NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

NZQA

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review

NZQA
P 0800 697 296
E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz
www.nzqa.govt.nz

Published | September 2009

CONTENTS

Introduction

This document sets out the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) policies and guidelines for the external evaluation and review of private training establishments (PTEs), wānanga and institutes of technology and polytechnics. It describes a step by step approach to the conduct of external evaluation and review.

The approach to external evaluation and review is generic and applies across all non-university tertiary education organisations (TEOs), yet it is flexible in that it recognises the distinctive contributions of the institutes of technology and polytechnics, wānanga and other TEOs. In particular, the unique values and philosophy of wānanga in the New Zealand tertiary education system will be recognised.

At times, this current edition reflects specific details of NZQA's internal processes and roles which may vary from those developed for the external evaluation and reviews undertaken by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQuality) under delegated authority from NZQA.

The Legislative and Policy Environment

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 & 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all tertiary education organisations (TEOs) that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) & (e) of the Act.

The criteria and policies for private training establishment registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level, in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after initial approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration is granted. However, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for university compliance, and the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQuality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for the polytechnic sector compliance.

The Quality Assurance Framework

These policies and criteria are gazetted under the Education Act 1989. They provide for a quality assurance framework established by NZQA, comprising four components:

- initial entry processes of course approval, accreditation to deliver a course, registration of private training establishments and accreditation to assess standards on the National Qualifications Framework
- self-assessment
- external evaluation and review
- managing the consequences of poor performance.

The quality assurance framework uses the theory and practice of evaluation in order to focus on the quality of educational outcomes. Evaluation as a discipline provides a systematic basis for answering questions about quality and value. Its use in tertiary education provides a practical approach to focusing on outcomes and key contributing processes, using both qualitative and quantitative information.

Evaluative quality assurance draws on a wide range of international theory and practice, in particular mixed method and participatory approaches, to arrive at a robust process for reaching consistent and comparable judgements.

The following four principles underpin the quality assurance framework.

'High Trust and High Accountability'

Evaluative quality assurance operates in an environment of 'high trust and high accountability' throughout the tertiary sector. The relationship between government agencies and TEOs is based on good communication and collaboration.

A high trust environment recognises a TEO has autonomy over its own processes, with minimal Crown intervention, except in relation to undertaking its regulatory roles.

The government recognises that quality is the direct responsibility of each individual TEO and that the TEO is accountable for the educational outcomes it achieves and the ongoing improvement of educational performance.

In return for greater autonomy, the Crown needs to have a high level of confidence in each TEO. External evaluation and review is the mechanism that will determine those levels of confidence. However, if the performance of a TEO falls below an acceptable level, that organisation will be monitored more closely by central agencies.

Quality As A Dynamic Concept

Quality is dynamic and will look different in different contexts. In tertiary education, what matters is the value that learners gain from their learning experience, the utility of their qualifications and the extent to which positive, longer-term outcomes occur.

This dynamic concept of quality is consistent with international trends[1] where there is a shift from quality control (meeting input standards) to quality enhancement and striving for excellence. This approach emphasises the aspects of an education experience that generate better outcomes.

Every TEO will have an understanding of quality which varies according to the purpose and goals of the organisation. In the TEO context, quality relates to how well learners actually achieve and the extent to which that achievement meets both their needs and those of the wide range of groups and individuals that have a direct, formal and often economic interest in the work of TEOs.

A Focus On Outcomes

Traditional quality assurance has focused mainly on inputs, systems and activities. This assumes that doing these well provides an assurance of quality.

Evaluative quality assurance is focused on the outcomes of tertiary education and the key processes that contribute to these outcomes. A key difference from traditional approaches is that while evaluative quality assurance also looks at processes, it does so from the perspective of the utility or impact of these processes on what is done and achieved – the 'valued outcomes' of tertiary education.

Outcomes are affected by contextual inputs such as student characteristics, staff and resources. An important indicator of quality in practice is a TEO taking all reasonable steps to maximise learner achievement.

Flexibility

Evaluative quality assurance is flexible and designed to constructively respond to the distinctive contributions and character of the wide range of tertiary education organisations in New Zealand.

Like the concept of quality, it recognises that evaluation will look different in different contexts, while still retaining the required consistency of approach to evaluate performance credibly.

In particular, the approach to evaluation taken by the distinctively Māori organisations, notably Wānanga and Māori private training establishments, will directly reflect their values, beliefs and aspirations. Q

1 NZQA has summarised extensive international literature on quality assurance in higher and further education. These summaries are available on the NZQA website: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/tertiary/

Key Components

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment includes the ongoing processes a TEO uses to gain evidence of its own effectiveness in providing quality education.

Responsibility for effective self-assessment is organisation-wide, actively involving governors, managers, teachers and support staff. Effective self-assessment is integrated into the business so that informed understanding of what is being achieved directly influences organisational decision-making, prioritising, planning and actions. It impacts throughout the organisation to maximise organisational effectiveness at all levels.

Key Features of Effective Self-Assessment

Processes used for self-assessment should be comprehensive, authentic, transparent, robust, and focused on the following areas.

- **Needs assessment** - the extent to which TEOs systematically determine and address the needs of learners, employers and the wider community
- **Processes and practices** - the processes and practices that help to achieve outcomes e.g. the primary importance of good teaching or the role of effective learner support services.
- **Learner achievement** - the impact of educational provision on learner progress and achievement.
- **Outcomes** - what is being achieved and the value of that for learners, employers and the wider community.
- **Using what is learned** - self-assessment should result in evidence-based conclusions and decision-making that will feed into strategic and business planning, leading to positive change
- **Actual improvement** - the extent to which improvements are relevant and worthwhile.

External Evaluation and Review

External evaluation and review is a periodic evaluation of a TEO to provide a statement of confidence (judgement) about an organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It uses a systematic process to make independent judgements about the following.

Educational performance	is the extent to which the educational outcomes achieved by a TEO represent quality and value for learners and others. An evaluation of educational performance involves answering questions focused primarily on the quality of learning and teaching, and the achievements of learners.
Capability in self-assessment	is the extent to which an organisation uses self-assessment information to understand performance and bring about improvement. It reflects the extent to which an organisation effectively manages its accountability and improvement responsibilities.

External evaluation focuses most directly on the:

- extent to which the TEO systematically determines and addresses learner and wider community needs
- key processes contributing to the achievement of outcomes for learners
- quality of educational provision and its impact on learner progress and achievement
- achievement of outcomes for learners and the wider community (employers, industry, local or national interests)
- effectiveness of the TEO's self-assessment in understanding its own performance and using this for improvement.

