NZQA

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

～ External evaluation and review: The first year

In 2009, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) implemented the evaluative quality assurance framework, and private training establishments (PTEs) were required to use self-assessment as part of their quality assurance model.

At the same time, NZQA began conducting external evaluation and reviews (EER) with PTEs.

In 2010, NZQA analysed all EER reports completed before 30 September 2010, to identify common themes to support continuous improvement in the PTE sector. As at 30 September 2010, NZQA had completed 144 EERs, and these reports are available publicly on NZQA's website. The analysis includes only those reports from EERs conducted with PTEs.

PTEs select and prepare learners for study in a way that maximises achievement.	Formative and summative assessments are used to help learners achieve qualifications.	Teaching staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported and professionally developed.
PTEs have a clear purpose for teaching, and awareness of how their self-assessment supports this.	**CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING PRIVATE TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS**	Senior management talk about self-assessment and good practice with teaching staff.
Educational and organisational structures and systems support self-assessment.	PTEs can show the positive impact they have had on learners.	Senior management and teaching staff collect useful data, learn from what the data tell them, make improvements, and know that these improvements have actually made the difference.

STATEMENTS OF CONFIDENCE

Of the 144 EER reports analysed, the statements of confidence were predominantly:

26% Highly Confident in educational performance/Highly Confident in self-assessment capability

22% Highly Confident in educational performance/Confident in self-assessment capability

24% Confident in educational performance/Confident in self-assessment capability

21% Confident in educational performance/Not Yet Confident in self-assessment capability

KEQ RATINGS INFLUENCE OVERALL STATEMENTS OF CONFIDENCE

The EER reports include answers to the key evaluation questions (KEQs) about performance in education and capability in self-assessment. The KEQs explore important dimensions of education quality: outcomes, programme content and design, and delivery. These questions provide a consistent basis on which PTEs are reviewed.

The six high-level, open-ended questions focus on the value of the outcomes achieved in tertiary education.

How well do learners achieve?

Most reports that evidenced learner achievement supplied data on programme or qualification completion and/or learner satisfaction ratings. A positive correlation between completion and/or satisfaction data and higher statements of confidence was apparent, but this was not necessarily predicated on those data being high. What was especially important was the understanding PTEs had of their data.

What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

A third of PTEs were supporting community/iwi development. The majority of these PTEs were community-based organisations, specifically focused on getting second-chance learners into employment or further education, and English-language schools.

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

Most PTEs had identified a very broad set of stakeholders, but few were formally or informally assessing the needs of these stakeholders.

A small number of PTEs, which delivered 'industry-focused' qualifications, were measuring how well their graduates found jobs in the specific industries for which they had delivered training. This information provided these PTEs with positive reinforcement that they were developing and delivering quality educational outcomes to learners.

How effective is the teaching?

Individualised approaches to teaching were achieved in a variety of ways, be it through systemised learner management systems or support given when required. Higher ratings in this KEQ were associated with:

- formal or informal support structures are in place for teaching staff
- at least one staff member being trained and/or qualified in adult education
- close involvement with developing programmes and activities for delivering qualifications.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE	CAPABILITY IN SELF-ASSESSMENT			
	Highly Confident	Confident	Not Yet Confident	Not Confident
Highly Confident	38 (26.39%)	31 (21.53%)	3 (2.08%)	
Confident	2 (1.39%)	34 (23.61%)	30 (20.83%)	1 (0.69%)
Not Yet Confident			1 (0.69%)	2 (1.39%)
Not Confident				2 (1.39%)

All reports provided evidence of how learners were acquiring useful and meaningful skills.

62 per cent of reports provided evidence of learner completions, while another 22 per cent provided evidence of learner satisfaction in lieu of evidence of learner completions.

Higher performing PTEs carefully track attendance, as many have found that high attendance positively correlates with completion. Smaller PTEs appeared better placed to monitor attendance more closely (i.e. texting absent learners, picking individuals up from home and bringing them class), but larger PTEs tended to have more sophisticated student management systems. Poorer performing PTEs, particularly those with international students, were less likely to have good attendance records.

54 per cent of reports provided evidence of graduate outcomes, which included work, further education and/or community outcomes.

How well are learners guided and supported?

PTEs that assessed the needs of prospective learners were able to individualise their programmes to better meet learners' needs, and the provision of ongoing support and guidance requirements for learners.

How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Most PTEs were rated at least "Good" in education performance for KEQ 6, but one-quarter had self-assessment capability issues. Generally, the approach PTEs took to self-assessment was characteristic of how these PTEs approached their business. Some PTEs did not have sustainable business models, which could benefit from the insights self-assessment can provide. Through the use of self-assessment, a number of PTEs have mitigated funding risks by setting their own targets above that set by funding agencies. These PTEs have also taken additional responsibility for collecting and analysing data that they consider important to their business. Most commonly, this is encapsulated in the stories they collect and align with statistical results.

TEOS' SELF-ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES

TEOs are continuing to develop and enhance their self-assessment capability. However, one-fifth of statements in self-assessment capability were Not Yet Confident. The EER process has identified a number of areas where TEOs are being challenged by self-assessment.

'Practitioner' led, rather than organisation-wide self-assessment

Some TEOs are still experiencing evaluative quality assurance as a system from the 'outside', rather than as an internal, organisational evaluative process that generates improvement. This is most evident in the ways in which self-assessment is carried out within some organisations.

Smaller organisations are more likely to have informal approaches to self-assessment, which can be very responsive but often this is not sustainable. It is not sustainable because the responsibility for meeting the requirements of external evaluation is often placed on one individual. As a result, only one person in the organisation has an organisational and long-term view.

Larger organisations tend to designate a team (i.e. senior management) to take responsibility, but the 'practitioner' effect can still be apparent. Occasionally, staff (including teaching and administrative) are not encouraged to participate in self-assessment, and at the very least, are not included in work to prepare for an external evaluation. As a result, they are not apprised in what should be an organisation-wide process (i.e. understanding why they must collect or record certain data or information).

These approaches can also lead to a lack of integration between the key characteristics of effective self-assessment, particularly where needs have been assessed and an attempt is being made to improve on an unsatisfactory outcome.

Measuring what matters

TEOs are effective at monitoring achievement where it is required for reporting purposes, but are not necessarily interacting with the data.

Dynamic self-assessment

TEOs can sometimes focus on setting up the 'perfect' process (i.e. designing templates), and this focus can take attention away from the practice of self-assessment.

THE CHALLENGE FOR NZQA

Some TEOs have reported difficulties with conceptualising the links between the KEQs, the evaluation indicators, and the key features of effective self-assessment. NZQA is embarking on work to create further resources that TEOs can use to advance their thinking on self-assessment.