

Managing National Assessment Report

Waitaki Boys' High School

May 2025

FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

Waitaki Boys' High School

8 May 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.

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 to:

Action	Timeframe
External and internal review	
Strengthen external moderation follow up.	Immediate and ongoing
Credible assessment practice to meet student needs	
Improve the accessibility and currency of staff and student handbooks.	Immediate and ongoing
Develop a process to ensure that all internally assessed entries have a result or are withdrawn.	Prior to 1 December annually.
Ensure that quality assured grades based on standard-specific evidence are reported to NZQA for use as derived grades.	Prior to the end of year examination round annually.

For consideration

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

- providing identified students with a paper copy of the numeracy Common Assessment Activity (CAA) assessment to minimise barriers to their success.

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28 May 2025

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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 18-19 October 2021 Managing National Assessment Report

The school has resolved three of its four agreed actions by:

- ensuring the procedures and protocols for protecting the security of examination papers are strictly followed. During the end-of-year examination period, access to stored examination papers is strictly limited to the Principal's Nominee and the Exam Centre Manager
- monitoring internal moderation to ensure the critiquing process is both credible and thorough, while sharing responsibility for this oversight with Heads of Department, and
- using suitably qualified subject specialists to verify grades awarded on a sample of internally moderated work.

The previous action *to provide clear and consistent information about further assessment opportunities* will be addressed when the current action *to improve the accessibility and currency of staff and student handbooks* has been resolved.

External moderation response to outcomes and processes The school is compliant and has an established process for ensuring that grade judgements reported as *Not Consistent* or *Not Yet Consistent* with the standard are followed up with an action plan. However, there are several ways that the school can strengthen the quality of its follow-up process, which are outlined below.

This review identified three common issues in a selection of the school's 2024 and 2025 *Not Consistent* and *Not Yet Consistent* external moderation reports. In future, assessors of these standards need to do some, or all, of the following:

- provide more consistent and detailed evidence at each grade
- ensure better alignment with curriculum levels, and
- improve utilisation of available guidance and support resources.

As recommended in previous Leading National Assessment seminars, Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge now share ownership with the Principal's Nominee for the monitoring and management of external moderation follow-up. However, the Principal's Nominee is still required to evaluate the effectiveness of each action plan in resolving the issues identified by NZQA moderators. The *CAAS Guidelines 3. iv* states that schools must evaluate whether the follow-up to external moderation has "*achieved the desired outcomes*." This includes addressing and resolving any patterns of inconsistency that emerge over time. The Principal's Nominee may require subject leaders to:

- source additional professional learning and development in subject areas with a pattern of inconsistency, and/or
- advise assessors in poorly performing standards or subject areas to use the Query and Appeal functions in the External Moderation Application to clarify understanding as required, and/or
- resend student evidence when NZQA moderators cannot access digitally sent materials and/or

- use an external verifier with recent, consistent experience with the standard to internally moderate a standard in a poorly performing standard or subject.

The Principal's Nominee also needs to be aware of how well assessors access available assessor support through:

- NZQA's learning management system, Pūtake
- NZQA's subject webpages, including reference to the exemplars, clarifications and the National Moderator's report, and
- for Level 1 achievement standards, the Ministry of Education's NCEA website.

The Principal's Nominee could use their annual check of each department's quality assurance processes to reconcile documentation on the internal moderation cover sheets in the student management system with actual practice, and complete their evaluation step, thereby closing the moderation cycle for affected standards.

To support future assessors of standards that have required an action plan in the past, Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge could ensure a copy of the external moderation report is centrally stored online with its evidence and action plan for ease of access. These interventions and more consistent practice will enable the school to improve its external moderation outcomes and ensure any patterns of inconsistency do not persist.

Outcomes from additional moderated standards The school had two additional standards requiring work from 2024 to be sent for external moderation. Both were found to be *Not Yet Consistent*. Although the school used an external verifier for one standard and the assessor reciprocated by moderating the verifier's work, the resulting *Not Yet Consistent* report generated questions, which were not followed up by using either the Query or Appeal process. The assessor and verifier could share their reports to strengthen their understanding of their respective outcomes.

The other Level 3 standard was assessed by a relatively inexperienced assessor. The school is confident that the return of a more experienced practitioner will resolve the issue regarding the appropriate level of detail required to meet the Achieved grade criteria. In this instance, the school needs to examine the choice of verifier and the verification process to determine how verification can be strengthened.

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)

Waitaki Boys' High School has a continuing focus on ensuring all "learners are fully engaged in their learning and teaching to achieve success." Since the last review, the demographics of the student population have changed, and the school has responded by adapting its practices to accommodate students' changing needs and qualifications goals. The school is using its own processes of self-review based on data analysis and staff/student voice to review programmes and implement changes designed to reduce barriers to success for all students.