Using Evaluation

An evaluative approach has some particular attributes, including that it:

- provides a systematic process for answering questions focused explicitly on quality, value and importance of tertiary education outcomes and key contributing processes
- applies a 'fresh eye' to TEO activities to validate effective practices, identify areas for improvement and recognise new and innovative ways of doing things
- focuses on needs assessment and 'met needs' as the basis for reaching conclusions about educational performance
- provides a robust basis for reaching judgements about educational performance and capability in self-assessment. This involves both quantitative and qualitative information, referenced within the TEO (through expectations) and externally (through benchmarking).

In addition, good practice in external evaluation and review:

- uses open and transparent processes which can contribute to improving self-assessment in the TEO
- actively engages the TEO using participatory approaches
- provides opportunities for the TEO to describe and explain its processes and outcomes, and for evaluators to fully understand what is happening
- validates the evidence a TEO uses to substantiate its conclusions about quality and effectiveness
- uses trained and competent evaluators with a wide range of experience in evaluating tertiary education to reach valid, comparable judgments about educational performance and capability in self-assessment. Q

Undertaking External Evaluation and Review

External evaluation and review uses evaluation methods, tools and processes to reach reliable and valid judgements about educational performance and capability in self-assessment. The following sections describe:

- evaluative tools developed for external evaluation and review
- evaluation methods and processes including guidelines to inform the conduct of each stage of external evaluation and review.

Tools for External Evaluation

The evaluative tools used in external evaluation and review are:

- key evaluation questions
- tertiary evaluation indicators
- performance criteria descriptors.

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)

There are six key evaluation questions that provide the structure and direction for the enquiry.

The key evaluation questions were developed as an integral part of an evaluative approach. The intention is to answer questions focused on 'what matters most' - the quality, value and importance of tertiary education in meeting the needs of learners and other relevant parties.

These high-level, open-ended questions focus on either the outcomes achieved or the key processes contributing to the outcomes.

Outcome Questions

These questions focus on the value of the outcomes achieved in tertiary education.

1. How well do learners achieve?

   Evidence of actual learner achievement, including, where possible, the progress or value-added component, is the primary indicator of effective educational delivery.

   The outcomes include both the immediate outputs of tertiary education represented by measures such as retention rates, course and qualification completion rates and the longer term outcomes for graduates in terms of employment, further study, and the social and economic contribution to the community.

2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders,[2] including learners?

   The priority group to consider here is learners. However, other groups are also important such as employers, business, and local and wider communities. These groups are the users of the 'educational products' of the TEO. The TEO should be able to identify how they know that the needs of these users are being met through the achievement of identified, relevant and important outcomes.

Process Questions

These questions focus on the quality and value of the key contributing processes in tertiary education.

3. How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

   Systematic needs identification and analysis provides the basis for programme design. This question focuses on the evidence of the extent to which needs are well understood and used as a basis for the design and delivery of programmes and activities to meet those needs.

4. How effective is the teaching?

   Research suggests that good teaching is the most important contributing factor to learner achievement under the control or influence of the TEO.

   Teaching refers to the broader learning and teaching context. It might include the use of 'on the job' training and/or work experience, technology and distance learning strategies as well the more conventional instructional classroom-based or campus-based activities.

5. How well are learners guided and supported?

   Support and guidance help to identify and respond to learner needs, and also provide a mechanism to actively engage and keep them engaged to the completion of their course and beyond.

2 'Stakeholders' can be different groups of people in different TEOs, but are likely to include some or all of: students, communities, employers, professional bodies and other relevant regional and national groups.

6. How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

   A whole-of-organisation approach to managing educational performance and organisational capability is likely to ensure that organisational systems, processes, policies and practices are aligned to this effect.

Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

The indicators provide a common understanding of the valued outcomes of tertiary education and the key processes likely to contribute to them. They are based on research and experience in New Zealand and overseas.

The tertiary evaluation indicators point to the possible evidence to be drawn on. Evaluators use the indicators to:

- understand what might be important and need to be looked at in the external evaluation and review
- develop enquiry questions for answering the key evaluation questions
- reach credible judgements by providing a description of 'what good looks like'
- identify strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for innovation where the evaluation team may have identified some areas in which the TEO could extend.

Performance Criteria

The performance criteria set out the definitions or explanatory guides for making judgements.

They describe the extent to which the tertiary evaluation indicators must be present to define the level of performance. Taken together, these provide the framework for reaching judgements in focus areas, and about educational performance and capability in self-assessment at TEO level.

Stages of External Evaluation

An external evaluation and review involves four key stages:

1. developing the scope and the plan of enquiry
2. undertaking the enquiry – on-site
3. making organisational judgements of educational performance and self-assessment capability – undertaken by the team
4. reporting the findings.

Each of these stages is explained in detail in the next part of this resource. Q

Stage One: Developing the Scope and Plan for an External Evaluation and Review

Initiating an External Evaluation and Review

An external evaluation and review is initiated through the scheduling process based on:

- a maximum period of four years elapsed since the previous external evaluation and review or quality audit
- TEO request e.g. following change of ownership in the case of a PTE
- a Quality Assurance Body (QAB) or other agency request e.g. thematic review, concerns over compliance and performance matters.

Determining the Scope of a Review

The Lead Evaluator is responsible for deciding the scope of the external evaluation and review, in consultation with the TEO. The scope determines the focus areas of the TEO's business which will be included in the external evaluation and review. It needs to ensure:

- that the depth and breadth of the external evaluation and review is sufficient to answer the key evaluation questions and reach robust judgements about the TEO as a whole
- the best use of the available resources. The evaluation team needs to be able to assure the TEO that the integrity of the review process is not compromised by the availability of resources. Effective planning is required to ensure the evaluation team uses resources wisely.

Reviewing Available Information

In order to identify possible focus areas the evaluation team requires a full understanding of the organisation. The range of information sources needed to obtain this understanding will include:

- self-assessment and other information (including strategic and annual plans) provided by the TEO. This includes an outline of the scope, main findings and actions of its self-assessment activities over the past years. The TEO decides the format in which the information is made available
- the TEO profile
- an investment plan (where available)
- relevant industry training organisation information
- performance information including:
  - baseline monitoring reports
  - discussion with investment teams
  - most recent annual report (TEIs)
  - moderation results
  - most recent audit or evaluation report
  - history of complaints
- requests from the TEO.

Determining the Number of Focus Areas

Table 1 presents a guide for estimating the number of focus areas. The number of focus areas is scaled to the size and complexity of the TEO, the programmes it provides and the resources available. The number of focus areas selected does not need to be statistically representative but should represent a 'reasonable proportion' of the TEO's activities.

