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External Evaluation and Review Report

Quality Consultants New Zealand Ltd

Date of report: 10 November 2022

About Quality Consultants New Zealand Ltd

QCONZ provides short courses and workshops nationwide (face-to-face and online) for the dairy industry, alongside its consultancy and advisory services in quality assurance. Course delivery to Primary ITO trainees is approximately 90 per cent of training activity.

Type of organisation:	PTE (private training establishment)
Location:	50 Church Road, Hamilton
Number of students:	Domestic: 5724 students in 2021 (696.5 EFTS); approximately 10 per cent Māori, 2 per cent Pasifika, 42 per cent NZ European and 48 per cent other
Number of staff:	24.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) staff, including 19.5 tutors and assessors, plus 12 FTE contract tutors and assessors
TEO profile:	See NZQA: Quality Consultants New Zealand
Last EER outcome:	In 2018, NZQA was Confident in QCONZ's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competency Certificate for the NZMPTA¹ Milking Machine Test – NZQA-approved training scheme (114821) (38 credits); 44 students in 2021• Milk Quality 1 and Food Safety – Primary ITO programme for dairy farmers and dairy companies; 866 students in 2021
MoE number:	7128
NZQA reference:	C50771
Dates of online EER enquiry:	15 and 16 September 2022

¹ The New Zealand Milking and Pumping Trade Association contracts QCONZ to design, deliver and assess the training scheme.

Summary of results

QCONZ training is highly valued by stakeholders for upskilling the dairy industry workforce and contributing to product quality. Effective leadership and self-assessment underpin excellent educational performance which has been maintained during a period of significant change and growth.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- All student groups are achieving strong pass rates. Processes have been strengthened to maintain student engagement and ensure timely assessment.
- QCONZ training is informed by ongoing and comprehensive engagement with the dairy industry. Students are gaining knowledge and skills to meet industry compliance requirements and contribute to industry sustainability.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Trainers and assessors have appropriate backgrounds and skills and participate in regular moderation activities. Many are also engaged in the auditing and systems assurance activities of QCONZ, which ensures current knowledge about industry practice and requirements.
- QCONZ continues to invest in technology to improve access for learners, ensure consistency in delivery and assessment, and collaborate with TITO² training advisors in student support.
- QCONZ is well managed, with effective planning, resourcing and communication practices. Review and improvement activities are effective, reflecting strong organisational commitment to quality standards,³ and leading to meaningful improvements.
- There are appropriate systems and monitoring processes to manage compliance accountabilities.

² Transitional industry training organisation

³ QCONZ holds three ISO accreditations (ISO 9001, ISO 17020 and ISO 17065), and audits are conducted regularly.

Key evaluation question findings⁴

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Most students are successfully completing courses and programmes (refer Appendix 1). Achievement rates for Māori students are comparable to others.⁵</p> <p>Marked improvements in course completion are evident for the Milk Quality courses (refer Focus Area 2.2) between 2019 and 2021.</p> <p>QCONZ attributes improved achievement rates to enhanced support for students preparing for assessment, and initiatives to ensure more timely assessment. This explanation is credible.⁶ Ongoing database developments continue to support this focus.</p> <p>QCONZ monitors student progress on a weekly basis to identify and address roadblocks to completion. Achievement data is analysed and regularly reported to QCONZ management and reviewed with key stakeholders. Further analysis is planned to compare unit standard achievement rates by delivery mode.</p> <p>Assessment and moderation processes provide assurance of the validity and consistency of achievement.</p>
Conclusion:	Student achievement is very strong. QCONZ regularly reviews achievement-related information and implements effective strategies for improvement.

⁴ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁵ Low enrolment numbers for Pasifika students reduces the statistical reliability of achievement data. Separate achievement data is not currently available for disabled students.

⁶ In 2019, 28 per cent of students completed assessment within eight weeks of the workshop course assessment compared with 66 per cent in 2021.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>QCONZ is highly regarded as a well-established provider of auditing and systems assurance and as a training provider. Ongoing high demand for training courses attests to the credibility of QCONZ trainers and the relevance of the courses. Stakeholders interviewed during the EER confirmed QCONZ's valued contribution to industry's meeting of compliance requirements and raised standards across the whole sector. Training is contributing to the reduced occurrence of milk contamination.⁷ QCONZ is also engaged in new developments, such as training to better support animal wellbeing outcomes on-farm.</p> <p>Students achieve unit standards and complete courses that improve their employability and on-farm effectiveness. In addition to compliance courses, students are gaining greater understanding of the relationship between their work and milk quality and farm outcomes, which has tangible value for farmers and employers.</p> <p>QCONZ is a valued partner to NZMPTA and has delivered the Milking Machine Testing Competency Certificate for many years. Individuals seeking employment in the milking machine service sector achieve certification (renewed every two years). Farmers and dairy processors require competent testers to assure quality and conduct annual machine tests. QCONZ has recently completed an extensive review to align milking machine testing and related training with international standards. This has improved quality and added value to the sector.</p>
Conclusion:	QCONZ has strong support from the dairy industry. Ongoing engagement provides information on students' application of new skills and knowledge on-farm, and opportunities for continual improvement and development of the training.

