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NZQA Monitoring Report Agribusiness Training Ltd (MOE 8190) Final – at 11 June 2015

Executive Summary

As part of a sector review in 2014/2015 the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) commissioned Deloitte to undertake a focussed review of five selected Agribusiness Training Limited (ABT) programmes. Following this initial review, TEC added a sixth qualification to the scope and extended the review of all programmes to encompass the past six years back to 2009.

A key focus of the Deloitte review was whether the programmes were taught in accordance with NZQA's approval and TEC's funding requirements and complied with the teaching hours and weeks set out in the NZQA programme approval letters, as this forms the basis of TEC funding. The Deloitte report identified an apparent under delivery of teaching hours across six programmes delivered by ABT.

NZQA has subsequently carried out a review of five of the programmes reviewed by Deloitte with focus on whether the programmes meet the educational outcomes set out in the original approval documents. The review found that the content of the programmes currently meet the learning outcomes set out in the original programme approvals. NZQA did not include the National Certificate in Apiculture as part of the review as ABT is no longer offering this course and all students have been transferred to the current New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture.

Action is required to ensure that ABT's programme documents and the approvals given by NZQA are consistent with ABT's intended methods of delivery in the future. Applications are already in progress for approval of programme changes.

Background

ABT has been offering the five programmes since they were approved by NZQA. These are:

- Certificate in Horticulture Industry Practice (Level 3), approved in 2007
- National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3), approved in 2009
- National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4), approved in 2012
- Certificate in Land Based Skills (Level 3), approved in 2006
- New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3), approved in 2014

An external evaluation and review (EER) was undertaken in July 2014 and ABT received a Category 3 rating (Confident in educational performance, not yet confident in capability in self-assessment). Prior to this (2011 -2014) ABT held a Category 1 rating.

The next EER is scheduled for 10 August 2015.

NZQA staff conducted a monitoring visit to ABT in Invercargill on 23 April 2015.

Particular attention was given to:

- Programme outcomes
- Assessment re sit opportunities
- Awarding of Certificates

The monitoring visit involved undertaking on site interviews with management and key staff – the Director, Education and Training Manager, Finance and Administration Manager, Chief Registry Officer, and Moderator. It also involved reviewing a wide range of documentation.

Information sources viewed on site included programme documentation, internal programme monitoring documents for 2015, unit standard templates, and assessment and moderation documents.

Documents viewed post visit were ABT's student handbook, marketing brochures and programme documentation.

Review of programmes delivered

Certificate in Horticulture Industry Practice (CHIP) (Level 3)

NZQA Programme Approval Details:

Approval date: July 2007

Programme number: 109954

Credits: 70

Content: The CHIP has three compulsory units on the naming of plants, structure of plants and plant processes and life cycles. Learners must complete at least one module from the following set: soils and growing media; amenity horticulture; nursery production; organic production; horticultural water management; landscaping; plant propagation; pruning and training; weed management; agrichemical application. Learners may then complete one or more modules to a maximum of 25 credits from the following set: machinery maintenance and operation; horticultural structures; health and safety; chainsaw safety; ATV safety; tractor safety; agrichemical awareness; HSNO awareness; approved handler.

NZQA Findings:

Unit standards are offered through a range of learning packages including:

- Growing Organically
- Soft Landscaping
- Amenity Landscaping
- Chainsaw Safety
- Farm Bike Safety
- Tractor Safety
- Plant Propagation

All three compulsory unit standards that are part of the CHIP are currently offered within the Plant Propagation Learning Package. Based on the results of the monitoring visit, and the

review of the content of the programme and delivery methods, NZQA considers this programme still meets the learning outcomes of the original programme approval.

National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3)

NZQA Programme Approval Details:

Approval date: November 2009

Programme number: 112459

Credits: 105

Content: The National Certificate in Horticulture was approved with the following nine compulsory unit standards: 771, 1026, 1672, 21039, 21041, 21551, 21557, 22191, 25158 and a number of electives.

