

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

## Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 17 April 2013

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MoE Number: 8292  
NZQA Reference: C10622  
Date of EER visit: 12 and 13 February 2013

# Purpose of this Report

*The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) 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.*

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Alexandra
Delivery sites:	The majority of the courses identified below have been run in two or more locations throughout the region of Central Otago including Alexandra, Cromwell, Wanaka, Roxburgh and Ranfurly. Dedicated staff, who live in these rural regions, are responsible for delivering courses as and when required by the community.
First registered:	5 November 1999
Courses currently delivered:	At the time of the external evaluation and review (EER) visit only two courses were being delivered. These included the one-to-one Intensive Literacy and Numeracy course and the Adult Community Education jam making and preserving course. The range of courses available for delivery in 2013 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Te Reo</li><li>• Computing for Absolute Beginners</li><li>• One to One Computing</li><li>• Parenting</li><li>• Healthy Eating on a Budget</li></ul>

- Learn to Sew
- NZ Sign Language
- One to One Careers Advice
- Career and CVs
- World Environment Day Activities
- Environment and Sustainability Forums
- Know your Camera
- Healthy Cooking on a Small Budget
- Sewing for Beginners
- Growing your own Garden
- REAP Days
- Men Shed
- Draft a Pattern
- Winter Warmers
- Sustainability - Hen Houses
- Christmas Cake Making
- iPad Circles

Number of students:	Domestic - 39
Number of staff:	Four full-time staff  19 part-time staff (approximately 14 full-time equivalents)
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACE – Adult Community Education as listed above</li> <li>• Tertiary Education Commission – Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programmes</li> </ul>
Distinctive characteristics:	Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme (Central Otago REAP) is a community-based charitable organisation which provides supplementary and complementary education to the Central Otago region. Central Otago REAP assists in addressing the educational disparities a community experiences because of its rurality. Central Otago REAP provides non-formal educational opportunities in a holistic manner that

are accessible, appropriate, affordable and enable people to assist themselves to increasingly become independent learners.

Recent significant changes: On 9 February 2013, three days before the EER visit, the \$2.6 million Alexandra Community House was officially opened. The building houses the Central Otago REAP, Central Otago Budgeting Services, Age Concern Otago, Central Otago District Arts Trust, The Alexandra Community Advice Network, Jigsaw Central Lakes Plunket, Catholic Social Services, Anglican Family Care Centre, Cancer Society, Alzheimers Society, Relationship Aotearoa, Alexandra Clyde Union Parish and groups within the Alexandra Arts and Crafts Incorporated.

The development of the new premises was a partnership between the community and the Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union Parish, the landowners and joint occupiers of the property.

Previous quality assurance history: The TEO was quality assured by CITO in December 2012, and the moderation report concluded that the TEO has strong processes in place.

Other: The manager of Central Otago REAP is also the chairwoman of Alexandra Community House Trust, which is the establishment committee responsible for the development of the new premises. She is also a Central Otago mayoress.

Central Otago REAP's goal is to engage people of all ages in learning – from early childhood, school students and the adult and community sector – building on the strength of the region. The organisation believes that 'learning makes the difference' and delivers lifelong learning opportunities in the Central Otago region. Since 2011 the organisation has had a core contract with Rural Education Activity Programmes Aotearoa New Zealand (REAPANZ) which meets the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission education priorities.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Prior to the EER, phone discussions were held between the Central Otago REAP manager and NZQA lead evaluator. The following focus areas were selected for inclusion in the EER scope. These foundation learning courses encompass provision of short course training (five days or fewer, or 50 hours or fewer) and full-time training of 34 weeks duration offered to the community in the Central Otago region including Maniototo, West Otago and the Upper Clutha. These courses include:

- Tertiary Education Commission - Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programme.
- Adult Community Education course in jam making and preserving.

Governance, management and strategy were also included in the EER scope as a mandatory focus area, in accordance with NZQA policy for all tertiary education organisations. For a small to medium-sized training provider, the two focus areas were sufficient to give the evaluation team a reasonable account of the organisation as a whole.

### 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. 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.*

The EER of Central Otago REAP was conducted at its office/course delivery premises in Alexandra township by a team of two evaluators over one and half-days.

