

Managing National Assessment Report

Garin College

July 2021

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Garin 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 2021* (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
- *Administration Procedures and Policies Staff Handbook Garin College*
- *Student Guide to Assessment Procedures Garin College*
- *Garin College Policies on Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Head of Faculty for:
 - Arts
 - Gateway and Trades Academy
 - Physical Education and Health
 - Religious Education
 - Science
 - Social Science
 - Technology
- eight students.

There was a report-back session with the Assistant Principal – Curriculum Support 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

2 July 2021

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

At the request of NZQA and due to the restrictions of COVID-19, the school agreed to reschedule this review from 2020.

What the school is doing well

Garin College focuses on striving for excellence in academic achievement. Programmes tailored to student learning and assessment needs and an inclusive culture built on positive relationships are integral to student engagement and achievement success. Credible assessment underpins teacher practice. The consistently high student achievement at all qualification levels over past years provides evidence of the effectiveness of the school's approach.

Self-review is embedded practice and occurs at all levels of the school. Ongoing inquiry and commitment to improving outcomes for students are strengths of the school. Analysis of data, including student voice, informs self-review by allowing teachers to reflect on course and programme design. Effective leadership and a shared culture of meeting student needs has built staff capacity and school-wide collaborative ownership of effective NCEA assessment practice.

The newly appointed Principal's Nominee provides clear direction of assessment best practice and effectively manages and resolves issues to improve current practice. The Principal, Senior Leadership Team and staff work collaboratively to help students achieve.

Assessment practices are effective. The school has broadened the range of academic and vocational opportunities offered to provide relevant and engaging pathways for students. Teachers use a variety of evidence gathering methods and assessment strategies to assist students to present their best achievement evidence. The school has developed effective systems to ensure students eligible for special assessment conditions can access opportunities for achievement. Students needing acceleration for literacy and numeracy are identified and supported, in preparation for NCEA study.

The management of assessment is consistent and effective across faculties and was evident in student responses to interview questions.

Effective internal moderation processes are evident in the consistent practice identified during the review. Senior leadership have confidence that only credible results are reported to NZQA. External moderation outcomes are reviewed, and appropriate actions remedy identified issues.

The management of assessment data is effective, ensuring results reported to NZQA are timely and accurate. Student results are well tracked to monitor progress towards meeting personal goals and qualification attainment. As appropriate, support and interventions assist students to improve their assessment outcomes. Heads of Faculty analyse results data to reflect on the previous year's programme, to report achievement outcomes to the Board of Trustees and to inform future course design and strategic direction.

Regular communication of NCEA assessment processes by the Principal's Nominee provides clear expectations, clarifies changes of procedures and promotes school-wide responsibility for credible assessment practice. Frequent use of digital, face-to-face and written communication ensures assessment information is available across all levels of the school community and contributes to understanding of the NCEA.

Students interviewed for the review were well-informed about the NCEA and reported that teachers supported them positively to achieve.

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



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23 August 2021

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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 27 October 2017 Managing National Assessment Report

The three items identified for action in the 2017 report have been actioned.

Teachers and students have been updated regarding the change in grades available for resubmission and documentation revised. Staff and students interviewed described the relevant practice correctly.

The Principal's Nominee monitors the reporting of results assessed under Memoranda of Understanding with external providers annually, including ensuring the correct provider code is used.

The school's procedure for investigating possible breaches of the rules for internal assessment has been added to the relevant documents.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has an effective process to respond to external moderation.

Heads of Faculty complete a review sheet for standards where an issue has been identified by an external moderator. The Principal's Nominee, new in this role, intends to monitor the reviewed actions for completion and expected improvement in outcomes, and support teachers with professional development, if required. This is good practice.

Historically, the school has had high consistency rates between teachers and NZQA moderators providing assurance that internal moderation processes are effective.

Internal review

Evidence for the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

Review is driven by the collective desire of a stable and experienced staff to support students to achieve their personal best. The school sees review of its learning and assessment programmes and processes as the key to continuous and innovative development to best meet the needs of students. School-wide self-review is informed by data analysis and interpretation, and student and staff voice. Supported by senior leaders and teachers, the new Principal's Nominee is committed to further enhancing school-wide understanding and ownership of NCEA processes, to assure the credibility of assessment and the robustness of quality assurance.