NZQA Findings:

Unit standards are offered through a range of learning packages including:

- Organic Horticulture
- Property Management & Landscape Skills
- Amenity Horticulture
- Landskills
- Pest Disease & Weed Management

If learners have completed the CHIP programme they have 70 credits that are then cross-credited into the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3). The total credit requirement is 105 credits. NZQA has reviewed the content of the programme and considers it still meets the learning outcomes of the original programme approval.

National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4)

NZQA Programme Approval Details:

Approval date: July 2012

Programme number: 114321

Credits: 140

Content: This qualification requires learners to complete at least 110 credits from 13 horticulture-related domains, with any additional credits required taken from elsewhere on the framework. At least half of the credits achieved in the programme must be at level 4 or above. The ABT programme contains five elective modules relating to some of the strand options available. Learners select the combination of modules most relevant to their workplace or which builds on the training they have done at level 3. Each module has at least one compulsory unit standard in it, with additional units that can be added to the package of study depending on the workplace context of learners.

NZQA Findings:

Unit standards are offered through a range of learning packages including:

- Hard Landscaping
- Amenity Horticulture

- Pests, Weeds and Disease
- Nursery Production
- Horticulture Management

If learners have completed the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) they have 105 credits that are then cross-credited into the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4). The total credit requirement is 140 credits, 70 of which need to be from level four. NZQA is currently analysing a programme change application for the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4). The change is for inclusion of additional unit standards.

Based on the results of the monitoring visit, and the review of the content of the programme and delivery methods, NZQA considers this programme still meets the learning outcomes of the original programme approval.

Certificate in Land Based Skills (Level 3)

NZQA Programme Approval Details:

Approval date: June 2009
 Programme number: 109370
 Credits: 80

Content: This course covers a broad range of agricultural and land based subjects including firearms skills, small engines, HSNO, farm dogs, pasture production, livestock handling, water supply, ATV skills, livestock production, shelter, tractor skills, milk harvesting training, ATUVU skills, agrichemical awareness, calf rearing, fencing, irrigation, motorcycle skills, horse care, and chainsaw skills. Credits gained while attending this course can be used towards National Qualifications. Unit standards are selected from the Agriculture, Driving, Forestry, Horticulture, Occupational Safety and Health, Pest Management, Rural Contracting, Equine and Mechanical Engineering sub-fields.

NZQA Findings:

The Certificate in Land Based Skills is made up of modules of unit standards. To achieve the certificate learners must complete the two compulsory safety unit standards and then choose any combination of modules. The qualification is delivered in part-time block courses or “Strands”. Some require attendance for one or two days, others are delivered part-time over a period of several weeks.

Based on the results of the monitoring visit, and the review of the content of the programme and delivery methods, NZQA considers this programme still meets the learning outcomes of the original programme approval.

Beekeeping for Beginners (New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture Level 3)

NZQA Programme Approval Details:

Approval date: February 2014
 Programme number: 116614
 Credits: 65

Content: The programme contains three modules aligned to the qualification Graduate Outcomes. They are: Construct and Manipulate Beehives (35 credits), Hive Transport (5 credits), and Pests and Disease (25 credits). The topics within each are delivered in a specific sequence aligned to the apiculture season. Learners must commence at the beginning of the programme and complete the entire programme without any flexibility in module selection. Each Module has a small elective portion, so that there is the flexibility to alter the programme content to best suit the needs of different learner groups. The submitted programme contains the electives ABT most commonly uses. Modules contain a mixture of Unit Standards and Learning Packages. Learning Packages are used where existing Unit Standards are not of the required level or configuration to meet the Graduate Outcomes of the qualification.

NZQA Findings:

ABT provided NZQA with a copy of its rationale and outcomes for the New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3). This illustrates how the programme is constructed with several elective options attached to each of the three modules. This allows for some flexibility to include what is most relevant to different learner groups.

NZQA notes that in ABT's current student handbook the National Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3) is listed rather than the current New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3). NZQA recommends ABT update its student handbook to accurately reflect the current programmes on offer.

Based on the results of the monitoring visit, and the review of the content of the programme and delivery methods, NZQA considers this programme still meets the learning outcomes of the original programme approval.

Delivery in relation to credit value

NZQA considers that students are engaged in a package of learning that reflects the credit value of the qualification and allows them to gain the necessary knowledge and skills. The focus for ABT is on ensuring that students have met the learning outcomes, which NZQA believes is educationally sound.