Interviews were held with the manager, the chairman of the board and three members of the management team, as well as with four tutors and five learners. The external stakeholder group interviews included an industry training manager and a Work and Income NZ contact. Telephone interviews were also conducted with tutors and past learners.

Documents, including a self-assessment report, profile information and organisational structure and programme-specific documents were also reviewed on site to support evaluative conversations.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme**.

Central Otago REAP has strong credibility for developing and delivering quality courses of high relevance across the rural region it serves. The organisation was established in response to a demand to address the educational disparities a community experiences because of its remoteness. The vision that guides Central Otago REAP's activities to engage people in lifelong learning is shared across the organisation. This reflects the extent to which the organisation works with its stakeholders to understand and match their training needs, and is evidenced through strong rates of participation in the courses delivered. Most courses have been run in two or more locations throughout the region, e.g. Alexandra, Cromwell, Wanaka, Roxburgh and Ranfurly.

The board has a breadth of expertise which is highly regarded and representative of community interests, as evident from stakeholder feedback and the ongoing contracts the organisation has been able to secure in a financially constrained environment. One such example is a contract to deliver courses to address cyber-bullying. From its new premises the organisation is in a prime position to champion the current alignment of various service providers that learners interact with.

The organisation is capably led by its manager who has high recognition in the Alexandra community and Central Otago region. She holds a key civic position and played a key role as chairwoman in the development of the Alexandra Community House. Her wealth of knowledge, in both public responsibilities and developmental accountabilities, ensures that her staff can aspire to high standards.

The key features of the organisation's capability in educational performance are:

- The courses have a very strong practical emphasis, with a goal of providing learners with the skills and knowledge to make and preserve jam with produce they have grown, picked, prepared and preserved.
- The courses provide the learners with the skills and knowledge they need to change behaviour patterns and outlooks and to engage positively in the community and to gain employment skills and/or enter into higher formalised study.
- There are clear pathways and the courses are tailored to meet the needs of learners based on their previous educational background and confidence to reach their personal and employment aspirations.
- The organisation has identified its stakeholder groups and is working toward maintaining and growing relationships; this is particularly evident

with mature second-chance learners, beneficiaries and the retired community.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Central Otago Rural Education Activities Programme**.

Central Otago REAP has a strong culture of ongoing self-assessment, including:

- A commitment to measuring what matters
- Collecting quality data and information to inform decision-making.

There was evidence that all staff reflect on data collected and are proactive in setting up projects to collect information as a basis for informed decision-making leading to improvements in the organisation's performance.

There is good alignment between the organisation's vision, business plan and quality improvement plan. The evaluation team sighted many examples of review action taken, including evidence of changes made as a consequence.

Learners have expressed strong satisfaction with the course delivery at Central Otago REAP through student questionnaires and evaluation feedback. The organisation was also able to demonstrate the steps taken to address any identified issues. One such improvement is the change made to the timetabling of courses to counter the unpredictable weather experienced by the learners because of the remoteness of the delivery locations.

Regular reporting to the board is an activity that allows the organisation to assess issues within each course as well as approve any resource requests. One such example is the board-funded position of literacy tutor. These activities indicate the commitment and drive of the organisation to ensure it is an effective provider of education and that its learners are achieving identified outcomes.

The organisation is proactive in giving and seeking feedback from the Ministry of Social Development, local industry, advocacy providers, counselling services and employers. Other key stakeholders, including staff and students, are given many opportunities to provide feedback.



# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Within the short timeframe of delivery there is evidence of enhanced learner achievement outcomes. Learner achievement is tracked and progression monitored through a linked, organisation-wide approach connecting progress and achievement to the data management system. The organisation has records of achievement showing that all of the 40 students who enrolled in the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy course in 2011, as well as the 35 learners enrolled in 2012, completed their course successfully and gained a certificate of attainment, indicating that their literacy goals were achieved.

These outcomes are monitored at planned review and assessment intervals against funder targets. For the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy course, individual learner plans provide a broad-ranging record and reliable evidence that the learners make incremental achievement growth to their personalised education aims and/or employment goals.

Central Otago REAP reports show that it is meeting or exceeding targets set internally and by its funding bodies. These targets include developing learners' employability skills to help and aid work placement, as well as an emphasis on literacy needs to enable the learner to improve their language skills. For example, one student who had gained employment with a local supermarket said her increased English language skills contributed to improved communication skills, enabling her to interact confidently with customers and work colleagues.