It will also depend on the nature of the focus areas themselves i.e. there are likely to be more focus areas which are straightforward to evaluate and fewer where the focus area is complex or large.

Table 1: Proposed number of focus areas by size of TEO

TEO CHARACTERISTICS	INDICATIVE NUMBER OF FOCUS AREAS
< 20 students; 1 site; 1–2 courses	1–2
20–100 students; 1 site; 2+ courses	2–4
100–500 students; 1–2 sites; 6+ courses	3–6
500–100 students; + sites; multiple courses	6–8
1000 > students; multiple sites; multiple courses including degree programmes	8–10

Deciding Which Focus Areas to Select

Evaluators need to consider a balance between vertical and horizontal dimensions in conjunction with the factors outlined in Table 2. A selection of horizontal, vertical and mandatory focus areas make up the scope of an external evaluation and review where:

- vertical focus areas include programmes, courses, schools and faculties. This could possibly be the whole TEO in the case of small or specialist providers.
- horizontal focus areas include processes and activities that directly or indirectly affect learners and the quality of education, across multiple programmes or organisational activities, e.g. student support services, or governance and management.
- mandatory focus areas may be included to provide a common basis for reporting on priority areas identified by the Crown, government agencies, professional and employer groups or through consultation with the sector. Mandatory focus areas will be advised by Quality Assurance Bodies to TEOs.

Table 2: Factors to Consider in Selecting Focus Areas

GUIDING FACTORS	EXAMPLES
TEO self-assessment activities, findings and priorities	• areas the TEO has identified as possible issues or areas where the current performance is unknown • comprehensiveness and veracity of the TEO self-assessment • important or high stakes areas of TEO operation • pilot or new initiatives, especially if they are likely to be expanded • areas relevant to critical learner needs • areas where there is a likely impact on meeting student needs and/or where a large proportion of students may be affected
TEO type, size and complexity	Issues arising from complexity of the TEO through: • the type and number of approved and accredited courses • number of sites • nature of their distinctive contribution • delivery methods, for example, e-learning • number of staff • financial turnover and/or proportion of revenue from government funding.
Past and current performance issues	• areas where there is a record of previous problems • areas raised in monitoring reports, advice from Investment teams e.g. baseline monitoring reports (TEC) • previous low levels of confidence in the self-assessment • number and types of complaints to external bodies upheld • achievement in other credible quality assurance systems e.g. professional and registration bodies
Crown, agency, professional and employer needs and priorities	• Government funding priorities and concerns, national focus areas and areas of public interest • strategic priorities from national or regional perspectives • employers, industry groups and professional bodies may have specific areas of interest from external evaluation and review

Engaging with the TEO

Following the initial contact with the TEO, the Lead Evaluator should engage as early as feasible with key decision-makers in the TEO to discuss:

- the effectiveness of the TEOs self-assessment processes and results by reviewing examples provided by the TEO
- the reasons for the focus areas suggested by the TEO
- possible focus areas based on the monitoring and other information available to the evaluation team
- the preliminary scope for the external evaluation and review.

An important purpose of this preliminary engagement and review is to gain an initial understanding of the comprehensiveness and robustness of the TEO's self-assessment, as a source of evidence for the enquiry stage of the external evaluation and review.

Key decision-makers are likely to be the Chief Executive/Tumuaki along with the chairperson/director of the governing body and their nominees. The range of nominees will generally include governors, members of the management and academic teams and occasionally other interested parties.

A range of methods of engagement may be used including:

- telephone and email
- initial sessions during the enquiry when on-site at the TEO
- on-site or regional meetings held prior to the commencement of the external evaluation and review.

Recording the Provisional Scope

As scoping decisions need to be defensible, evaluators must record and explain the reason for selecting a specific focus area.

Preparing the Plan for the On-Site Enquiry

The plan of enquiry sets out the process for obtaining the evidence to answer the key evaluation questions in each focus area. It identifies the enquiry questions and the sources and types of information the team will use to undertake the evaluation on-site. The plan also includes the necessary steps for processing the evidence gathered into focus area judgements and TEO level statements of confidence, ready for drafting the report.

For each focus area, the plan of enquiry involves the 'what, who and how' aspects of the evaluation process.

- What is it that the evaluators need to find out to answer the relevant questions?
- Who do the evaluators need to talk to?
- How will the necessary information be gathered?

How to Plan the Enquiry

For each focus area, the evaluator(s) identify:

- the relevant key evaluation questions
- the proposed enquiry questions
- the likely or possible sources of information that will be required.

The tertiary evaluation indicators provide useful assistance for evaluators in identifying possible enquiry questions and evidence sources. An example is provided in Appendix Four.

The plan of enquiry incorporates a timetable showing a planned and logical process for each activity to be completed as part of the enquiry. The activities are:

- enquiry into the focus areas
- synthesising and recording judgements within each focus area.
- summarising and recording the evidence and reasoning underpinning the judgements
- synthesising and recording the TEO level statements of confidence for educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
- checking key emerging findings with the TEO as the external evaluation and review progresses.
- a 'meeting to conclude' the on-site stage where all key findings and judgements are discussed and clarified.

Evaluators discuss with the TEO the most effective and efficient ways of accessing and understanding the information required to answer the relevant questions. To achieve the best results for both the TEO and evaluation team, evaluators encourage the TEO to explain what the people in the TEO know, and how they use that understanding to bring about improvements.

Stage Two: Undertaking the On-Site Enquiry

The plan of enquiry guides the on-site component of the external evaluation and review. The plan needs to be flexible to respond to issues and questions as they arise.

The aim of the on-site component is to gather sufficient evidence to answer the relevant key evaluation questions for each focus area, using self-assessment information where possible.

Individual evaluators and the evaluation team record summaries of evidence and interpretations to reach judgements within focus areas and at TEO level. The team maintains a clear record of the team process and conclusions reached on-site before the report is drafted.

If the self-assessment information is robust, the external evaluation and review team should be able to rely on it to a significant extent to reach judgements about TEO performance and capability. If it is insufficient, the external evaluation and review team will need to make a more direct enquiry using other sources, including TEO staff and other relevant groups. Discussion between evaluators and the TEO is important in understanding the meaning and implications of documented information and reports.

Using Information from the TEO's Self-Assessment

The initial information source for the evaluation team is the TEO's self-assessment. The robustness and comprehensiveness of the self-assessment is reviewed to consider the scope, main findings and actions of the TEO's self-assessment activities over the past years. In particular, the level of detail with which the TEO has analysed and interpreted information, and how it has acted on it.