⁷ For example: 2013-14, 5000 suppliers and 900 tracebacks; 2021, 9500 suppliers and 400 tracebacks.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>QCONZ has effective processes to develop and review courses to meet stakeholder training needs. QCONZ is responsive to changes to industry practice and regulations. In addition to compliance courses and milk quality training, QCONZ designs and delivers non-formal training programmes, such as those recently developed specifically to support corporate farm managers.</p> <p>Training is delivered via a mix of face-to-face block courses, online modules and work-based learning and preparation for assessment. During COVID-19 lockdowns, QCONZ maintained continuity and learner progression through online delivery and assessment options for most students. QCONZ has various technology-based approaches for assessment in rural locations, such as a phone app to upload evidence and voice recording for capturing verbal evidence and verification. In addition, extra support was provided via workshops and pre-assessment tutorials offered over Zoom and videos on YouTube. These approaches were generally effective in maintaining learner progression and achievement.</p> <p>Consistency of nationwide delivery is maintained through shared teaching resources and regular tutorial meetings. Course review forms are completed daily by tutors, and these, together with student surveys, are reviewed for improvements. Monthly programme reviews and regular discussions with external stakeholders also ensure course materials are current and effective in engaging students.</p> <p>QCONZ has strengthened internal moderation processes and tracks improvements to assessment practice arising from moderation activities. External moderation outcomes have improved, and in 2021 QCONZ met TITO assessment standards in nearly all cases.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>QCONZ's training supports the development of knowledge and practical skills required for work in the dairy industry. Stakeholder and student feedback is acted on. There is good evidence of improvements arising from self-assessment</p>

	activities, such as industry engagement, moderation and programme review.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Pastoral	<p>QCONZ has a good understanding of the various needs and work and learning contexts for their students. They encourage students to engage and see value in the learning experience, including those who may be reluctant to be in the classroom environment or are required by employers to attend compliance-based courses. Students receive timely and useful feedback on their learning and assessment.</p> <p>Online learning is challenging for some students and reduces opportunities to build social and academic networks. QCONZ endeavours to provide additional support, such as facilitating study groups. New initiatives include the development of welcome videos for new students and a mentoring pilot to support learners through community and whānau support.</p> <p>Guidance and support are provided in the context of short courses and work-based learning. QCONZ is implementing an action plan to strengthen pastoral care and focus on learner wellbeing, including professional development for tutors and assessors on identifying and supporting learner needs (including anxiety and mental health). Recent IT developments support real-time communications between QCONZ and the TITO on individual needs and supports tracking of students moving to new workplaces. Improvements to training resources reduce barriers for students with ESOL⁸ and literacy and numeracy challenges.</p> <p>Disabled learners who self-identify, or are identified by external stakeholders, are provided with appropriate support. QCONZ is not yet systematically monitoring or reporting on the learning needs and outcomes of these students.</p> <p>QCONZ is a culturally diverse organisation providing an inclusive learning environment. The PTE has recently committed</p>

⁸ English for speakers of other languages

	to building organisational capability in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori, and is currently engaged in a Māori Success project.
Conclusion:	QCONZ has effective processes for monitoring student progress and wellbeing. Students are well supported to remain engaged and to succeed in their learning. Useful improvement initiatives have been identified as a result of self-review.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>QCONZ has maintained strong educational performance during a period of significant change. In addition to the challenges associated with COVID-19 and the Review of Vocational Education (which are ongoing), QCONZ has undergone significant growth in scale and scope of delivery.⁹ QCONZ's vision and strategic direction is strongly aligned to dairy industry goals, and the PTE is innovative and responsive to emerging stakeholder needs.</p> <p>QCONZ governance and management is effective and has been strengthened by new appointments and restructuring to clarify accountabilities and focus on improvement. An ongoing commitment to training is reflected in strategic reviews, significant investments in technology and human resources, and enhanced reporting and monitoring of outcomes.</p> <p>Training staff feel valued and well supported. Effective management and communication practices are contributing to increasing coherence within the team and consistency across all delivery locations. These include regular reporting and meetings, performance monitoring, group moderation exercises and professional development.</p> <p>QCONZ is strongly committed to systematic review and improvement, consistent with the wider organisation's purpose in quality assurance. Improved outcomes are resulting from</p>