The majority of learners enrolling with the organisation are second-chance learners and long-term unemployed who have struggled to obtain employment or engage in other educational opportunities or for whom secondary school has been challenging and disengaging. Learners said that Central Otago REAP helped them to develop core foundation skills and knowledge to better enable them to work with others.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Central Otago REAP has a strong focus on providing learning opportunities across the early childhood, school and adult community education sectors, as reflected in its mission statement: 'to engage the Community in Life Long Learning'. To achieve this mission, the organisation maintains a network of people in the community connected to various organisations with comparable or linked interests. These groups are defined as the stakeholders of the organisation. Throughout the evaluation there was clear evidence of strong stakeholder relationships that the organisation has developed and maintained, including with REAPANZ, other regional REAP offices, local trust boards, the union parish, the local art community, the local advocacy and counselling agencies, local school representation and the retired community. Having such input by these people and groups involved as associate members has helped the organisation. Stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team were confident that valued outcomes were being gained. One such example is the new premises developed with significant input from this stakeholder group. This validates the expectations of learners and the level of commitment and strategic planning shown by the organisation.

Employers particularly value the responsiveness of the organisation to meeting identified knowledge gaps. The manager's connection particularly with a local training establishment has enabled the personalised introduction of learners to further relevant training in the farming industry. One trainer said, 'these kids are disengaged at school and don't do well and they get the skills they need with Central Otago REAP'. He went on to note that the students arrived for training punctually, and were good-mannered, motivated and well informed.

The value to the learner in particular is their growth towards various personal goals and improvement in their employability. Learners interviewed commented that they were very much aware of the reasons they had enrolled with the organisation, their reasons for study and how long they would be studying. The students interviewed had clear progression pathway plans following completion of the course. These included enrolment into higher study or enrolment in further short courses.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Central Otago REAP focuses on an approach of ruralisation, that is, providing learners with the skills they need to become increasingly self-reliant in a geographically remote region. For that reason, courses such as jam making focus on locally sourced fruit, preserving and the need to store food. The Winter Warmers course focusses on the extreme winter climate of the area and the need to stay warm; the organic innovation course focuses on showing participants how to care for and run fowls, and the need to produce their own food. This approach shows an excellent matching of courses to learner and wider stakeholder needs.

Central Otago REAP also communicates to its Central Otago community a willingness to provide any type of course where interest is shown by a group of people. Once the community need is identified, the organisation seeks a suitable tutor (from a pool of community-based contracted tutors) to provide the knowledge and skills sought. The organisation works closely with the tutor to ensure suitable resources are available in the community and that a clear course outline that is relevant and current can be provided. Examples were provided to the evaluators of changes made to courses to fit with seasonal timing and conditions, social events and industry needs. One such change involved the social stigma issues attached to literacy programmes, resulting in a course name change from 'Not Just Words' to 'Choices'.

Evaluation feedback reported that most learners were satisfied with the flexible delivery and course timetabling; the free childcare service available in some courses ensures the childcare needs of parents were being met which minimises barriers to learning. Delivery of the short courses (50 hours or five days) is structured so that learners attend the class over several consecutive weeks. This approach allows learners to engage the course content without being burdened with too much information in a short period of time, as well as permitting learners to plan so they can attend class with the least disruption to their domestic and employment duties.

Central Otago REAP has identified its stakeholders in the community and has a strong relationship with them. Evaluation feedback from a local industry training provider is complimentary of the calibre of students referred to their courses. More formally, the organisation consults with other REAP organisations of similar size and demographic and a local private training establishment that deliver similar courses. The minutes of the regular meetings indicate a wide range of topics discussed – such as course content and new course opportunities. For example, a student-led offensive against cyber-bullying has resulted in Central Otago REAP securing funding to develop and deliver a course promoting positive digital

citizenship, with the broad aim of raising awareness and ensuring the course's relevancy and currency.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Tutors interviewed by the evaluation team spoke enthusiastically about strategies to develop and improve students' practical skills. Learners interviewed were similarly positive about the influence of the 'family' atmosphere which provided an affirmation of their abilities and a sense of well-being and reassurance. Learners indicated that they found the delivery of the course by the tutors to be of a high standard, and which engaged them in learning in a safe and agreeable way. Typical remarks included: 'I was able to read the road code'; 'I can make my own preserves', 'I know the correct way of pronouncing words'.

