

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS

AUTHORITY



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Information for Private Training
Establishments and Wānanga on
External Evaluation and Review

[New Zealand Government](#)

NZQA 

P 0800 697 296

E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz

Published 1 September 2009

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
How is evaluation used in quality assurance?	5
What is external evaluation and review?	6
Why do I have to participate in external evaluation and review?	7
What is the structure of external evaluation and review?	8
How does an organisation prepare for external evaluation and review?	9
Choosing focus areas	10
The on-site visit – what happens during the external evaluation and review?	12
What will an external evaluation and review cost?	13
Invoicing	14
How is an external evaluation and review scheduled?	15
Commencing external evaluation and review in 2009	16
The evaluation team	16
Conflicts of interest	17
What will be in the external evaluation and review report?	17
Will the report be published?	17
Reconsiderations	17
What will happen if the judgement is one of low confidence?	18
How will consistency between external evaluation and reviews be managed?	18
Principles guiding the conduct of external evaluation and reviews	18

Introduction



NZQA is leading the use of an evaluative approach to quality assurance in tertiary education in New Zealand. An evaluative approach is more aligned and “fit for purpose” as our sector shifts to a more direct focus on the value of the outcomes of learning. Ongoing self-assessment by tertiary education organisations is key to the new quality assurance framework. This evaluative underpinning is backed by periodic external evaluation and review. Information on the framework can be found on the NZQA website.

NZQA will continue to provide updated, relevant information and resources to assist in this process.

This guide is intended to provide a one-stop source of information for organisations in preparing for and experiencing external evaluation and review.

I would appreciate any feedback and comments you may have on this guide to ensure it addresses matters that are important to you and your organisation. Feedback can be addressed to Paul Stone, the Manager of the External Evaluation and Review Unit, newly established within the Quality Assurance Division.

Paul can be contacted on 04 463 3342 or by email

paul.stone@nzqa.govt.nz

Karen Poutasi
Chief Executive

How is evaluation used in quality assurance?

Evaluation is used in quality assurance to:

- answer questions about the value that learners gain from their education, the utility of their qualifications and the contribution of these to positive longer term outcomes such as employment, social and economic contribution to society
- explore qualitative and quantitative evidence of educational outcomes and the key processes which contribute to them
- enable a participatory approach, using systematic enquiry and specific tools to reach robust judgements.

What is external evaluation and review?

External evaluation and review is a systematic process of enquiry designed to provide independent judgements about an organisation's performance and capability in delivering high quality education. These judgements are expressed as statements of confidence where:

Educational performance is the extent to which the educational outcomes achieved by a tertiary education organisation represent quality and value for learners and the wider community (employers, regions, local or national interests).

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, that is, how effectively an organisation manages its accountability and improvement responsibilities.

The statements will be reported as one of four levels of confidence: *Highly Confident*, *Confident*, *Not Yet Confident* or *Not Confident*.

External evaluation and review is one component of each organisation's accountability to students, employers, funders, quality assurance bodies and other interested parties. It will also provide information to support improvement across the tertiary education sector.

Why do I have to participate in external evaluation and review?

NZQA is responsible for ensuring tertiary education organisations continue to meet statutory policies and criteria after initial approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration is granted. The NZQA policies and criteria require that ongoing quality assurance is provided through an organisation's self-assessment and external evaluation and review.

Participation in self-assessment and external evaluation and review is required by the criteria and policies NZQA has established under sections 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Education Act 1989 and section 253(1)(ca) for private training establishments.

What is the structure of an external evaluation and review?

The evaluation team conduct the external evaluation and review in four stages:

- developing the scope and the plan of enquiry
- undertaking the enquiry on-site
- reaching judgements
- reporting findings.

Tools for external evaluation and review

There are a range of tools the evaluation team will use in the conduct of the evaluation. They include:

a. Key evaluation questions

There are six key evaluation questions that provide the structure and direction for the enquiry. The questions operate within the focus areas and across the organisation. These high-level open-ended questions focus on either the outcomes achieved or the key processes contributing to the outcomes.

b. 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 up-to-date research and experience in New Zealand and overseas.

