

Managing National Assessment Report

**Timaru Girls' High
School**

September 2024

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Timaru Girls' High School

26 September 2024

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 to five years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of Covid-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2024.

Actions and considerations

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	
Strengthen external moderation follow up for required standards.	Immediate and ongoing
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Create fuller guidance on the required steps for both external and internal moderation in the staff handbook.	For the new school year and ongoing
Internal moderation to ensure the reporting of credible results	
Strengthen monitoring of internal moderation.	Immediate and ongoing

For consideration

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

- reviewing documentation relating to the management of authenticity.

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12 November 2024

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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 12 March 2020 Managing National Assessment Report Both agreed actions from the last Managing National Assessment review have been addressed by senior leaders:

- clarifying teachers' understanding of NZQA's resubmission requirements through regular reminders of the correct practice and updating the staff handbook accordingly
- reminding staff to verify student work around grade boundaries and ensuring all staff are aware of NZQA's verification requirements for sufficiency, albeit recognising that teachers will be verifying more Level 1 work than usual until grade boundaries are established for the new standards. The school should provide guidance in the staff handbook regarding the type and number of pieces to select for internal moderation.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes At the last Managing National Assessment (MNA) review, the school's documentation of the external moderation process met requirements, but some of this good practice has not continued. Although the school has carried out external moderation follow up, this has not been carried out consistently, nor has it been well documented. The school is advised to use the template provided during the review to document the follow-up for all Not Consistent and Not Yet Consistent external moderation reports and must retain a verifiable record of the process.

All the particulars need to be recorded on this template, including the actions the school determines it needs to take to resolve the issues identified by the NZQA moderator. This follow-up process should take place soon after receiving each report, so that the query or appeal process can be actioned within the following 30 days. Once the process has concluded, each report and its response form need to be filed centrally, so that they can be accessed by senior leaders and future assessors of the standards.

Reinstating quality assurance audits of departments is strongly recommended as the overall quality of the school's external moderation has been less consistent since 2020 and fell quite sharply in 2023. Spot checks of the critiquing step taken by the Learning Areas for standards that have been found to be Not Consistent, or Not Yet Consistent, may help clarify what actions are needed to resolve issues identified by NZQA moderators. If this is not the issue, then the school may need to consider a change of verifier. Sharing ownership of this level of response with the Learning Area Heads (LAHs) will help distribute responsibility for the quality of assessment and moderation across all middle leaders. The Principal's Nominee can use the audit to evaluate the effectiveness of previous action plans and this effectively closes the moderation cycle for those standards.

Effective response to derived grade outlier reports At NZQA's request, the school carried out a detailed and thorough analysis of its outlier subjects and accounted for the variance cited the reports.

The school is more confident about the stability of staffing in the Learning Area affected. It was this factor which contributed to much of the variance exhibited in 2023, including:

- the loss of teaching and assessment time due to teacher strikes,
- prolonged, post-COVID illnesses affecting staff and students, and
- loss of permanent specialist staff.

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)

Timaru Girls' High School (TGHS) is using its own processes of self-review based on data analysis and staff, student and community voice to build teacher capability and implement changes that will continue to improve assessment outcomes for all students.

The school has long valued academic success, which together with recent measures to better support staff/student well-being, drives improvements to systems and processes. In 2023, the school maintained Level 1 and 2 NCEA pass rates above those of comparable schools and schools nationally. Similarly, NCEA achievement outcomes for Māori students were better than those of their counterparts in comparable schools and schools nationally. The aim is to better engage an increasingly diverse student population and school community.

Three of the school's current strategic goals are to improve Merit and Excellence endorsements, achievement outcomes at Level 3 and to match or exceed the number of University Entrance (UE) awards nationally. The current Strategic Plan itemises a range of strategies to achieve these outcomes including:

- making course and certificate endorsement opportunities and benefits more visible in classrooms
- revisiting progress towards these goals at every LAH meeting
- raising expectations regarding endorsements and academic aspirations and actively tracking progress with more frequent monitoring and mentoring
- identifying students capable of attaining UE, Level 3 and New Zealand Scholarship earlier
- making better use of Māori and Pacific students' voice
- rebuilding a collective appreciation of the value of external assessment
- continuing to celebrate academic success with a range of honours badges and awards, as well as finding new culturally inclusive ways to celebrate success with students and whānau
- building teacher capability so lessons are engaging and meaningful.