Programme changes

As a result of the Targeted Review of Qualifications (TROQ) agriculture and horticultural qualifications have been reviewed and the new New Zealand Certificates are due to be approved and published in May 2015. ABT programmes will be affected in the following manner:

Certificate in Horticulture Industry Practice (Level 3)

This is a provider developed qualification and will expire within two years of the publication date of a new qualification. ABT will need to apply for programme approval and accreditation for a new programme leading to a New Zealand qualification.

National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3)

This qualification is due to expire in December 2017 from which point no new enrolments will be accepted. ABT will need to apply for programme approval and accreditation for a new programme leading to a New Zealand qualification.

National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4)

This qualification was approved by NZQA in 2012. ABT currently have an application in for a programme change (NZQA reference C19197) which is being analysed by NZQA.

Certificate in Land Based Skills (Level 3)

This is a provider developed qualification and will expire within two years of the publication date of a new qualification. ABT will need to apply for programme approval and accreditation for a new programme leading to a New Zealand qualification

New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3)

NZQA considers this programme will require a programme change application to clarify the change to delivery methods and delivery hours.

Administration and record keeping

NZQA notes that changes have been made to improve the administrative systems which record delivery. In 2013, the Academic Manager at ABT introduced the Internal Programme Monitoring form for Branch Managers to complete. The form goes some way to illustrate a break-down of learning hours for each course ABT delivers. However, in its current format NZQA believe that the form is both complicated for Branch Managers to fill in and is difficult to follow and understand.

NZQA recommend that the Internal Programme Monitoring form is simplified to clearly show the differences in directed learning hours and self-directed learning hours and what components make up each of these, for example: class hours, tutorials, online learning.

Programme delivery

NZQA notes that during the visit to ABT, discussions were held about the change in programme delivery to include blended learning and online learning components. ABT stated it has recently started using a content management system (CMS) which was designed by local software firm Flatout.

ABT has started using the CMS with learners in its programmes. ABT indicated to NZQA that a full description of the blended learning delivery approach will be included in its programme changes and any new programme applications.

Awarding of Certificates

The Deloitte report identified there could be an issue around the awarding of certificates but states that ABT has investigated this issue and has advised Deloitte that this was an isolated incident and that further procedures have been put in place to ensure that similar situations do not occur going forward.

ABT stated that due to the seasonal nature of their work some learners may need longer to complete their qualifications which can have an effect on when certificates are issued. There could also be a delay in awarding certificates as ABT waits for a few cohorts to complete their qualification and the certificates are then awarded at graduation.

NZQA recommends ABT update its student handbook to include its practices for issuing learners' certificates.

Further assessment opportunities (re-sits)

Final report: issued to ABT 11 June 2015

ABT provided copies of its assessment templates which advise learners they have the right to attempt one re-assessment and any further re-assessment attempts are at the discretion of the tutor. This approach is consistent with Primary ITO's guidelines for best practice around further assessment opportunities. NZQA has identified no serious concerns in relation to further assessment opportunities based on the documented approach.

Moderation

ABT provided a copy of its Assessment and Moderation Policy from its QMS. This includes internal and external moderation procedures, moderation plans for 2014 and 2015, and moderation summary of results for 2014. ABT has a good record with external moderation, consistently meeting standards for those units moderated by NZQA and Primary ITO.

NZQA has no concerns in relation to moderation.

Next steps

NZQA recommends that:

- ABT reviews its current programmes in consideration of the change to qualifications as part of the TROQ.
- Following the review ABT submits applications for programme changes, or new programme approvals for the following four programmes by the end of July 2015:
 - Certificate in Horticulture Industry Practice
 - National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3)
 - Certificate in Land Based Skills (Level 3)
 - New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3)
- ABT clarify its terminology for directed learning and self-directed learning and simplify its Internal Programme Monitoring form to reflect this.
- ABT clarify the further assessment opportunities with all tutors as part of the professional development programme and continue the best practice of group moderation of assessment.
- ABT update its student handbook to include practices for issuing learners certificates.
- ABT update its student handbook to accurately reflect the current programmes on offer – in particular to include the new New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3).