The tertiary evaluation indicators are the merit criteria used in external evaluation and review, guiding the sort of evidence that evaluators will be looking for when answering the key evaluation questions.

c. Performance criteria

The performance criteria set out the definitions or explanatory guides for making judgements. Performance criteria are provided at the level of the focus areas and at the organisational level for both educational performance and capability in self-assessment. Statements of confidence are one example of performance criteria.

More information on these tools for external evaluation and review is available on the NZQA website.

How does an organisation prepare for external evaluation and review?

Self-assessment process

An organisation that has planned, ongoing and effective self-assessment activities will be well prepared for an external evaluation and review. Best practice clearly indicates that self-assessment is not an exercise done only in preparation for an external evaluation and review.

The information gained as a result of the self-assessment activities, and the use the organisation has made of the information, is a major focus of the external evaluation and review.

Engaging with NZQA

The Lead Evaluator will contact the tertiary education organisation 8 to 10 weeks ahead of the scheduled week of review. The Lead Evaluator will ask for information about the organisation's self-assessment activities and processes which will be used as the basis for further discussion with the organisation and to inform the preliminary scope for the external evaluation and review.

The first stage in starting an external evaluation and review is for the Lead Evaluator and the organisation to discuss and agree the scope for the review and for the evaluation team to develop the plan of enquiry.

In most organisations it is not possible to evaluate all its activities, so a sample of activities or focus areas is selected in discussion with the organisation. Focus areas may be:

- “vertical” which include programmes, courses, schools and faculties – or possibly the whole organisation in the case of small or specialist providers
- “horizontal” which include processes and activities that directly or indirectly affect learners and the quality of education, across multiple programmes or organisational activities
- “mandatory” which 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.

In total, the number of focus areas will represent a “reasonable proportion” of the organisation's activities.

Choosing focus areas

The Lead Evaluator will contact the organisation to discuss the focus areas it wants to nominate for inclusion in the scope. At this time, the organisation identifies the evidence, in the form of results, reports, explanations and other information available to inform the selection. Through these discussions, the Lead Evaluator will encourage the organisation to explain how and how well its self-assessment is used to improve performance.

The evaluation team will contribute its own views on the focus areas to be included in the scope based on:

- self-assessment information from the TEO
- monitoring information from NZQA and other agencies eg Tertiary Education Commission, relevant industry training organisation
- results of complaints
- other agency requests.

The TEO and evaluation team interests in specific focus areas will be synthesised into an agreed scope. However, the final decision for the focus areas included in the scope rests with the NZQA Lead Evaluator.

Note: If NZQA does not receive the self-assessment information from the organisation when requested, the evaluation will still proceed. However, the evaluation team will require additional time during the on-site visit to review the self-assessment, which is likely to increase the cost of the external evaluation and review.

Mandatory focus areas

From time to time, NZQA may require mandatory focus areas to be included in every relevant external evaluation and review.

The first mandatory focus area to be determined is *governance, management and strategy*.

The implementation of the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* will be a mandatory focus area for those organisations who are signatories to the Code.

Number of focus areas

The following table indicates the likely number of focus areas for an external evaluation and review based on the characteristics of the organisation.

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
500–1000 students; + sites; multiple courses	6–8
1000 > students; multiple sites; multiple courses including degree programmes	8–10

Evidence available for the evaluation team

The starting point for an external evaluation and review is the tertiary education organisation's self-assessment processes and results and how these have been used.

The evaluation team will want to see the processes and activities used in all aspects of the organisation's self-assessment as it:

- gathers, interprets and reports information
- makes decisions based on the information
- implements changes as a result of the decisions
- monitors the effectiveness of the changes implemented.

Plan of enquiry

Prior to the on-site visit, the evaluation team will prepare a plan of enquiry which outlines how the key evaluation questions will be answered in each of the focus areas and how self-assessment and other sources of information will be used for this.

Tertiary education organisations with multiple delivery sites

If the organisation delivers courses at more than one site, it is possible that the team will need to visit one or more of these secondary sites. The team will decide which sites to visit when determining the plan of enquiry.