In 2025, the school timetable will move from a six-period to a five-period day. The catalyst for this change was prompted by feedback from staff about burnout and loss of effective teaching time in the previous iteration. Senior leaders believe this change will give teachers more time to teach, improve well-being and make better use of a planned, extended Āko time.

Planned improvements for extended Āko time Changes to the school's Āko programme will be fully implemented across all year levels by 2027, with Years 9 to 10 continuing and Year 11 introduced in 2025. There will be a focus on assessment for NCEA in Years 10 and 11.

At Year 11, Āko teachers will spend more time preparing students for the different modes of NCEA assessment, including enhancing students' digital/computer skills and delivering lessons that are careers/pathway related.

Year 10s will receive targeted upskilling of their literacy and numeracy skills to support success in the digital online Common Assessment Activities (CAAs) for the NCEA Co-requisite.

Year 9 students will be offered a condensed, 10 week version of the careers-related "Become Me" programme.

The school has an increasing number of Year 12 and 13 students, who out of necessity have paid work commitments outside school to support whānau financially. As a result, many are time-poor and the school has responded by offering them the opportunity to use their Āko time for study or completing NCEA assessments.

These same socio-economic dynamics and demographics also influence students' selection of internal versus external standards. Where students opt for programmes that are weighted more towards internal assessment, this is often because of the flexibility it offers to juggle competing outside commitments and maintain the quality of their grades.

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)

Collaboration with other local schools supports student success A unique feature of the school is its relationship with Timaru Boys' High School. Each school is able to optimise its staffing to offer a range of subjects that the other does not, and students are transported to attend classes at the other school accordingly. This reciprocal arrangement extends the ability of both schools to meet more students' needs, interests and aspirations. This collaboration also strengthens ties for internal moderation verification and sharing of assessment practice. Timaru Boys' High School has agreed to follow the school's new timetable from 2025, so students attending classes at the other school will not be disadvantaged by the change.

Mid and South Canterbury schools frequently collaborate with each other to support the needs of students for assessment opportunities where a school cannot offer a course, a subject or a particular standard. This spirit of collaboration extends to professional support by teachers for teachers with clusters of subject experts providing subject expertise, sharing Best Practice strategies and offering external verification as required. Two collaborative initiatives in response to student need are:

- the introduction of a new Foundation Skills course at Year 11 in 2025, designed to re-engage priority students in learning and their NCEA journey. The course will require an extension of the school's Consent to Assess and is modelled on the New Zealand Certificate of Foundation Skills course developed by another local Canterbury school

- in collaboration with Timaru Boys' High School and Mountainview High School, Timaru Girls' High School will offer an intensive English class for students who have recently migrated to New Zealand to address these students' linguistic and other educational needs.

Personalised tracking supports every student's qualifications and pathway goals There is a rough rule of thirds for the destination of Timaru Girls' High School leavers. A third go to university, a third to employment and a third to other tertiary or work-based training. Wherever possible, the individual needs of the student are met by:

- encouraging and enabling multi-level study or creating personalised programmes, as required
- creating opportunities to pursue specific, or blended pathways
- having Deans and Deputy Principals, as well as Careers and Gateway staff, provide wrap-around support using centralised systems to track and monitor each student's progress
- creating Action Plans for students "at risk."

Resubmission practice ensures credible assessment Since the last MNA review, there is a much better understanding of the nuances around the application of the resubmission rules and the practice is monitored effectively by Learning Area Heads.

Robust authenticity checks in place for internally assessed standards The school places a high value on academic integrity and has extended its repertoire of plagiarism/AI detection software and keyboard tracking tools to combat breaches of authenticity. Regular checks of document version history, as well as mandatory checkpoints for assessment carried out over time, enable teachers to address any malpractice early and redirect the students by clarifying authenticity expectations with them. Consequently, there are very few breach investigations resulting in a Not Achieved grade. The school is currently reviewing its authenticity documentation and practice to ensure students and whānau better understand the ethical importance of academic integrity. This is a response to the recent proliferation of Artificial Intelligence tools now at students' disposal, either through deliberately accessing tools, such as, ChatGPT, or inadvertently accessing assistive tools automatically enabled through browser extensions.

