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Using Evaluation to Strengthen
Organisational Self-Assessment

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The Purpose of this Resource

This document is designed to help governors, managers and staff at all levels in tertiary education organisations (TEOs) carry out self-assessment activities, as part of an evaluative approach to quality assurance.

The resource provides information on:

- the place of self-assessment in an environment of evaluative quality assurance
- the role of self-assessment in bringing about organisational improvement
- implementing self-assessment activities.

The ideas and examples provided here are a guide only. TEOs will need to develop their own approach, suited to their organisation.

However, any approach to self-assessment should remain consistent with the “Key Features of Effective Self-Assessment” presented on page 6. [Q](#)

The Quality Assurance Environment

Regulatory Arrangements

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are separate and complementary elements. They are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 & 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) & (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments (PTEs), the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after initial approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration is granted. However the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for university compliance, and the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQuality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for polytechnic sector compliance.

Quality Assurance Framework

These policies and criteria are gazetted under the Education Act 1989. They provide a quality assurance framework established by NZQA comprising four components:

- initial entry processes of course approval, accreditation to deliver a course, registration of PTEs and accreditation to assess standards on the National Qualifications Framework
- self-assessment
- external evaluation and review
- managing the consequences of a TEO's poor performance.

The quality assurance framework uses the theory and practice of evaluation in order to focus on the quality of educational outcomes and key contributing processes. Evaluation as a discipline provides a systematic basis for answering questions about quality and value.

Evaluative quality assurance draws on a wide range of international theory and practice, in particular mixed method and participatory approaches, to arrive at a robust process for reaching consistent and comparable judgements.

The following principles underpin the quality assurance framework.

a. High Trust and High Accountability

Evaluative quality assurance operates in an environment of 'high trust and high accountability' throughout the tertiary sector with the relationship between government agencies and TEOs based on good communication and collaboration.

A high trust environment recognises a TEO has autonomy over its own processes, with minimal Crown intervention except in relation to undertaking its regulatory roles.

Government recognises that quality is the direct responsibility of each individual TEO. Every TEO is accountable for the educational outcomes it achieves and the ongoing improvement of educational performance.

In return for greater autonomy, the Crown needs to have a high level of confidence in each TEO. External evaluation and review is the mechanism that will determine those levels of confidence. However, if the performance of a TEO falls below an acceptable level, that organisation will be monitored more closely by central agencies.

b. Quality as a Dynamic Concept

Quality is dynamic and will look different in different contexts. In tertiary education, what matters is the value that learners gain from their learning experience, the utility of their qualifications and the extent to which positive longer-term outcomes occur.

This dynamic concept of quality is consistent with international trends¹, where there is a shift from quality control (meeting input standards) to quality enhancement and striving for excellence. With this approach, the emphasis is on the aspects of an education experience that create better outcomes.

Every TEO will have an understanding of quality which will vary according to the purpose and goals of the organisation. In the TEO context, quality relates to how well learners actually achieve and the extent to which that achievement meets both their needs and those of the wide range of groups and individuals that have a direct, formal and often economic interest in the work of TEOs.

c. A Focus on Outcomes

Traditional quality assurance has focused mainly on inputs, systems and activities. This assumes that doing these well provides an assurance of quality.

Evaluative quality assurance is focused on the outcomes of tertiary education and the key processes that contribute to these outcomes. A key difference from traditional approaches is that while evaluative quality assurance also looks at processes, it does so from the perspective of the utility or impact of these processes on what is done and achieved – the “valued outcomes” of tertiary education.

¹ NZQA has summarised extensive international literature on quality assurance in higher and further education. These summaries are available on the NZQA website: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/tertiary/>

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Outcomes are clearly affected by contextual inputs such as student characteristics, staff and resources. An important indicator of quality in practice is evidence that a TEO is taking all reasonable steps to maximise learner achievement.

Table 1 outlines the difference between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. These terms are used throughout this document.

Table 1: **An Outcome-focused Approach** (E.J. Davidson, Workshop 2009)

EVALUATION TYPE	TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
PROCESS EVALUATION	Inputs	People and things that are <i>put into</i> or <i>accepted into</i> an organisation	Staff and resources Learners
	Activities	Programmes, systems and services that the organisation <i>delivers</i>	Courses and programmes Support services
	Outputs	“Products” and trained learners that are <i>produced by</i> (or through) the organisation’s programmes and activities	Graduates Course/unit credits Qualifications
OUTCOME EVALUATION	Outcomes	Changes that <i>happen to</i> learners, employing organisations, communities and the economy that are at least partially caused by the organisation’s programmes and activities	Knowledge and skills Attitudes and confidence Job placement and salaries Work performance

This example uses baking a cake to illustrate the distinction between a systems-based audit and an outcomes-focused evaluation.

A **systems-based** audit would focus mainly on ensuring that the:

- baker was suitably qualified
- appropriate equipment was used
- kitchen was clean
- right ingredients were used and in the right quantities.

In an **evaluative approach** to quality assurance, the baker will, in the first instance, start assessing the quality of the cake from the angle of how well the final product satisfied the customer.