A TEO's ability to sufficiently answer enquiry questions will influence the level of confidence the evaluation team develop in its capability, as will major concerns about the credibility and reliability of the information. A more direct and independent approach is taken where TEO self-assessment is inconsistent or weak, or the results are not used effectively.

Where the TEO does not have good information about its performance, or does not effectively use the information that it has, evaluators will encourage the TEO to work with them to gather and interpret the information that is available. In more extreme circumstances, for example where the TEO is unwilling to work with the evaluation team or to make information available, evaluators may look directly at the information independently of the TEO. It is the responsibility of the TEO to explain what is happening in its programmes and activities to the evaluators.

The provisional scope may need to be altered part way through the external evaluation and review if unexpected circumstances arise during the on-site stage, for example, where new information or understandings emerge, or if misleading or incomplete information has been provided, possibly leading to skewed evaluation results.

Throughout the evaluative enquiry, evaluators need to consider the quality and utility of the self-assessment information, its interpretation and its use for bringing about improvement. The methodological question in this regard is:

> ***In this focus area, or for this key evaluation question, how well is self-assessment information used to understand educational performance and bring about improvements?***

Engaging the TEO On-Site

The evaluation team will engage with key decision-makers when arriving on site. The initial meeting provides an opportunity to discuss the scope for the external evaluation and review and consider how well the TEO's self-assessment activities meet the characteristics of effective self-assessment.

The evaluation team will discuss the conduct of the evaluation and expectations of both the team and participants from the TEO.

Evaluative conversations

Evaluative conversations are used to explore the meaning and context of the self-assessment information in order to answer the key evaluation questions. Evaluative conversations provide a mechanism to understand the quantitative and qualitative data and how it has been interpreted and used by the TEO, particularly as this may not be recorded formally in records and reports.

These conversations are more than a description of what is happening ('what is so?') – they extend to a discussion of why it matters and what its impacts are ('so what?'). It may also be necessary to discuss what might need to be done about it ('now what?').

In a well-conducted evaluative conversation the external evaluator will:

- use open-ended, exploratory questions to explore the effectiveness of the TEO's self-assessment
- explore how well the TEO identifies and meets the needs of learners and its communities.

Identifying Other Sources of Information

From evaluative conversations and analysis of the self-assessment, both strengths in performance and gaps in information or areas needing further clarification may be identified and lead to:

- evaluators becoming aware of aspects that the TEO itself may not know about
- identification of topics that the TEO has been reluctant to discuss
- the need to enquire more deeply or widely. This may require the evaluation team to source raw data and/or information from students and others who meet with the evaluation team.

To ensure data is reliable and valid it should be triangulated. Emerging findings can be triangulated through:

- analysis of the self-assessment
- collecting data from different sources, e.g. staff, learners, employers and other groups
- using multiple methods of data collection, such as interviewing, observing practice and reviewing documents
- using more than one evaluator to interpret the information/data.

Evaluators schedule formal and informal debriefing sessions to discuss the emerging answers and underpinning logic as they proceed. Agreement needs to be reached within the team on how these emerging answers will be discussed with the TEO. The Lead Evaluator is responsible for giving the TEO agreed formative feedback. It is important that relaying formative feedback to the TEO is managed cautiously to ensure the TEO receives consistent messages from the evaluation team.

Using the Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

Evaluators use the tertiary evaluation indicators to assist in the enquiry as they provide:

- enquiry questions
- relevant information and sources of evidence
- relationship between the outcomes achieved and the contributing processes and activities.

The tertiary evaluation indicators provide a basis for thinking about how quality and value may be identified. They allow a common understanding of what constitutes quality in the way TEOs operate and the outcomes they achieve. Using the indicators supports a consistent approach to evaluation across all TEOs and assists evaluation teams make robust judgements. Appendix One contains a table showing how specific indicators can be used as prompts for the key evaluation questions.

The tertiary evaluation indicators were developed using systems modelling research. They are based on up-to-date research and experience in New Zealand and overseas. The indicators include references to relevant educational research.

Information on the indicators can be found in the publication, *Tertiary Evaluation Indicators for Tertiary Education Organisations, 2009* and is also available on the NZQA website.

Rating Answers to the Key Evaluation Questions

Evaluation teams answer all relevant key evaluation questions in each focus area and then draw on the multiple sources of information collected and interpreted to make an indicative rating for the question. The answers are then rated according to the criteria in Rubric 1.

If there is insufficient information to answer the key evaluation question, either additional information can be sought or, if it is not available or inadequate to make a rating, a finding of 'insufficient evidence' may be recorded.

It is likely that where there is 'insufficient evidence' that there are significant implications for conclusions about the TEO's capability in self-assessment.

Rubric 1: Criteria for Rating Answers to Key Evaluation Questions

	CRITERIA FOR RATING ANSWERS TO KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Excellent	Performance is clearly very strong or exemplary in relation to the question. Any gaps or weaknesses are not significant and are managed effectively.
Good	Performance is generally strong in relation to the question. No significant gaps or weaknesses, and less significant gaps or weaknesses are mostly managed effectively.
Adequate	Performance is inconsistent in relation to the question. Some gaps or weaknesses. Meets minimum expectations/requirements[3] as far as can be determined.
Poor	Performance is unacceptably weak in relation to the question. Does not meet minimum expectations/requirements.
Insufficient evidence	Evidence unavailable or of insufficient quality to determine performance.

3 For example, many professional or registration bodies such as those for accountancy, nursing, medical radiation technology, and social work, have expected levels of performance or professional standards that graduates are required to meet.

Establishing an Evidential File

Comprehensive notes from interviews, any observations and comments on documents sighted must be recorded. The information that has been used must be documented and will form part of the evidential file collated on each external evaluation and review. Where the external evaluation and review team uses the TEO's own data, reports etc., the document referenced should be cited in the evaluation records with a statement on how the information was used. It is not normally necessary to retain a copy of the original source of information in the evidential file.

An evidential file is required to support the judgements the evaluation team has made as a result of the external evaluation and review. Documents in the evidential file must meet the standards required for evidence and may be requested through the Official Information Act, 1982.

NZQA has developed a series of templates for its use to document the findings of the external evaluation and review and record the process of reaching statements of confidence.

