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External Evaluation and Review Report

South Pacific College of Natural
Medicine

Date of report: 12 September 2022

About South Pacific College of Natural Medicine

South Pacific College of Natural Medicine (SPCNM) offers the New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation (Level 4) and the Bachelor of Natural Medicine (Level 7) for domestic and international students. The degree may be studied on campus, online or through a blend of both these modes of delivery.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	8 Arthur Street, Ellerslie, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 126: 18 under 25, Māori 22, Pasifika six, female 123, male two, other one International: nil
Number of staff:	Full-time eight, part-time 12 (six administrative staff, six teaching staff)
TEO profile:	See NZQA: South Pacific College of Natural Medicine The main principle of naturopathy is the healing power of nature and the inherent restorative power of the individual to overcome disease.
Last EER outcome:	At the last EER in 2018, NZQA was Confident in both the PTE's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Bachelor of Natural Medicine (Level 7) (ID:111380)
MoE number:	8642
NZQA reference:	C52391
Dates of EER virtual visit:	8-10 August 2022

Summary of results

South Pacific College of Natural Medicine delivers exceptional teaching and learning that prepares students for a range of employment options in natural medicine. Self-assessment is comprehensive and embedded in all aspects of the organisation's activities.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- SPCNM has consistently exceeded its Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) course completion targets in the four years since the last evaluation.
- The achievement rates for students who study online, on campus and/or in the blended modality are tracked closely and are comparable. Māori and Pasifika student achievement is on a par with non-Māori and Pasifika achievement.
- Programmes are regularly reviewed, well resourced and taught by qualified, experienced practitioners. Moderation outcomes show that assessment is valid, fair and consistent.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Students receive exemplary support and are passionate and engaged in their learning. Graduates gain a wide range of employment, mostly directly related to their studies.
- Governance and management are focused on student achievement and are working in productive partnership with all stakeholders.
- Staff are valued and well supported. Self-assessment is comprehensive, embedded in all activities, and has led to meaningful change and improvement.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SPCNM students complete their programmes of study and gain qualifications. Completions for 2018-21 were consistently above 90 per cent, exceeding the TEC benchmark of 80 per cent. Retention for first-year students was also high (refer Appendix 1). To better meet graduate progression, SPCNM has developed course credit agreements with Torrens University Australia, with 70 per cent of the Bachelor of Natural Medicine degree able to be credited. This agreement indicates independent approval of the quality of the degree programme and its graduates. SPCNM also have an approved articulation pathway into select programmes offered by Endeavour College of Natural Health in Australia.</p> <p>Qualification completions for 2018-21 were low due to a range of factors, well understood by SPCNM. To meet students' needs, SPCNM provides considerable flexibility for study. This can include leave of absence and/or a change in enrolment status from full to part-time. The impact of Covid-19 in 2021 was cited as a reason for withdrawal in 31 per cent of those interviewed at exit (10 of 32 students). Students have up to six years to complete the degree, another contributing factor to low qualification completions. SPCNM is in discussion with the TEC regarding enrolments and the factors impacting qualification completions.</p> <p>Student engagement and progress (including for Māori and Pasifika and across all delivery modes) is tracked closely and benchmarked against previous years. At-risk students are identified and effective interventions are taken. Regular review meetings, where individual student progress is discussed, are highly effective for addressing problems early.</p>
Conclusion:	Systematic and comprehensive attention to the achievement of individual students has contributed to consistently high rates of course completion and retention.

¹ 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 students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Graduates apply their knowledge to support their own needs and that of whānau and community. The on-site Paua Clinic provides opportunities for year 3 students to apply their learning in a safe, structured environment with peer support and tutor supervision. This also builds confidence to work with the public or future clients.</p> <p>SPCNM has developed career pathways that introduce graduates to the breadth of possible careers within the natural medicine field. In response to student feedback, there has been an increased emphasis on the business skills required to be self-employed. Stakeholders who have employed graduates found them to be work-ready.</p> <p>Destination data collected by SPCNM for graduates for 2012-19 had a response rate of 36 per cent (80 respondents of 221 possible). The data showed that 63 per cent of respondents were in clinical practice. An outcome of the alumni survey is a research project to investigate why some graduates are not employed in the natural health field.</p> <p>SPCNM is committed to contributing and advancing knowledge in naturopathy and herbal medicine. The research programme is 'fit for purpose' and involves degree teaching staff. Research topics are designed to both advance knowledge and inform teaching and learning. Monthly research reports to the academic board monitor progress and share insights.</p> <p>Industry representatives and external academics are regularly consulted about the degree programme. Communication between stakeholders and SPCNM is open and collaborative. Stakeholder views and opinions are welcomed and used to make changes and improvements.</p>
Conclusion:	A highly professional approach – underpinned by clear values and a shared mission – guides all stakeholders. Research outcomes and stakeholder feedback inform teaching and learning in a cycle of continuous improvement.