⁹ Student numbers increased from 1505 enrolments in 2019 to 5724 in 2021, and increased training scope and nationwide delivery of Primary ITO programmes.

	analysis and reflection on good quality self-assessment information.
Conclusion:	QCONZ is a high performing organisation which is responding to the needs of its stakeholders. Reliable information and data is available and increasingly being used effectively to support educational achievement.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>QCONZ has generally effective processes for managing key areas of compliance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate processes for managing academic standards and integrity, and for maintaining compliance with NZQA Rules. These include documentation and monitoring of programme delivery, assessment and internal moderation, and effective processes and record-keeping for responding to student complaints. • Ongoing reviews and updating of key internal documentation, such as the quality management system. • Processes and reporting to meet legislative obligations, including Health and Safety at Work 2016. • Reviews of compliance against the pastoral care codes¹⁰ and the development and implementation of action plans. • QCONZ is regularly audited against three ISO standards. <p>During 2021, QCONZ self-identified unit standard credit reporting issues (timeliness and accuracy). A detailed investigation was completed, which addressed outstanding reporting and established new processes which are now fully documented and closely monitored.</p> <p>Responsibilities for compliance accountabilities have been reviewed, and are now allocated to teams, rather than</p>

¹⁰ Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019 and The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

	individuals. There is not, as yet, a single consolidated calendar for managing compliance which could support overall coordination.
Conclusion:	QCONZ is managing its compliance accountabilities well. Lapses in compliance are detected and addressed.

Focus areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Competency Certificate for the NZMPTA Milking Machine Test

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>All students who enrol for the Milking Machine Competency Certificate, and who require it for their employment in the installation and servicing of machines, successfully complete the assessment requirements and are licensed by NZMPTA.</p> <p>Students complete pre-course online modules, attend a one-week block course in a custom-built facility (which provides for self-paced and practical learning), and complete post-course work-based learning to submit six test reports for marking. Block courses were deferred during the COVID-19 lockdowns.</p>
Conclusion:	Significant review and improvement to the training programme and outcomes has taken place since the previous EER. QCONZ is highly valued by NZMPTA for its support for the service sector.

2.2 Focus area: Milk Quality 1 and Food Safety

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Achievement rates in the Milk Quality 1 and Food Safety course improved over 2019-21 (78-96 per cent overall) (see Appendix 1). QCONZ reports that this improvement reflects targeted support for students in preparing for and completing assessments. However, the ongoing challenges of online learning for some students is expected to have a small impact on 2022 results (94 per cent overall as at 5 September 2022).</p> <p>Students attend a two-day block course, followed by work-based learning for up to 12 weeks in preparation for on-farm assessment.</p>

	During COVID, QCONZ collaborated with several other training providers to support the shift to online delivery, sharing content, technology and resources to maintain continuity for learners.
Conclusion:	Student and stakeholder needs are well understood and met. Students are gaining essential practical skills and knowledge which enhance their work opportunities as well as building confidence for continuing with further study.

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Quality Consultants New Zealand Ltd consider:

- Developing processes to systematically identify, monitor and report on the learning needs and outcomes of disabled students, as a priority group.
- Continuing to deepen understanding of achievement data; in addition to the planned review of unit standard achievement by delivery mode, consider reviewing the comparable achievement of regional cohorts, and explore opportunities for external benchmarking.
- Continuing to focus on improving support for students in collaboration with TITO field staff, including processes for identifying learning needs, targeted approaches to supporting priority groups, and specific learning needs such as ESOL and Literacy and Numeracy.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Successful course completion rates (%) for Milk Quality 1, 2019-21

Year	All (%)	NZ Euro	Māori	Pasifika	Other	<25
2019	78	80	75	43	79	74
2020	94	94	88	90	95	92
2021	96	96	95	92	96	96

Data provided by Quality Consultants New Zealand Ltd

Note: Active numbers of students per workshop year as at March 2022:

2019 – 0; 2020 – 31; 2021 – 155

Students have access to re-activate enrolment and achieve assessment until the qualification expires in December 2022.

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud¹¹*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

¹¹ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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 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.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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