The tutors all have relevant experience and knowledge within their particular area of expertise. In addition to these skills, tutors require a particular set of experiences to work with students at Central Otago REAP, including a strong belief in and commitment to people realising their potential. Tutors observe a philosophy of accepting learners as they are. Students noted that they worked well with their tutors.

Central Otago REAP has recently undergone some significant changes, such as moving to new premises and the appointment of a designate literacy tutor position, a role fully funded by the board. Staff, management and students consider that these changes have improved the teaching and learning environment. Interviews with students and staff confirmed this view.

Tutors interviewed said they felt well supported both with professional development and course resources. Accessibility and connectedness to all staff<sup>2</sup> on a weekly basis is provided through intranet, email, phone and text connection, and an all-staff meeting is held monthly to discuss and review best practice approaches such as the provision of additional one-to-one activities to understand workplace vocabulary terms.

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that the organisation does not differentiate by using the term 'outpost staff'. There are 13 staff who deliver courses from their regional locations, as required.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Ongoing guidance and support is provided by the organisation to help learners to follow their chosen pathway within the context of courses delivered in a short space of time. The Tertiary Education Commission progression tool is used to track Intensive Literacy and Numeracy learner progress, and there is regular shared best practice among staff. The collegial, close-knit working environment at Central Otago REAP means peer review and discussion between tutors about responses to different learning needs occur naturally and as part of everyday practice.

Regular formal and informal interaction with staff ensures students have plenty of opportunities to discuss their learning, and self-assessment processes help to maintain student interest and learning. Learner feedback is thoroughly reviewed and in some cases peer reviewed to identify changes to teaching plans or activities. The tutors identified that students in the programme responded well to the introduction of the Papa Ako and Papa Whai Rawa resources offered as a supplementary option to support their learning within the literacy courses. This motivated tutors to consider other aspects of learning in their course plans.

All courses delivered by the organisation have clearly written brochures and pamphlets which identify the resources required, delivery site, the teaching approach and desired outcomes.

## 1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**

The governance and management of the organisation is sound and functioning effectively, particularly in the case of the roles of the chairman and board members in guiding and leading Central Otago REAP. The active governance has translated into staff representation and appointments based on their geographical location as well as their experience. Obligatory meetings were achieved in 2012, including the annual general meeting, board meetings (agenda prepared two weeks out) and the ongoing contact, both formal and informal, between the chairman and the manager. These strategic relations provide the organisation with industry and market integrity as well as enabling the organisation to remain well informed of new developments in the rural community it serves.

There was comprehensive evidence that the organisation establishes annual goals at the beginning of each year. There is discussion of achievement of the mission statement and the key learning objectives as identified through initial interviews

with the learners and recorded in monthly management meeting minutes and six-weekly board meeting notes.

There is good evidence of planning and responding effectively to change. Over the past few years, funding has been reduced for the demographic of learners that the organisation targets, and the organisation has responded quickly and effectively to ensure it matches the needs of the key funders. The evaluators noted that Central Otago REAP is active in seeking support from the parent body, REAPANZ, which confirms that collective action is being taken in response to the decisions of funding bodies, as linked back to identified government priorities.

There were recorded commentaries on the strategic alliance with local support and advocacy agencies, or on course developments that might be of advantage to the community. The recent move to the new premises, which locates Central Otago REAP in a social service and interagency co-habitation, is an example of one such strategy. Over time, Central Otago REAP will benefit from enhancing existing relationships and seeking planned association with other local organisations to establish a one-stop-shop learning and support environment to limit barriers to learner success.

The evaluation team heard repeatedly from staff that they enjoyed a flat organisational structure where everyone had a say. Staff reported that the open-door policy of the manager supported this style of organisation and said they understood what was required of them. Staff had a very good understanding of resourcing decisions and constraints and the learners were content that their needs were met promptly.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

### 2.2 Focus area: All programmes

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Central Otago REAP build on and continue to develop the planning and structure for self-assessment to ensure that information gained is shared across the organisation and able to be monitored over time. Consider reviewing the student evaluation form/survey to determine how well social, personal and employment-readiness skills are progressed.



# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.*

*In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or 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 EER process approved by the NZQA Board.*

*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](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>*

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