk to meet their qualification goal and career aspirations.

Staff feel well supported by the Principal's Nominee who provides advice and guidance and affirms their current good practice.

### **Areas for improvement**

To address the inconsistent application of resubmission opportunities described by some Heads of Learning Area, the school agreed to clarify with staff the requirements for a valid resubmission opportunity. The school will also use the NZQA terms resubmission and further assessment opportunity for consistency and to avoid teacher and student confusion.

The addition to the information in the staff and student handbook that students can appeal any assessment decision will provide clarity to this assessment process.

### **Agreed action**

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are:

- clarify the requirements for offering a valid resubmission opportunity

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6 November 2018

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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 17 June 2015 Managing National Assessment Report** The four agreed actions from the 2015 review have been completed by:

- clarifying that reported derived grades must be based on authentic standard-specific evidence
- providing professional development on ways to collect non-written evidence that meets NZQA requirements
- ensuring the random selection for external moderation meets NZQA requirements by the Principal's Nominee making the selection using the student management system
- amending school documentation.

**Effective response to external moderation outcomes** An effective process is in place to follow-up on external moderation that supports the development of assessor understanding of grade boundaries, where required. The Principal's Nominee reviews each report. Meetings are held with Heads of Learning Areas where "*Not Yet Consistent*" and "*Not Consistent*" outcomes are reported. The planned actions to improve practice and a way forward are discussed, with appropriate support provided. In the subjects where the moderator indicated "*Issue not addressed*" additional support has been put in place including reviewing the verification process and the requirement to have work moderated outside of the school. This is good practice. The school will evaluate the effectiveness of these actions by selecting standards with prior issues for external moderation in 2019.

The Principal's Nominee, who is new to the role, provides a report to the Principal and Board of Trustees of the effectiveness of internal moderation processes and the actions planned to address external moderation issues.

**Effective response to derived grade management review** NZQA conducted a derived grade review in 2017. The findings of the review confirmed the school's assessment procedures ensure reported grades are derived from authentic, standard-specific evidence.

The recommended next steps to strengthen the school's quality assurance of the grades have been completed. To confirm to Senior Management that the quality assurance changes are effective, the Principal's Nominee analysed the correlation of 2017 practice examination results with actual NCEA. This was shared with Heads of Learning Areas. Where the analysis identified more than a 25 percent decrease in NCEA grades compared to the practice examinations, external moderation feedback was reviewed to identify where additional support is required to ensure that where a derived grade is reported, it is valid and standard-specific.

**Response where internally assessed results differ significantly from externally assessed standards** NZQA provided the school with 2017 data identifying a subject where the variation between internal and external results differs from the national pattern for schools of a similar decile band. The Principal's Nominee had already identified the issue and triangulated the data with the school practice examinations and external moderation feedback. Support and professional learning have been provided to develop the understanding of the achievement criteria expectations. The effectiveness of the support will be monitored in 2019.

### **Internal review s**

*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)*

Ellesmere College's aim is to provide learning opportunities to engage students enabling them to achieve at their potential. Self-review processes are used to inform the ongoing development of assessment programmes offered to support students reach their qualification goal. The Principal's Nominee, who is new to the role, has lead a number of assessment and quality assurance reviews as part of a cycle of review she is implementing. Working collaboratively with Heads of Learning Areas, Deans and Senior Management the reviews have confirmed credible results are reported to NZQA and communication of assessment information is effective.

These reviews have resulted in a number of changes and developments and provide evidence of the school effectively responding to changes in the student cohort and learning needs to enhance student outcomes. The school's self-review processes and professional leadership of NCEA assessment practices illustrate its capacity to effectively respond to NZQA's and the school's own review findings. This response provides confidence to Senior Management that reported results are credible and student assessment needs continue to be met.

Self-review has resulted in a number of developments at the school, including:

- fewer incidents of plagiarism in 2018 as a result of implementing strategies to inform students what plagiarism is and assisting teachers to better manage authenticity and identify possible instances of plagiarism
- Level 2 students only studying five subjects in their assessment programme enabling them to focus on the quality of the credits achieved and support the school's goal of increasing the number of merit and excellence grades
- Level 1 assessment programmes offering fewer credits or the opportunity to negotiate a course from optional internal and external standards to meet individual qualification goals and support student wellbeing
- the development of LANES (Literacy and Numeracy Education Support) in 2017 to assists students achieve Level 1 numeracy and literacy NCEA requirements
- extending the school's Consent to Assess to offer Level 2 New Zealand Certificate in Tourism and Maori Performing Arts to support students career aspirations and interests.

### **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)*

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

- using class profiles to identify student ability and language level to inform how learning and assessment opportunities can be scaffolded
- collecting evidence of student achievement in a variety of ways, including verbally, through portfolios, , group activities, and digitally, to enable alternative presentation methods
- engaging with external providers to offer vocational and trade-based assessment opportunities to meet students' career aspirations
- using school-based evidence to support special assessment conditions applications to remove the potential financial barrier of a Level C Assessor report, and providing these entitlements, as appropriate
- providing differentiated assessment programmes and opportunities within a subject level including the use of optional standards
- providing feedback and feedforward information to support students to present their best evidence and reduce the need for resubmission and further assessment opportunities.

### **Ellesmere College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- reporting Not Achieved for proven breaches of authenticity and where students have had an adequate assessment opportunity but submitted no work
- ensuring consistency in the granting of extensions through the Principal's Nominee making the decision in consultation with the teacher
- assisting students to present authentic work by developing understanding of plagiarism, standardising referencing, and monitoring authenticity using the learning management system revision history function
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act (1993)* for student grade sign-off and when using student work for exemplars
- effectively managing NZQA external examinations.