Meeting to Conclude the On-Site Stage of External Evaluation and Review

A meeting towards the end of the on-site stage is offered to the TEO to discuss and clarify key emerging findings and the basis on which they were reached. This meeting is intended to cover all significant findings likely to appear in the written report. The meeting itself, however, is not an 'oral report' in that it provides probably the last opportunity for findings and judgements to be discussed directly. The meeting helps ensure the written report contains no significant surprises and that findings and judgements are accepted and used constructively by the TEO.

Where possible, the meeting should include the people involved in the scoping discussions.

Stage Three: Reaching Judgements on Educational Performance and Capability in Self-Assessment

Once answers to the key evaluation questions in each focus area have been obtained, and the responses rated, the evaluation team progresses to synthesising ratings into organisational level judgements on educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

The following section identifies the three key steps and describes each sequentially. At each step, CORE, a tool for synthesis designed for external evaluation and review is used. A step-by-step guide to using the performance criteria rubrics is contained in Appendix Two.

An external evaluation and review team must be able to demonstrate how they reached their conclusions and cite the evidence used to support their judgements.

Steps to Reaching Organisational Level Judgements

1. Rate educational performance and capability in self-assessment in each focus area.
2. Rate educational performance and capability in self-assessment on each key evaluation question i.e. an organisational rating for the key evaluation question.
3. Reach statements of confidence in educational performance and capability in self-assessment at an organisational level.

The following are important points to consider in making ratings:

- emerging findings and judgements should be tested by discussing and clarifying interpretations of the evidence with the TEO personnel most directly involved and knowledgeable about the focus area
- evaluators should work collegially, meeting and discussing emerging conclusions, synthesising ratings and reaching statements of confidence as a team
- indicative ratings may change as the answers to all key evaluation questions are synthesised into an overall rating. For example, the evidence might suggest high performance on a key evaluation question that is not particularly important in the context of the overall performance

- evaluators should carefully distinguish between the rating levels and be prepared to explain and justify their conclusions to colleagues and the TEO on the basis of evidence and its analysis
- judgements must demonstrate a consistent understanding and interpretation of evidence based on the tertiary evaluation indicators and the performance criteria set out in the relevant rubrics
- the team should collectively reach all the major findings and judgements that will be included in the report
- the meeting to conclude the on-site stage of external evaluation and review should be used to explain, test and, if necessary, modify emerging conclusions with the TEO. Any modifications are made on the basis of further analysis of substantive evidence or explanation. This is not a negotiation process
- clear records of judgements, reasons and evidence are maintained, as these will form the basis for writing the report
- the designated writer for the report should provide the draft report for comment by the tertiary education organisation before final confirmation.

CORE

CORE is an approach for synthesising judgements designed specifically for external evaluation and review. Although other synthesis techniques may be appropriate, using CORE in external evaluation and review provides a consistent and transparent basis for reaching judgements.

CORE (synthesis) can be used at any stage of external evaluation requiring judgements based on multiple dimensions, data sources or types of evidence. It will be used to synthesise:

- answers from several KEQs to reach an overall judgement for a focus area
- judgements across key evaluation questions for the organisation as a whole
- judgements across all focus areas and from organisational level performance in answering key evaluation questions to produce statements of confidence in the educational performance or capability in self-assessment of the TEO.

Table 1: The CORE Approach

Concentration of ratings	Identify the mode and median ratings on the range. The ratings provide the initial baseline ratings which may be modified through the subsequent CORE steps.
Outlier ratings	Identify any outlying levels of really low or high performance, and whether this would cause a shift in the rating. High or very high levels of performance in some areas do not necessarily compensate for low levels of performance in others. Decide the appropriate emphasis to give to the more extreme performance ratings and determine if there is sufficient reason to raise or lower the 'concentration rating' based on consideration of any extreme ratings.
Reflection	Reflect on whether the important findings have been given the appropriate weight. Determine if the 'what is so?' and 'so what?' questions have been answered. Consider if the emerging judgement is credible and reflects common sense. Judgement, justification, impact – are evaluators clear about the judgement being reached? Is there sufficient evidence to reach the judgement and is the evaluative interpretation of the evidence plausible? and explainable? Why does this thing matter – what is the impact on outcomes? In context, how significant is this finding? Consider whether there are: • any other reasons for adjusting the rating • alternative explanations for an unexpected or extreme rating. The external evaluation team may review the earlier analysis and interpretation of information and/or adjust the final judgement. Differences in interpretations between evaluators and/or evaluators and the TEO can be discussed and alternative explanations explored.
Explanation	Identify the most critical and relevant findings that led to the judgement and which need to be reported. The report should contain sufficient information to substantiate the judgements that have been made and explain why the findings are important.

Rating Educational Performance and Capability in Self-Assessment in Each Focus Area

The ratings for the key evaluation questions are synthesised into an overall judgement in the focus area using CORE. The descriptors for the ratings of educational performance in focus areas provided below in Rubric 2.

Rubric 2: Criteria for Rating Educational Performance in Focus Areas

	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR FOCUS AREAS
Excellent	• Highly effective focus area in terms of both contributing processes and outcomes.[4] • Comprehensively meets the needs of learners and relevant groups. • Any gaps or weaknesses are not significant and are managed effectively.
Good	• Effective processes and outcomes. • Generally meets the needs of learners and relevant groups. • No significant gaps or weaknesses, and less significant gaps or weaknesses are mostly managed effectively.
Adequate	• Inconsistently meets needs of learners and relevant groups i.e. meets some needs and not others. • Some gaps or weaknesses that are being addressed effectively. • Meets minimum expectations/requirements[5] as far as can be determined.
Poor	• Focus area is ineffective, or has serious weaknesses. • Weaknesses not being addressed effectively or still require significant improvement to meet minimum expectations/requirements.

Rating Capability in Self-Assessment in a Focus Area

Once a judgement about educational performance in a focus area has been reached, the following question is asked and the response rated using the criteria in Rubric 3:

> ***In this focus area, how well is self-assessment information used to understand educational performance and bring about improvements?***

4 Refer tertiary evaluation indicators and the characteristics of effective self-assessment.

5 For example, many professional or registration bodies such as those for accountancy, nursing, medical radiation technology, and social work, have expected levels of performance or professional standards that graduates are required to meet.