It is possible that during the on-site component of the external evaluation and review an issue arises that needs to be investigated further. The issue may involve activities based at other specific sites. In this instance, the plan would need to be revised to accommodate the visit.

The on-site visit – what happens during the external evaluation and review?

Reviewing the tertiary education organisation’s self-assessment

The evaluation team will want to understand the context of the findings of the self-assessment and how the organisation has interpreted and used the information. Information obtained from the self-assessment and other sources will be verified.

The team may want to see reports, minutes of meetings and converse with governors, managers, staff, students, employers and other key interested groups. Where the self-assessment information is weak or inconsistent, the team will look directly at the base information.

Evaluative conversations

Evaluative conversations are a key mechanism for conducting the enquiry and for the evaluation team to test the veracity of information, understand the context of information and how it has been interpreted and used.

For the organisation, evaluative conversations should also lead to a deeper understanding of its own data and feedback to assist in benchmarking its performance against that of other organisations.

What will an external evaluation and review cost?

The cost of an external evaluation and review is primarily dependent on the amount of time spent on the evaluation. This includes preparation for the evaluation, the on-site visit and preparation of the report.

Costs are based on the current charge out rate for NZQA Lead Evaluators which is \$150 per hour (GST excl.) including disbursements. Other evaluation team members are charged out at \$100 per hour (GST excl.) plus disbursements.

A schedule of indicative costs is included below. An estimate of the cost of an individual organisation's external evaluation and review will be communicated to the organisation when final arrangements are confirmed for the review. However, final costs will be determined by the actual time spent on the billable components outlined above.

The following table illustrates the indicative range costs for external evaluation and review for three typical organisations. Note all costs are GST exclusive.

Case study	TEO description	Estimated cost range for external evaluation and review (GST excl)
1	Small trade-training provider; 1 course; 15 EFTS	\$2,600–\$3,000
2	300 students; multiple courses (levels 1–4); 2 main sites	\$12,000–\$14,000
3	Multi-site degree-granting provider; 2000+ students	\$34,000–\$40,000

Invoicing

NZQA normally issues two invoices, the first in the month following the external evaluation and review visit, and a final invoice on completion of all work pertaining to the external evaluation and review. For the external evaluation and review of small providers, it is likely only one invoice will be issued on completion of the evaluation.

However, NZQA reserves the right to invoice providers at any time during the process if there are extenuating circumstances.

How is an external evaluation and review scheduled?

Each organisation will participate in an external evaluation and review within a period no longer than four years since the previous external evaluation and review, unless there are other reasons to trigger an evaluation (e.g. on request from a funding body).

Developing and publishing the schedule

Each year in June, NZQA will determine which organisations are due for external evaluation and review in the following calendar year. A draft schedule will be developed with external evaluation and reviews scheduled to commence in a designated week.

When an organisation is scheduled, it will be advised of the proposed week and invited to request amendments if the proposed week does not suit. A final schedule will be published on the NZQA website in August for external evaluations and review in the following calendar year. This means each organisation will have a minimum of 4 months and up to 16 months notice of the week its next external evaluation and review is scheduled. In the normal course of events, this is expected to enable sufficient notice for budgeting and resource allocation.

The exact dates in the scheduled week will be agreed with the organisation at the time of the initial contact about the external evaluation and review, approximately 8 to 10 weeks prior to the evaluation.

Changes to the schedule for external evaluation and review

Once the schedule is published, changes will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Commencing external evaluation and review in 2009

External evaluation and review commences in September 2009.

If an organisation would normally have been due for an audit between September 2009 and June 2010 then the following will apply:

- a. Private training establishments on less than a one-year audit cycle and those registered for less than one year will be audited against the private training establishment registration criteria.
- b. All other organisations will undergo external evaluation and review. Those organisations scheduled for external evaluation and review in 2009 will be advised directly.

To manage a progressive roll-out of external evaluation and review, some organisations may have their external evaluation and review deferred until 2010 or 2011. The schedule and its criteria will be published once confirmed.

NZQA recognises that tertiary education organisation self-assessment processes will take time to mature. NZQA has established a Quality Development unit to assist organisations develop capability in evaluative approaches to quality assurance. The Provider Development and Support unit continues its work with Māori and Pacific organisations.