**Clarification of resubmission required** A resubmission should be offered by teachers to individual students who are on the grade boundary and can independently identify and correct the error or omission without further teaching and learning or specific feedback. The school agreed to clarify this process with staff to ensure resubmission practice, by all staff, meets NZQA and the school's expectations. This clarification will address the inconsistent resubmission practice described by some staff interviewed, including offering it to all students.



**Agreed action**

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management of assessment for national qualifications. Senior management undertakes to:

- clarify the requirements for offering a valid resubmission opportunity.

## **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)*

### **Ellesmere College has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation.**

Teachers:

- are clear in their understanding of the school's internal moderation critiquing and verification expectations
- carryout and document the internal moderation process before results are reported to NZQA
- engage with subject specialists from within and outside of the school, through cluster groups and on-line means, to verify assessor judgements.

The Principal's Nominee:

- requires Heads of Learning Areas to ensure internal moderation is completed and documented for all standards assessed in their learning area prior to reporting results to NZQA
- regularly monitors internal moderation completion and documentation by reconciling completed coversheets received against assessment statement plans
- uses the moderation coversheets to review the robustness of the verification process including who the verifier is
- supports Heads of Learning Areas to develop effective digital and paper storage processes so that samples of student work are readily available for external moderation.

### **Ellesmere College has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:**

- selecting samples of student work for external moderation randomly to NZQA requirements
- reviewing Industry Training Organisation moderation reports as part of the school's response to external moderation
- ensuring teachers have Education Sector Logins and training them to use the online Moderation Application to prepare material for submission, view moderators' reports, request clarifications and make appeals.

**Clarification of verification sample recommended** The school is encouraged to clarify the strategic selection of work for verification. Heads of Learning Areas described verifying work at grade boundaries in addition to a random selection of eight samples. This practice has the potential to increase assessor workload.

The verification sample is not fixed or predetermined. The sample size should be influenced by assessor experience, number of students assessed, external moderation feedback and number of grade boundaries. The strategic selection of a

verification sample has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process.

**For consideration**

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

- clarifying strategic sample selection for internal moderation verification.

## 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)*

### Ellesmere College effectively:

- **uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:**
  - monitoring student progress, and identifying to the Academic Coordinator who facilitates appropriate support for those at risk of not achieving Level 1 literacy and numeracy or a qualification
  - teachers and Deans using the estimated credit function on the student management system to predict student achievement and then monitoring progress
  - annually reporting to the Principal and Board of Trustees an analysis of NCEA achievement data by gender, ethnicity and against national and decile statistics.
- **reports accurate achievement data by:**
  - timely and accurate reporting of internal results and external entries to NZQA, that have been checked by students and staff to ensure all internal entries have a result reported and minimal late external entries
  - only reporting grades for standards where the school has Consent to Assess
  - reconciling memoranda of understanding annually against outside providers whose code is used to report results
  - resolving errors shown in NZQA Key Indicators and data submission errors.

**Review of analysis of NCEA achievement** In 2019 the Principal, who is new to the school, is planning to provide Heads of Learning Areas with pre-analysed NCEA achievement data. This change is to enable them to focus on interrogating, interpreting and reflecting on the analysed data to inform changes to assessment programmes, identify barriers to student achievement and reflect on ways to address student needs now and in the future.

Senior Management consider that the change to providing analysed data with focus questions will enhance the effectiveness of the analysis and result in a more efficient use of Heads of Learning Areas time.

NCEA Learning Area reports identified student literacy, including those for whom English is a Second Language as a barrier to student achievement particularly in subjects where there is a specialised subject language. Teachers have responded to this barrier by providing additional literacy support and differentiated resources.

### 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))*

### **Ellesmere College has effective processes and procedures for:**

- supporting students to take ownership of monitoring their qualification progress by providing online access to the student management system
- providing students with consistent assessment programme information using a common template generated from the student management system
- promoting the availability of financial assistance to support those eligible to make an application.

### **Ellesmere College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:**

- using targeted individual assistance, emails and updated relevant documents to ensure staff and Heads of Learning Areas are aware of and understand the school's NCEA policies and procedures
- using a buddy system to support new Heads of Learning Area understand the school's NCEA assessment procedures
- using Heads of Learning Area and staff meetings to clarify changes to school procedures and expectations, and facilitating discussion on good assessment practice
- engaging with whānau by phone calls, emails and learning conferences to support them to understand NCEA, school processes and their students' qualification progress and how they can give support at home
- improving parental understanding of NCEA and assessment procedures through targeted evening meetings.

The students interviewed had a sound knowledge of the school's assessment procedures and what is needed to gain an NCEA qualification and University Entrance. They were aware of how and where to access NCEA information and acknowledged the advice and support staff provided to assist them to achieve their qualification goal.

**Access to NCEA information** A *New student NCEA information pack* has been developed in response to the increasing number of students entering the school, including those for whom English is a Second Language, and the identification of the need to ensure they are aware of the school's NCEA processes.

To augment the accessibility of assessment information for parents, students and staff on-line communications modes have been reviewed and further developed, and now include the use of the School App and texts for alerts.

### **Clarification of further assessment and resubmission terminology is suggested**

To avoid confusion it is suggested that the terms resubmission and further assessment opportunities are used rather than 'resit' to ensure consistency with NZQA and to support understanding.

**Amendment to staff and student handbooks** The staff and student handbooks have been reviewed and updated. They support consistent assessment practice by containing relevant plain English information. The school agreed that when the handbooks are next updated to include that students can appeal any assessment decision

**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.