Rubric 3: Criteria for Capability in Self-Assessment in Focus Areas and Across KEQs

	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR CAPABILITY IN SELF-ASSESSMENT
Excellent	• Clear evidence of effective self-assessment[6] used to gain a comprehensive (full) understanding of educational performance and bring about wide-ranging, worthwhile improvements. • Any gaps or weaknesses in self-assessment are not significant and are being addressed effectively. • In this context, self-assessment is clearly part of a coherent and comprehensive approach across the TEO.
Good	• Good evidence of effective self-assessment used to understand educational performance and bring about many worthwhile improvements. • No significant gaps or weaknesses in self-assessment, and less significant gaps or weaknesses are being addressed effectively. • In this context, self-assessment is part of a reasonably coherent and comprehensive approach across the TEO.
Adequate	• Self-assessment is of inconsistent quality and/or used inconsistently to understand educational performance and bring about improvements. Some improvements may be occurring but somewhat haphazard. • Some significant gaps or weaknesses in self-assessment but being addressed. Not yet clear if improvements are sufficiently effective. • In this context, self-assessment is not part of a coherent and comprehensive approach across the TEO.
Poor	• Self-assessment is ineffective, or has serious weaknesses. • Weaknesses not being addressed effectively or still require significant improvement to meet minimum expectations.

6 Refer tertiary evaluation indicators and the characteristics of effective self-assessment.

Organisational Rating

Rating Performance on Key Evaluation Questions Across the Organisation

The ratings for the key evaluation questions in individual focus areas are synthesised into an overall rating, across all focus areas, sampled across the organisation (using CORE). For example, if there are four focus areas, the four individual ratings for KEQ 1 are synthesised into an overall rating for that question, repeated for KEQ 2, and so on for all six key evaluation questions. The descriptors for the ratings of performance in individual key evaluation questions are provided in Rubric 1.

Rating Capability in Self-Assessment across Focus Areas

Rubric 3 is also used to rate capability in self-assessment based on the key evaluation questions in all focus areas across the organisation. This is done by answering the methodological question:

> *In the context of the key evaluation question across the TEO, how well is self-assessment information used to understand educational performance and bring about improvements?*

Synthesising the answers and ratings across the sample of focus areas is an important stage. It means that evaluators can discuss transparently the evidence and reasoning leading to the judgements with both the evaluation team and the TEO.

In some circumstances, during the process of synthesising performance, it may become apparent that other areas of enquiry, beyond the formal scope, are needed to be made to confirm emerging findings. For example, if the rating on one key evaluation question across four focus areas is variable, evaluators might want to undertake some straightforward further enquiry into one or two other areas of the TEO's operation to assist them reach a final judgement.

Reaching Statements of Confidence on Organisational Educational Performance and Capability on Self-Assessment

Statements of Confidence

The organisational level judgements reached through external evaluation and review are expressed as statements of confidence.

It is not possible, nor defensible, to make a judgement about the overall performance of the organisation based on the sample of focus areas. This is because the sample is unlikely to be sufficiently representative or statistically significant. However, the sample is sufficient to support the conclusion about how confident the evaluation team is in the TEO's performance.[7]

Each statement of confidence is derived from two lines of synthesis. One synthesises judgements across the overall ratings in the focus areas. The other synthesises the judgements for organisational ratings across key evaluation questions. One line of synthesis is used to confirm or question the other as a means of ensuring maximum validity of the results.

Once an organisational statement of confidence is reached, the evaluation team applies the reflection and explanation steps of CORE to ensure the level of confidence is credible and can be robustly explained.

Reaching a Statement of Confidence in Educational Performance

The overall statement of confidence in educational performance is derived from two lines of synthesis (using CORE and Rubric 4):

- ratings across the key evaluation questions at organisational level
- ratings across the educational performance in focus areas.

The intention is that each line of synthesis reinforces, or calls into question, the conclusions reached from the other. Evaluators confirm or adjust the rating in light of the second rating to reach a final statement of confidence about educational performance in the TEO.

7 Careful scoping can improve the 'representativeness' of a sample.

Rubric 4: Criteria for Judgements About Organisational-level Educational Performance

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE	DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AT AN ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL
Highly Confident	ALL of the following: • Clear and comprehensive evidence that the organisation is meeting the most important needs of learners and other relevant groups. • Clear evidence of effective processes that contribute to learning and other important outcomes. • No significant gaps or weaknesses.
Confident	ALL of the following: • Good evidence that the organisation is meeting many of the most important needs of learners and other relevant groups. • Good evidence of adequate quality in the processes that contribute to learning and other important outcomes. • The body of evidence may not be comprehensive and/or clear enough OR the magnitude or range of outcomes may not be sufficient to justify a rating of *highly confident.* • Areas of weakness are not serious and are effectively managed.
Not Yet Confident	ALL of the following: • At least some evidence that the organisation is meeting the most critical needs of learners and other relevant groups. • At least some evidence of adequate quality in the processes that contribute to learning and other important outcomes. • EITHER, evidence of important outcomes and/or quality contributing processes is too patchy to justify a rating of *confident* OR evidence is sound but shows several important (but not critical) gaps or weaknesses. • Adequate plans are in place or are being actively developed to address areas of weakness but needed improvements in outcomes, outputs and/or their contributing processes are not yet fully apparent.
Not Confident	ANY ONE OR MORE of the following: • Insufficient evidence that the organisation is meeting the most important needs of its learners. • Evidence shows that some important needs are not being met to an acceptable level. • Plans to address gaps and weaknesses in educational programming, delivery or outcomes are insufficient, nonexistent or not being given high enough priority.

Reach a Statement of Confidence in TEO Capability in Self-Assessment

To reach a statement of confidence in TEO capability in self-assessment, two ratings are taken into account. The first is the ratings in the focus areas and the second is the organisation ratings on the key evaluation questions across the focus areas.

CORE is used to synthesise the ratings for capability in self-assessment on firstly the focus areas and then Rubric 5 is used to reach a statement of confidence.

Next, a statement of confidence is reached by synthesising the capability in self-assessment ratings on the key evaluation questions across the focus areas using Rubric 5.

The primary rating is confirmed or adjusted in light of the secondary rating to reach a final statement of confidence about educational performance in the TEO.

Rubric 5: Criteria for Judgements About TEO-level Capability in Self-Assessment

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE	DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE ABOUT ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY IN SELF-ASSESSMENT
Highly Confident	• The organisation has effective[8] self-assessment that evaluates all of its high priority programmes and activities on an ongoing basis, along with periodic reviews of other focus areas. • The quality and validity of the self-assessment information reviewed as part of the EER is consistently high. • Findings are used insightfully to make comprehensive improvements.
Confident	• The organisation has a wide-ranging self-assessment system in place that evaluates the majority of its high priority programmes and activities on an ongoing basis, along with periodic reviews of other focus areas. • The quality and validity of the self-assessment information reviewed as part of the external evaluation and review is generally good, although there may be some important areas where quality and validity should be strengthened in order to help justify a highly confident rating. • Self-assessment is purposeful and appears to be largely genuine. Findings are used to make useful improvements.
Not Yet Confident	• The organisation has a self-assessment system in place that evaluates a reasonable proportion of its high priority programmes and activities. • The quality and validity of most of the self-assessment information reviewed as part of the external evaluation and review is generally acceptable to good, although some important areas need to be strengthened in order to help justify a confident rating. • There is evidence of at least some genuine effort to use findings to make improvements.
Not Confident	• The self-assessment system is narrow and/or covers too few of the organisation's high priority programmes and activities; or • coverage and prioritisation may be adequate, but the validity or utility of evidence or conclusions are too weak to usefully inform decisions or improvements. There are critical weaknesses evident in the TEO's capability in self-assessment.