In response to a range of different factors (staff and student feedback, changes to NCEA and a reduction in the number of leavers bound for university) the school no longer streams its junior classes and has reduced the number of subjects senior students study from six to five. Most of the teachers and students interviewed were positive about the removal of streaming, noting that it allows the school to better manage student behaviour by creating class groupings that foster a more positive

and productive learning environment. The school believes mixed ability classes will result in improved morale, engagement, and well-being for students for whom streaming may have been counterproductive. The reduction in number of subjects has allowed the school to use period five each day for running assemblies, whānau time, extra sport/well-being and the co-curricular *Inspire* programme.

The school reviews its achievement data at year end, as well as reporting to the Board of Trustees during the year. Deans at each year level are responsible for tracking student progress and identifying learners *at risk* of not reaching their qualifications goals. As part of their Professional Growth Cycle, each Head of Department meets with a member of the Senior Leadership Team twice annually to review and reflect on progress towards department and personal goals.

Common Assessment Activities external assessment reviewed The selection of students entered into the literacy and numeracy Common Assessment Activities (CAAs) has changed over time. In 2022, the school entered all students in year 10 or above without the NCEA co-requisite, whereas in 2025, the school has taken a more strategic approach, with most of year 10 sitting numeracy in the second assessment opportunity to address the readiness of this cohort.

At years 10 and 11, the school has dedicated Mathematics and English classes with a primary focus on numeracy and literacy, to support students identified as being *at risk* of not meeting the NCEA co-requisite requirements. Year 11 mainstream Mathematics and English classes do some preparation for the CAAs each week, with these classes differentiated in terms of how many Level 1 standards they offer.

The school effectively tracks students *at risk* of not completing their NCEA co-requisite and ensures this priority group has an alternative pathway through the additional tagged standards to meet the NCEA co-requisite requirement. In 2025, the school is working with other agencies to monitor, manage and report on the relatively low number of senior students without either the Literacy or Numeracy component of the NCEA co-requisite. The focus is on improving outcomes for year 12 students and leavers. This intervention includes regular professional learning and development to improve the capability of teachers leading literacy and numeracy initiatives across the school.

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 2025)

Withdraw internal entries without a result before 1 December The school had a higher number of internal entries with no result recorded in 2024 compared with previous years. Although there are checks of entries and results at key times during the year, these processes need to be more robust and carried out more frequently to ensure that each student's entries and results are accurate for the purpose of tracking progress towards their achievement goals. During this review, the Principal's Nominee identified that the school needed to strengthen its checks of entries and results and will share ownership for this with Heads of Department.

Additional support for Common Assessment Activities (CAAs) During this review, a query was raised regarding whether year 10 students without Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) entitlements are eligible to receive a paper copy of their numeracy Common Assessment Activity (CAA). Where the school identifies a student experiencing anxiety or a similar debilitating response when engaging with the digital platform, a paper copy of the CAA may be used to reduce this barrier to

their success. The school may provide this entitlement where it feels this is justified, and this should be recorded to meet NZQA's requirements. Student's entitled to a paper copy of the numeracy CAA may need supervisory support if they use the digital platform for their responses, as the order of questions varies between the paper version and the digital version.

Ensure staff and student handbooks are up-to-date and fit for purpose This review identified that assessment-related staff and student handbooks need to be more effectively reviewed to ensure they remain current, accurate and fit for purpose. The staff and student handbooks are shared digitally with all staff and students. However, both handbooks contain material regarding a range of school processes outside the scope of NCEA assessment. The recommendation of this review is that this extraneous material is removed, so that the documents' sole focus relates to the communication of rules, processes and procedures around the delivery of NCEA assessment. This will better support teachers new to NCEA and ensure the handbooks are a reliable reference for both staff and students. The Principal's Nominee or their delegate needs to:

- strengthen relevant sections of these documents to provide better guidance on assessment matters and update information on NCEA processes, qualifications and awards, and
- remove contradictory, out-of-date content and any gaps identified during this review and the previous review.

The Principal's Nominee effectively uses a range of other channels and additional documentation to keep staff and students well-informed and maintain the credibility of the qualification.

Academic integrity and authenticity of student work strengthened In response to an increase in the number of breaches of authenticity being detected by teachers over the past few years, the school has invested in a secure platform for online exams and assessments. This upgrade will enable the school to detect plagiarism and breaches of authenticity with more confidence and mirror conditions for digital external examinations for the purpose of generating derived grades. The advent of generative Artificial Intelligence tools and add-ons will also necessitate updates in the staff and student handbooks, along with clearer guidelines for managing alleged breaches of authenticity and outlining the consequences for students when a breach is proven.