As a consequence of their review processes, the school has put in place a number of teaching and learning strategies to address student need and to strengthen the consistency of assessment practice and quality assurance processes, including:

- staff professional development on assessment for learning, involving providing students with agency and understanding of their learning and assessment needs, to improve achievement
- reviewing the number of subjects studied, and credits offered in each course, with a focus on student wellbeing, quality learning and achievement, and engagement in externals. This review is ongoing
- taking a natural justice approach to missed assessments, by only reporting a Not Achieved result when the student has had an adequate assessment opportunity, removing the need to have a medical certificate as a potential barrier to access an extension, and reminding students on their assessment cover sheet that appeal of an assessment decision is possible
- making Heads of Faculty responsible for decisions of extension to deadlines for student work submission, recognising the consistent practice that currently occurs through collaboration with the Principal's Nominee
- reviewing resubmission and authenticity policies and procedures and informing students and whānau of changes in practice
- streamlining the storage of internal moderation documentation and the Principal's Nominee accessing for monitoring purposes
- establishing protocols for the storage of digital evidence to ensure it is readily available for external moderation submission
- engaging in pilot external assessment to prepare for future changes and digital examinations to match student everyday learning and assessment approach.

Advancing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Opportunities for Māori and Pacific students The school is committed to equity of qualification attainment and access to future opportunities of Māori and Pacific students relative to their peers, including in STEM subjects.

Reviewed practices and changes in STEM include:

- setting and expressing higher expectations for Māori and Pacific success supported by building strong learning relationships between teachers and students
- responding to student voice, providing coherent pathways in the senior school and reducing course credits to focus on deeper learning rather than credit accumulation
- including local Māori contexts within teaching and learning programmes
- tracking student achievement and uptake in STEM courses from Year 9 and removing restrictions to continued study
- led by the Careers Counsellor, greater focus on learners' understanding of STEM careers linked to learning programmes
- increased face-to-face teaching time of STEM subjects for all learners throughout the year and during the period leading up to external examinations

- engaging with Auckland University of Technology STEM Online programme for staff resources and student access to re-windable learning through video and written content.

The school's evaluation of the effectiveness of these changes identifies an increase in student engagement in STEM subjects over the past five years and surveyed students indicating they feel supported in their learning and for success. Further in-depth review of pathways and programme delivery is planned.

These developments highlight the school's strategic and innovative direction to support student achievement and ensure credible assessment practice. Strategies positively impact on student engagement and meeting student need, as evidenced by achievement outcomes.

No action required

No issues with the school's response to NZQA external reviews and/or its self-review of assessment systems and practice were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021 5.1 – 5.7)

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

- broadening academic and vocational assessment opportunities by engaging with external providers to meet students' abilities, interests and planned career pathways
- providing differentiated learning and assessment opportunities across classes in the same subjects, including offering courses that are internally assessed only and optional standards
- designing courses with learning contexts that are authentic, engage student interest and reflect the school's special character
- using formative assessment, milestone checks, feedback, and feedforward to assist students to present their best evidence of achievement
- extending the methods by which evidence of student achievement is collected, including from portfolios, naturally occurring, oral, presentation formats and digital, to reflect student strengths
- assessing students when they are ready through flexible timeframes, as appropriate
- identifying and supporting junior students needing additional literacy and numeracy support in readiness for NCEA
- providing challenge through supporting students to enter for New Zealand Scholarship
- motivating students by celebrating academic achievement through awards and acknowledgement of success.

Garin College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring consistent school-wide assessment practice on missed and late work, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- using a range of strategies to monitor the authenticity of student work, including student sign-off on assessment cover sheets
- modifying publicly sourced assessment tasks, and keeping commercial tasks secure
- ensuring derived and unexpected grades are based on standard-specific authentic evidence from practice examinations and assessments that have been subject to a quality assurance process
- managing NZQA pilot assessments and external examinations effectively
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 2020* when issuing student results and using student work as exemplars.

Students with special assessment conditions are well supported The school recognises the necessity of students accessing special assessment conditions to

remove barriers to their achievement. Consequently, the SENCO working alongside teachers has developed effective school-wide systems to appropriately identify eligible students, gather evidence to support an application for entitlement and to manage provision for assessment. School-based evidence removes the possible financial barrier of independent assessor reports that may prevent students accessing support.

Staff are well informed of student entitlements, including through students carrying individual cards to help ensure they are offered their appropriate SAC entitlements. Teachers also survey students prior to an internal assessment, to establish the appropriate assistance for that assessment.

The success of the school's approach is evident in the high proportion of students using entitlements in comparison to similar schools. Senior leaders report a growth in assessment confidence in eligible students and a positive culture of acceptance across all students.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2021 6.4b)

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

- ensuring assessment tasks reflect the standard by having amended or new tasks critiqued prior to use
- using clarification documents, benchmark exemplars and documented discussions on grade judgements to inform assessment decisions
- using department marking processes or appropriate subject specialists from inside or outside the school to verify assessor grade judgements for a sample of student work
- requiring teachers to document quality assurance processes on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* and digitally store completed sheets prior to reporting results to NZQA, to facilitate monitoring by the Principal's Nominee
- reconciling internal moderation documentation for a sample of standards by checking the information documented matches practice, and following up on any identified issues
- following the internal moderation processes of Industry Training Organisations.