Concurrently, a programme of mentoring and support is being implemented to support the external evaluation and review teams.

The evaluation team

NZQA has appointed a team of 8 lead evaluators who are responsible for leading and conducting all aspects of the external evaluation and review. In addition, there will be a pool of evaluators contracted from within tertiary education organisations, industry and the wider community.

All evaluators will be trained and competent. They will need to be credentialed to meet the competency standard for evaluators. Where a team of evaluators is required, they will be drawn from the pool.

Conflicts of interest

The Manager External Evaluation and Review will carefully select evaluators employed by a tertiary education organisation when making up evaluation teams in order to manage potential conflicts of interest.

What will be in the external evaluation and review report?

The report will be detailed and present the judgements from the evaluation, the main findings and the information that led to the judgements being determined.

Will the report be published?

The full report will be published on the NZQA website along with an executive summary. The report should be ready for publication on the NZQA website within eight weeks of completing the on-site visit and on expiry of the review period.

Prior to publication, the tertiary education organisation will be invited to comment on the draft report and whether this leads to any changes to the final report is at the discretion of NZQA. The report presents the findings and interpretations of the evaluation team.

Reconsiderations

If an organisation wishes the judgements of the external evaluation and review to be reconsidered this can be done through the internal NZQA reconsideration process. The request for the reconsideration must be made within 10 working days of the release to the organisation of the external evaluation and review report. A separate fact sheet on the reconsideration process is available on the NZQA website.

What will happen if the judgement is one of low confidence?

If an organisation receives a judgement of *not yet confident* or *not confident* for either educational performance or capability in self-assessment it will be referred to NZQA's Risk and Compliance Unit for follow up. The nature of the follow up will depend on the issues identified, although it is expected a plan of action will be agreed and implemented.

Funded organisations will also be advised to discuss the areas of concern with the relevant Tertiary Education Commission investment team.

How will consistency between external evaluation and reviews be managed?

A system is being set up between NZQA and the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQ) that is equivalent in function to external moderation of assessment. By reviewing external evaluation and review reports, the judgements given and the evidence for the judgements can be analysed and compared.

Principles guiding the conduct of external evaluation and reviews

Principles of natural justice, transparency and a common understanding of relationships and processes will guide the conduct of external evaluation and reviews. All NZQA evaluators must adhere to the standard of conduct described in the NZQA Code of Conduct including identification of any conflicts of interest.

The following table sets out the expectations of NZQA and the tertiary education organisation during external evaluation and reviews in accordance with these principles.

NZQA undertakes to:**The tertiary education organisation undertakes to:****Information**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make accurate information about the external evaluation and review process available in a timely manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make all relevant information available to NZQA, including self-assessment results, within requested timeframes |
|---|---|

Scope of the evaluation

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take into account the organisation's self-assessment when planning the scope • discuss the scope of the evaluation with the organisation and consider its suggestions • inform the organisation of the reasons for any changes to the scope of the evaluation as a result of its investigations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suggest focus areas for the evaluation that include a balance between issues where the TEO is performing well and those where it has identified a need for improvement |
|---|--|

Conduct of the evaluation

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the evidential basis for key findings and reach judgements based on evidence • treat all participants in the external evaluation and review professionally, respectfully and courteously, particularly when questioning, interpreting and clarifying the meaning of information. • outline its findings to the organisation so that there are "no surprises" in its report • report appropriately any harmful, illegal or unethical behaviour should it be discovered • provide the organisation with an opportunity to comment on the report before it is confirmed. The final report will be sent to the organisation prior to its publication. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify the governors, managers, staff, students and other interested parties that an evaluation is scheduled to take place • work constructively with evaluation teams to provide access to information on-site; and facilitate discussions with members of the governance, management, staff, students and other interested parties. |
|---|--|

Further information from the External Evaluation and Review Unit

For further information, contact Paul Stone, Manager External Evaluation and Review by email paul.stone@nzqa.govt.nz and refer to the NZQA website at www.nzqa.govt.nz

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