Q

8 Refer to the tertiary evaluation indicators and the characteristics of effective self-assessment

Stage Four: The External Evaluation and Review Report

Purpose

The purpose of external evaluation and review reports is to clearly set out the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, including the reasons why the conclusions were reached.

The report supports both accountability and improvement by assuring the multiple audiences of the level of confidence they can have that the TEO is delivering quality outcomes.

The report has multiple audiences which include:

- potential and enrolled students who want to know the level of confidence they can have in the quality of the programmes and the nature of the learning environment that the TEO provides
- the Tertiary Education Commission which needs to know the level of confidence it can have in the TEO's educational performance and capability for investment purposes
- the TEO which gains a more in-depth understanding about what is working well, what can be improved and/or possible opportunities for innovation
- accreditation and professional bodies which are assured that the requirements associated with approval and accreditation are being met.

The report is the product of external evaluation and review and is intended to be used by the TEO to maintain or strengthen its self-assessment and educational design, delivery, assessment and evaluation processes. The findings and judgements in an external evaluation and review report will also inform the scope of the next external evaluation and review when it is scheduled.

Style

The style of external evaluation and review reports is succinct and evaluative, not descriptive. The report will present significant findings including:

- strengths and areas for improvement
- judgements, justifications, and impacts
- any opportunities identified for new ways of doing things
- provide sufficient information for the TEO to use for ongoing improvement
- explain any implications for the TEO and relevant groups.

Information may be presented in tables and graphs to summarise information and clarify findings.

Report Outline

A series of standard statements (refer Appendix Three) will be included in each report on the:

- basis for external evaluation and review
- purpose of the report
- limitations of the report.

Brief Description of the TEO

This will contain:

- a statement of the location, type, size (by EFTS), sites
- TEO-supplied information e.g. programmes, kaupapa, learner characteristics (including ethnicity), nature of distinctive contribution
- a brief summary of previous report(s) and follow-up information
- other contextual information as relevant.

Executive Summary

The report's executive summary:

- outlines the purpose of the report according to the standard text
- presents the statement of confidence about educational performance, including a summary of the key findings and reasoning leading to this conclusion
- presents the statement of confidence about capability in self-assessment, including a summary of the key findings and reasoning leading to this conclusion
- summarises any recommendations made
- summarises any future action(s) as a consequence of the external evaluation and review report.

The Body of the Report

This part of the report will contain the following elements.

Findings

Standard text about the conclusions in the report being based on a sample of the organisation's activities.

Outline of scope

The scope of the external evaluation and review will be described, including the role of self-assessment information in informing the scope and the report findings.

The main body of the findings is presented in three distinct parts.

Part I

This section provides a picture of the TEO's overall educational performance as an organisation. The ratings to individual key evaluation questions in a focus area are reported at the TEO level across all of the focus areas evaluated. A description of the overall performance in each key evaluation question will be reported

The evaluation questions should be explicitly answered with an outline of the reasoning and evidence behind the findings.

The ratings are supported with examples of exceptional performance identified in the focus areas. Exceptional performance may be either strong performance or weak performance.

The standard sub-headings to be used are:

- 'Context', which describes the key features of the organisation in relation to the key evaluation questions
- 'Performance' – including examples of strong and weak performance.

Part 2

This section reports on overall performance in each of the focus areas including the mandatory focus areas.

The level of achievement of the most significant outcomes and contributing processes are described. Findings in response to individual key evaluation questions are reported and explained if exceptional performance is identified.

The standard sub-headings to be used are:

- 'Context', which describes the key features of the focus area and the use of self-assessment information and results for improvement
- 'Performance' – including examples of strong and weak performance.

Statements of Confidence

This section presents the two statements of confidence reached along with the evidence and reasoning used to reach them. This will be a description of the evidence and reasons built from the synthesis processes described in parts 1 and 2.

Recommendations

Not all reports will include recommendations. Whether or not recommendations are included will depend on the nature of the findings and on the level of confidence evaluation teams have in the TEO's ability to self-manage areas for improvement.

The report may include recommendations :

- of a general nature, which identify an area the TEO could consider in greater depth
- about straightforward issues, such as an obvious agreed gain that can be made from ceasing an unproductive practice or initiating a simple improvement to practice.

Draft Reports

TEOs will have the opportunity to comment on the report before final sign-off by the Quality Assurance Body and subsequent publication on the relevant website.

This provides a further opportunity to ensure that the report does not contain factual errors and that the judgements and statements of confidence are reasonable and based on substantive evidence.

The Quality Assurance Body is responsible for the findings and conclusions in the final signed-off report. Although it is preferable that there is agreement on the findings and conclusions, they do not have to be agreed with the TEO.

Where there is disagreement, a statement to this effect will append the report. The Quality Assurance Body retains the right to include all findings and conclusions considered relevant, provided it is confident of both the underlying evidence and the logic of the judgements reached.

Appendix One: How the Tertiary Evaluation Indicators Relate to the Key Evaluation Questions

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION	TYPES OF INDICATORS THAT MAY BE USED TO HELP ANSWER THE KEQS
How well do learners achieve?	Learners: • complete formal qualifications • acquire useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities • improve their well being and enhance their abilities and attributes. Graduates gain employment, engage with further study and/or contribute to their local and wider communities
What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?	• Knowledge is created and disseminated • Community/iwi development is supported • TEO actively engages with communities • Relevant groups are clearly identified and engagement is appropriate and ongoing • Relevant groups are informed of developments, barriers and possibilities • Effective engagement is encouraged at all levels in the TEO.
How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?	Programme design is reviewed regularly to: • incorporate ongoing needs analysis • maintain relevance to interested groups and communities • reflect changes in subject content • incorporate relevant teaching practice and technologies • ensure resources are adequate and appropriate.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION	TYPES OF INDICATORS THAT MAY BE USED TO HELP ANSWER THE KEQS
How effective is the teaching?	Learning: • environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners • activities reflect the needs of, and engage learners • activities provide opportunities for learners to apply knowledge and skills in a range of relevant contexts • is assessed through assessment processes which are valid, sufficient, fair and transparent and which provide learners and teachers with useful feedback on progress.
How well are learners guided and supported?	Learners: • are provided with comprehensive and timely study information and advice • are provided with continued support to assist them achieve their goals • experience an appropriate range of responses to their well-being needs • experience an inclusive learning environment • and teachers relate effectively • experience minimal barriers to learning.
How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?	The senior managers and governors of the TEO: • anticipate and respond to change • use results of self-assessment constructively for improvement • balance innovation and continuity • establish a clear organisational purpose and direction • provide effective leadership • allocate resources to support learning, teaching and research • ensure all policies and practices are legal and ethical • value their staff and put in place appropriate and effective processes for their recruitment and development.