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>The management team has made many useful changes and improvements. Graduate and learning outcomes, transferable skills and assessment design are now better aligned. Changes made include the development of a constructive alignment document for the degree (which defines NZQA levels for each component), and a redesign of the assessment tasks and rubrics for all courses. Students appreciated the improvements to assessment tasks as they provided clearer expectations and greater consistency of marking across course lecturers and courses. The graduate survey for 2020 showed that graduates thought they had met the graduate outcomes.</p> <p>Pre- and post-assessment moderation meets requirements and is used to inform teaching and learning. The programme advisory committee members include experts in higher education and industry and members of both peak bodies with oversight of natural medicine. Staff are well qualified and experienced practitioners. Professional development opportunities are encouraged and aligned with the current academic focus. Staff reported examples of where professional development had led to more effective practice.</p> <p>Resources are excellent. They include Cheal Cottage (a student hub), a herb garden, a purpose-built library and updated technology and software that supports live streaming of all classes. The transition to online learning during Covid-19 was seamless due to these pre-Covid upgrades. Students' needs are well matched, with a choice of on-campus, online or blended delivery modes. Progress and comparison of student success for each mode is carefully tracked. No significant differences in student performance were found across the delivery modes.</p>
Conclusion:	Academic management is very strong. It has led to significant improvements in assessment design and delivery that have benefited all stakeholders and enhanced the matched needs of students.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support is comprehensive and highly effective. It begins pre-enrolment where students are interviewed and informed of the commitment required for the degree, the underpinning philosophy of natural medicine, study requirements and career opportunities. Once a study plan is developed it is signed by the student, academic director and the chief executive.</p> <p>The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Students) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code) is well understood, supported and implemented. SPCNM's pastoral care policy was reviewed to align with the Code outcomes. The draft policy was shared with the student council. Staff and students attended NZQA Code seminars. The student council shares Code information with students, and the Code is discussed at orientation.</p> <p>Staff know their students very well. They are highly responsive and minimise barriers to learning such as disability and other issues. People with disabilities can access the campus and/or participate fully through online delivery.</p> <p>Pastoral care during the Covid lockdowns was exceptional for all student years. There was minimal disruption to delivery due to the variety of delivery modes. The year 3 clinical programme (2020, 2021) was extended, and all the students graduated with their cohort, an indication of the commitment and responsiveness of the college and the dedication and passion of the students.</p> <p>Structured learning is complemented by other activities such as immersion weekends and external speakers. Graduate involvement includes paid roles with the college, such as graduate liaison. This involvement provides valuable links with current students and alumni. It also demonstrates the high regard in which the college holds its graduates. This regard is mutual. Both staff and students speak of 'family' and 'community'. Staff are open, approachable and proactive. Student feedback and consultation is used to make change.</p>
Conclusion:	The college has developed a partnership model to support and engage with students. Students are highly respected and regularly consulted. Staff develop and foster authentic and

	ongoing professional relationships with both students and graduates.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The vision and mission of the college guides and informs all aspects of college life. Strategic goals include improving the statements of confidence for the current EER (external evaluation and review), improvements in EPIs (Educational Performance Indicators), increasing the credibility and visibility of research, increasing community engagement and awareness, and effectively managing risks such as fluctuations in student numbers.</p> <p>Examples of progress with these goals include mid-year enrolments in 2021 and 2022, increased staff involvement with research, the appointment of a part-time research coordinator, and exit interviews to gather data on qualification non-completions. Analysis of the effectiveness of these initiatives is at an early stage.</p> <p>The programme advisory committee draws on expertise from a representative membership that includes: an external academic from an allied college, two owners of health food retailers, and a manufacturer of herbal medicine who also represents NZAMH (New Zealand Association of Medical Herbalists), and a representative from the NMHNZ (Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists of New Zealand), the two professional bodies that register natural medicine practitioners. The Bachelor of Natural Medicine provides a recognised credential in an unregulated sector.</p> <p>While academic governance has historically been strong, it has been reinvigorated by new appointments to the roles of chief executive and academic director. Continuity has been maintained as one of these appointments has extensive history with the college. The board of directors expressed high confidence in the academic management of the college.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management is student centred and highly effective. SPCNM is well connected and held in high regard by their colleagues in the natural medicine field.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The board meeting structure is comprehensive and covers the main activities of the college: management, academic administration, student administration and support, compliance, admissions and enrolments, policies and procedures and clinic meetings. Policy review is undertaken by the chief executive and academic director for greater efficiency. The majority of the procedures have been reviewed and rewritten since the last EER.</p> <p>The chief executive reports compliance issues to the board of directors, which are noted on an annual calendar and checked off when completed. Changes to PTE rules and degree programmes are closely monitored by the management team, board of directors and academic board. SPCNM uses recommendations from the NZQA degree monitor's reports to develop action plans and inform improvements. For example, a recommendation to develop a more comprehensive Māori and Pasifika strategy has been taken up and progressed. SPCNM is in the process of reaching out to develop a relationship with local iwi so that a co-governance approach to developing a Māori strategy can be developed.</p> <p>The 2022 degree monitor's report concluded that the degree programme is delivered in line with approval and accreditation requirements. There was one recommendation: 'That SPCNM investigate the practicalities of embedding alternative career pathways into the degree, including allowing students to gain work experience hours during Year 3 in settings other than the on-site Paua Clinic'. The mechanics of advancing this recommendation were discussed by SPCNM and the evaluators, and will be reflected on further by the college.</p>
Conclusion:	SPCNM has developed constructive, reciprocal relationships with government agencies that benefit both parties. No gaps in the management of important compliance accountabilities were found at this EER.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Bachelor of Natural Medicine (Level 7)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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 South Pacific College of Natural Medicine:

- Continue to investigate the self-identified gap from its self-assessment to: consider training in higher education for staff and the efficacy of developing a micro-credential in higher education.

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. Course and qualification completions 2018-21

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of SAC students	165	176	136	126
Course completions	91.80%	92.50%	94.90%	96.70%
Qualification completions	44.70%	39.30%	33.30%	25.00%
First year retention	71.70%	78.90%	74.60%	68.80%
Student progression	44.10%	20.60%	No data on Nga Kete	No data on Nga Kete

Table data provided by South Pacific College of Natural Medicine from the Tertiary Education Commission-Te Amorangi Maturanga, Nga Kete

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 fraud²*
- 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.*

² 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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