Clarify NZQA's requirements for creating, quality assuring and reporting derived grades Since 2022, NZQA has required all consented schools to document evidence of their quality assurance process for benchmark exams generating potential derived grades. The *NZQA Assessment Rules for Schools, TEOs assessing against Achievement Standards and NCEA Co-requisite Standards, and Candidates 2025, Schedule 2, clause 4.3* states, "derived grades must be from quality assured, pre-existing, valid, authentic, standard-specific evidence from a practice assessment of the Standard that matches the format and conditions of the external assessment."

An additional requirement in clause 4.1 is that "Schools...must submit to NZQA for external Standard entries, grades from quality assured Standard specific evidence, so that the Derived Grades are available if required for consideration by NZQA." The school is not yet fully compliant in this area, as derived grades were not received for all eligible external standards. The school will need to improve its process to send NZQA derived grades for unexpected events prior to the examination round in 2025. The school can use the *Reported Derived Grades for Unexpected Events* report, to check that derived grades have been submitted.

Documents for recording the quality assurance process used by each subject area have been shared with the Principal's Nominee and should be completed and stored so they are available at the next school Quality Assurance visit in 2026.

Moderation to ensure assessment quality

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 2025)

Ensure internal and external moderation is monitored consistently across all subjects The school has adopted the moderation tool in the student management system to manage its internal moderation. This provides Heads of Department and senior leaders better visibility of the critiquing and verification steps for each standard and enabling the responsibility for monitoring internal moderation to be shared.

As indicated earlier in this report, Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge share ownership with the Principal's Nominee for monitoring internal moderation and external moderation follow-up. This enables some of the Principal's Nominee's considerable workload to be delegated to others, while the distributed leadership model supports the development of assessor capability across the school.

With the number of people involved in monitoring moderation, it is important that they all view the monitoring process through the same lens as the Principal's Nominee, that is, with an eye to limiting any risk to the credibility of the qualification. Some schools incorporate an analysis of external moderation outcomes as part of their annual departmental review, which the school may wish to consider.

The external review section of this report provides guidance on how the management and monitoring of both processes can be strengthened. It is the external moderation reports that throw light on any shortcomings in the internal moderation process, and it is up to those responsible for monitoring moderation processes to ensure that action plans resulting from external moderation do resolve the issues identified by NZQA moderators.

School reports that were *Not Consistent/Not Yet Consistent* in 2024 - 2025, commonly point to assessors needing to access more of the available assessor support. This advice needs to be included in the follow up action plans and any future assessment of the standard. Prior to assessment, some teachers need to make better use of NZQA's assessor support on *Pūtake*. Some faculties showed evidence of very good practice in this area, ensuring assessors reviewed all the support available.

Heads of Department should ensure their teachers are familiar with the latest clarification documents for internally assessed standards, the National Moderators' reports and exemplars, and use these to ensure they have a clear and up-to-date understanding of the standard. Where required, teachers are encouraged to use the *Request Clarification of an Internally Assessed Standard* form to clarify their understanding of a standard before assessing it and following external moderation, to make better use of the *Query* and *Appeal* functions in the External Moderation Application.

Appendix 1: Effective Practice

Effective assessment practice to meet the needs of students

Waitaki Boys' 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 to offer courses the school is unable to offer
- using formative assessments and checkpoints to provide on-going feedback and feedforward information so students can present their best standard-specific evidence of achievement
- providing credible opportunities for students to complete the NCEA co-requisite
- 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
- implementing strategies to provide opportunities to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Waitaki Boys' 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
- ensuring teachers and students are aware of authenticity requirements including the use of Generative AI
- 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

Waitaki Boys' 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 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.

Waitaki Boys' 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

Waitaki Boys' 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.

Waitaki Boys' 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
- 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 about assessment

Waitaki Boys' 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.

Waitaki Boys' 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 Waitaki Boys' 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.

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
- a selection of departmental reports to the Board of Trustees
- *WBHS Annual Plan 2025*
- *WBHS 2024 Parent Student Handbook* (Student Handbook)
- *WBHS 2024 Staff Handbook* (Staff Handbook).

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Heads of Department for:
 - English (Assistant Rector - School Operations)
 - Mathematics
 - Social Sciences
 - Science
 - Technology
- Teacher in Charge of:
 - Gateway/Pathways
- four students.

There was a report-back session with the Deputy Rector (Student Welfare), the Assistant Rector (Teaching and Learning) 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.