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

- selecting student work to NZQA requirements, using the random generator on the student management system
- teachers suggesting appropriate standards to be considered for inclusion in the moderation plan
- clarifying and appealing outcomes to assist with understanding of the standard
- valuing moderator's feedback for professional learning to inform changes to assessments and assessor's judgements.

Reinforce verification requirements to reduce teacher workload NZQA expects that verification should involve checking sufficient samples of student work strategically selected at grade boundaries. Several teachers interviewed were verifying more samples of student work in their quality assurance of grades than required. In addition to student work selected at grade boundaries, samples were chosen randomly, or focused on a specific number per teacher or class size.

Reinforcing verification requirements with teachers has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. Verification does not require a fixed or predetermined number of pieces of student work. Factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed should determine the sample size.

For consideration

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

- reinforcing with teachers that verification should focus on a sufficient number of strategically selected material at grade boundaries.

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)

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

- Whānau teachers and Deans monitoring student achievement progress to identify students at risk of not achieving their chosen assessment pathway or qualification goals, and modifying programmes, as appropriate
- submitting unexpected event grades to NZQA
- supporting professional learning inquiries with a focus on assessment, including the NCEA Change Programme.

Garin College reports accurate achievement data by:

- actively encouraging students to use their NZQA Learner login to check reported results for accuracy and prepare for pilot and digital external assessment
- using a sign-off process with students to confirm the accuracy of the internally assessed grades reported
- timely and regular reporting of results to NZQA that have been checked for accuracy
- resolving any issues highlighted in the *Key Indicators* or submission error messages
- only reporting results for standards the school has consent for, or against the correct code of outside providers with whom the school holds current Memoranda of Understanding.

Effective data analysis to inform change Data analysis is used to inform and reflect on student engagement and achievement, strategic goals and the effectiveness of changes made.

Heads of Faculty annually report a reflective analysis of 'the story behind the statistics' for the prior year's achievement outcomes to the Board of Trustees. They report against faculty and school goals and include a review of the progression and effectiveness of action plans.

Faculty leaders also evaluate the effectiveness of learning and assessment programmes. Student need informs course design, teaching strategies and professional learning. Resultant changes include offering different modes of assessment, contexts and standards.

The school has strengthened the strategic use of data through the establishment of a Kahui Ako data management role. Data is interrogated for longitudinal and comparative patterns, such as low University Entrance attainment in a subject. Findings are shared with faculty areas and staff and reported to senior leaders. Targeted strategies are developed by faculty leaders to address unexpected performance and patterns, as needed.

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))

Garin College has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring assessment statements and other course materials provide consistent information for students
- reporting on students' goals and progress towards qualifications and University Entrance, including through the student and parent portal, reports and parent teacher evenings.

Garin College assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- using Heads of Faculty and staff meetings 'assessment spotlights' to clarify changes of assessment procedures or expectations, and facilitating discussion on assessment best practice
- supporting professional learning opportunities, collaborating with external subject specialist and attendance at NZQA Best Practice Workshops, when available
- publicly displaying NCEA information, including *The Myths* for ready access
- encouraging teacher use of their Education Sector Logon to access secure information and website functions
- supporting new Heads of Faculty and teachers through an induction programme on the school's assessment and moderation processes.

Assessment practice is well led The Principal's Nominee leads assessment practice with the Assistant Principal – Curriculum effectively. They provide clear direction and set high expectations to support ongoing improvement in assessment practice and student achievement. Strong leadership, role-modelling and regular communication and digitalising of NCEA assessment processes have promoted staff capacity and ownership of credible assessment practice. Staff acknowledged their professional respect for the senior assessment team and appreciate their knowledge and willingness to guide and support staff.

Students well informed about NCEA and school assessment practice

Students interviewed clearly articulated the school assessment practices, NZQA procedures, and what is needed to gain a qualification.

The Principal's Nominee presents NCEA information in tailored student assemblies and at NZQA Information Evenings for both parents and students. The information in the student assessment guide is up-to-date, concise and in language appropriate to the audience.

Students understood school processes such as resubmission, authenticity requirements, the right to appeal, moderation and derived grades. They acknowledged that the support given to them by staff enabled them to demonstrate their best work. This shows that communication to students about assessment and support are effective.

Update staff handbook to reflect changes to assessment practice Editing the handbook will ensure school and NZQA assessment information for staff is clarified, current and fully aligns with the context of the school and recent changes. This will provide staff with the same assessment information and supports school-wide consistent practice.

For consideration

To extend good practice in ensuring that information about assessment to students, staff and families is current and accessible, the school is encouraged to consider:

- update staff handbook to reflect current practice.