Appendix Two: A Step-By-Step Guide to Using the Performance Criteria Rubrics

Here are the steps involved in using the criteria and some instructions for each one.

1. In each focus area, answer all six key evaluation questions (if possible) through the enquiry process.
2. Rate the answer to each KEQ according to the criteria in Rubric 1.
3. Using CORE, synthesise an overall rating for educational performance in the focus area according to the criteria in Rubric 2.
4. Based on the steps so far, use the criteria in Rubric 3 to answer and rate the self-assessment question: *in the context of this focus area, how well is self-assessment information used to understand educational performance and bring about improvements?*
5. Complete this process for all focus areas.
6. Using CORE, synthesise an overall rating for performance in each key evaluation question across the organisation according to the criteria in Rubric 1.
7. Based on the ratings for key evaluation questions across the organisation, use the criteria in Rubric 3 to answer the self-assessment question: *in the context of this KEQ across the TEO, how well is self-assessment information used to understand educational performance and bring about improvements?*
8. Complete this process for all key evaluation questions.
9. The overall statement of confidence in educational performance is derived from two lines of synthesis (using CORE and Rubric 4):
   - ratings across the key evaluation questions at organisational level
   - ratings across the educational performance in focus areas.

   The intention is that each line of synthesis reinforces, or calls into question, the conclusions reached from the other. Evaluators confirm or adjust the rating in light of the second rating to reach a final statement of confidence about educational performance in the TEO.

10. Using CORE, synthesise a TEO statement of confidence for capability in self-assessment in the organisation using the criteria in Rubric 5. For capability in self-assessment the first rating is from the ratings in the focus areas and the second rating is the organisation ratings on the key evaluation questions across the focus areas (the order of the ratings is not critical).

    Confirm or adjust the primary rating in light of the secondary rating to reach a final statement of confidence about capability in self-assessment in the TEO.

11. Repeat the last two steps of CORE – reflection and explanation – to finalise all judgements and confirm records of conclusions and reasons in the relevant file records.

Appendix Three: Standard Text to Be Included in All Reports

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO's) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

Basis for External Evaluation and Review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 & 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) & (e) of the Act.

For registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after initial approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration is granted. However, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for university compliance, and the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQuality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for the polytechnic sector compliance.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board. Statements of confidence are reported as highly confident, confident, not yet confident *or* not confident.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and will be available from websites.

Findings

Although a standard process has been used to reach the judgements, including the statements of confidence, in this report, these conclusions are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities that is not necessarily representative of the activities of the entire organisation.

Answers to Key Evaluation Questions Across the Organisation

This section provides a picture of the TEO's overall educational performance as an organisation. The ratings for individual key evaluation questions are aggregated and reported at the TEO level across all of the focus areas evaluated.

Overall Performance in Focus Areas.

This section reports on overall performance in each of the focus areas (including the mandatory focus areas).

The level of achievement of the most significant outcomes and contributing processes are described. Findings in response to individual key evaluation questions are reported and explained if exceptional performance is identified.

Future Actions

A statement is included explaining any future actions that might be taken by the Quality Assurance Body. In the majority of cases this will be a standard statement to the effect:

"Because NZQA is confident in the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment no specific actions will be taken as a consequence of this external evaluation and review report."

If the statement of confidence about educational performance and/or capability in self-assessment is *not yet confident* or *not confident*, an indication of future action will be included. These actions will vary depending on the severity of the issues but include 'agreed actions'; 'further investigation'; or one or more of a range of statutory levers including 'compliance notices', 'placing conditions', withdrawal of one or more course approvals and /or accreditation to deliver the approved course and/or accreditation to assess against standards; or withdrawal of registration. Q

Appendix Four: Generic Example of Developing a Plan of Enquiry

Here are key evaluation questions one and two for a focus area, such as an academic programme (this example combines these two closely associated questions):

- How well do learners achieve?
- What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

Here are some possible enquiry questions:

- What is the extent and quality of the information on learner progress and achievement?
- How well is the information interpreted to understand learner achievement in terms of 'met needs'?
- What use is made of this understanding for programme design or improvement purposes?
- What evidence is there of actual improvements in shorter term outcomes / outputs (e.g. course and qualification completion)?
- How well does the TEO make the connection between longer term outcomes and the shorter term outcomes (outputs) of tertiary study?
- How well does the TEO determine the value of the longer term outcomes in terms of employers and business, possible further study or positive contribution to local and wider communities?
- How well does the TEO use self-assessment information to understand and improve performance in this area?

Here are some possible sources of evidence (refer to the tertiary evaluation indicators):

- Employment outcomes, career advancement, creative enterprise, voluntary work, community/iwi participation, further achievement in scholarship, research, publications or awards? (taken from alumni information, graduate surveys, employer surveys, economic trend data, societal trend data, census data, etc)
- Trends from learner assessment information, improving trends over time that are crossed referenced to other relevant programmes and TEOs, evidence that demonstrates that the TEO uses benchmarking information to revise/set its goals and expectations appropriately.
- Evidence of positive changes in literacy and numeracy, concentration and study skills, communication and inter-personal skills.
- Trends from learner assessment information including learner progress/ educational value added.
- Evidence of positive changes in motivation, life skills, self-management, physical health, cultural awareness, sense of belonging, community engagement, family relationships
- Evidence drawn from publications, citations, research outputs, consultancies, presentations, co-operative ventures, new technologies, new or improved industry/business processes and products, community/iwi initiatives
- Trends in economic data, employment statistics, heath statistics, education participation and outcomes, census data. Q

NZQA
P 0800 697 296
E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz
www.nzqa.govt.nz

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Published | September 2009