Extension process needs strengthening The school has clear guidelines and processes regarding the issue of extensions for missed or late assessment. There is a "Green Form" that must be used by students and teachers to support requests for extension and these ought to come back to the Principal's Nominee for checking, approval and monitoring. The Principal's Nominee became aware she needed to strengthen this process to protect the credibility of assessment when she received fewer Green Forms than usual over the past year.

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)

Strengthen monitoring of internal moderation The Principal's Nominee is encouraged to share ownership of the Quality Assurance of assessment and internal moderation with Learning Area Heads. For this to be effective, it is vital that they monitor internal moderation through the same lens as the Principal's Nominee.

Where a LAH is the sole teacher of a subject, they have built effective links with subject experts in other schools. This is particularly true in the case of Performing Arts subjects, where assessment is often delivered and/or verified off-site.

In 2025, the school plans to use the moderation tool in the student management system. This will create better visibility of the process and enable the school to manage and monitor Internal Moderation more effectively.

To ensure that this distributed leadership model continues to deliver compliant, consistent and credible assessment practice, checks on the internal moderation critiquing and verification steps need to be strengthened. The Principal's Nominee has indicated that they will outline the requirements of the critiquing and verification steps in the staff handbook.

Ensure the critiquing step is effective The Principal's Nominee needs to reinstate an annual audit of assessment and moderation in each Learning Area to reconcile a sample of internal moderation cover sheets with actual practice. Pre-moderation documentation should be shared with the person verifying the assessor's grades and be stored securely until the standard is assessed again.

Notwithstanding the influence of external factors on the quality of external moderation outcomes such as, staffing issues, or disruptions to teaching and assessment through illness and adverse events, external moderation reports commonly point to the need for assessors, and verifiers, to access more of the assessor supports available to them through:

- NZQA's learning management platform, Pūtake, and
- the clarifications, National Moderators' reports, and the exemplars published on the relevant subject resources page of the NZQA website.

Learning Area Heads need to ensure that all assessors have access to available assessor support and can navigate their way around the MOE and NZQA websites and understand how they are differentiated.

Ensure the verification step is effective Before results are sent to NZQA, the LAH or Principal's Nominee needs to review the completed internal moderation cover sheet and check that:

- the verifier is a suitably qualified, subject expert with recent successful experience with the standard, and
- the number of pieces internally moderated is sufficient and verification discussions are recorded.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Timaru Girls' 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 targeted support for students at risk of not achieving literacy and numeracy or their qualification goals.

Timaru Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- 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
- assuring valid, verifiable and standard-specific evidence is collected for derived grades
- safeguarding student privacy in the issuing of student results.

Effective internal and external moderation to assure assessment quality

Timaru Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- 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.

Timaru Girls' 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.

Effective management and use of assessment-related data

Timaru Girls' 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.

Timaru Girls' High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- ensuring that data files are submitted to NZQA in a timely manner so that NZQA holds up-to-date data
- 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
- ensuring low levels of late external entries, and internal entries with no results
- 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 families / whānau about assessment

Timaru Girls' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- keeping assessment-related communications current and accurate, and reviewing communications to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- 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, by holding assemblies and parent gatherings and issuing honours badges and awards.

Timaru Girls' 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 Timaru Girls' 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 families / 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 2024*.

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:

- a range of curriculum and achievement policies
- a sample of 2023 Learning Area reports to the Board of Trustees
- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Timaru Girls' High School New Zealand Qualification Authority ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES 2023* (Student Handbook)
- *Timaru Girls' High School New Zealand Qualifications Authority ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES 2024 - TEACHER INFORMATION* (Staff Handbook)
- *Timaru Girls' High School Strategic Plan 2023-2025*

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee / Deputy Principal
- Learning Area Heads for:
 - Arts
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences
 - Social Sciences (Absent but documentation supplied)
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Principal's Nominee/Deputy Principal 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.