So the questions would be:

Did it taste right?

Did it have the right texture?

Did it look appetising?

Was it safe to eat?

And most importantly:

Is there anything I want to improve?





Self-Assessment

Self-assessment includes the ongoing processes a TEO uses to gain evidence of its own effectiveness in providing quality education.

Responsibility for effective self-assessment is organisation-wide, actively involving governors, managers, teachers and support staff. Effective self-assessment is integrated into the business so that informed understanding of what is being achieved directly influences organisational decision-making, prioritising, planning and actions. It impacts throughout the organisation.

Effective organisational self-assessment uses evaluative enquiry to foster organisational improvement and create a positive change in the outcomes for learners. An important consideration will be ensuring that educational standards are maintained (for example as evidenced through moderation) at the same time as TEOs drive towards improving student retention and achievement. Self-assessment is considered to be effective when it can demonstrate that it meets the key characteristics outlined below.

TEOs may choose to involve people from outside the organisation in their self-assessment but it is basically an internally conducted process.

Key Features of Effective Self-Assessment

NZQA does not prescribe how you should conduct your self-assessment. However, any process you use should be comprehensive, authentic, transparent, robust, and focused on:

- **needs assessment** – the extent to which TEOs systematically determine and address the needs of learners, employers and the wider community
- **processes and practices** – the processes and practices that help to achieve outcomes e.g. the primary importance of good teaching, or the role of effective learner support services
- **learner achievement** – the impact of educational provision on learner progress and achievement
- **outcomes** – what is being achieved and the value of that for learners, employers and the wider community
- **using what is learned** – self-assessment should result in evidence-based conclusions and decision-making that will feed into strategic and business planning, leading to positive change
- **actual improvement** – the extent to which improvements are relevant and worthwhile.



External Evaluation and Review

External evaluation and review is a periodic evaluation of a TEO to provide a statement of confidence (judgement) about an organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It uses a systematic process to make independent judgements about educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

Educational performance is the extent to which the educational outcomes achieved by a TEO represent quality and value for learners and other relevant groups. 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. It reflects the extent to which an organisation effectively manages its accountability and improvement responsibilities.

External evaluation focuses most directly on the:

- extent to which the TEO systematically determines and addresses learner and wider community needs
- key processes contributing to the achievement of outcomes for learners
- quality of educational provision and its impact on learner progress and achievement
- achievement of outcomes for learners and the wider community (employers, regions, local or national interests)
- effectiveness of the TEO's self-assessment in understanding its own performance and using this for improvement.

Further information on external evaluation and review can be found on the NZQA website. [Q](#)

Evaluation Tools

Key evaluation questions (KEQs) and tertiary evaluation indicators are the main tools of external evaluation and review, along with performance criteria used to reach judgements about educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

A TEO may find the KEQs and the tertiary evaluation indicators useful when it is undertaking its self-assessments. They can create a strong link between self-assessment and the external evaluation and review. By using the same tools, evaluators can engage in conversations using common definitions and understandings.

There may however be times where a TEO will need to use its own questions or indicators for self-assessment activities, to reflect features unique to its organisation.

“It makes you look at yourself and be honest and see what you can do to improve... I like that it focuses on the learner and the delivery of programmes and what the learner is getting out of the programme.”

TEO staff member

Key Evaluation Questions

The KEQs are designed to explore what are widely regarded as the most important dimensions of educational quality: programme content and design, and delivery and outcomes. They provide a common platform for the external evaluation and review of TEOs regardless of their size or the type of programmes they offer.

These high-level, open-ended questions focus on either the outcomes achieved or the key processes contributing to the outcomes.

Outcome questions

These questions focus on the value of the outcomes achieved in tertiary education.

1. How well do learners achieve?
2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders², including learners?

² ‘Stakeholders’ can be different groups of people in different TEOs, but are likely to include some or all of: students, communities, employers, professional bodies and other relevant regional and national groups.

Process questions

These questions focus on the quality and value of the key contributing processes in tertiary education.

3. How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?
4. How effective is the teaching?
5. How well are learners guided and supported?
6. How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?


Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

The indicators provide a basis for thinking about how quality and value may be identified. They allow a common understanding of what constitutes quality in the way TEOs operate and the outcomes they achieve. In external evaluation and review, using these indicators supports robust judgements and a consistent approach to evaluation across all TEOs.

The tertiary evaluation indicators were developed using systems-modelling research. They are based on up-to-date research and experience in New Zealand and overseas. The indicators include references to relevant educational research.

Appendix 2 lists the tertiary evaluation indicators. Further information on the indicators can be found in the publication, *Tertiary evaluation indicators for tertiary education organisations* and is available on the NZQA website.

Performance Criteria

Performance criteria set out the definitions or explanatory guides for external evaluation and review teams to make judgements about educational performance and capability in self-assessment. 

Using Evaluation in Self-Assessment – an Overview

Evaluation can be useful in self-assessment as it provides a way of creating knowledge that can be used for improving organisational effectiveness.

There are many different approaches to evaluation, but most use quantitative and qualitative data to better understand what is happening in a programme or organisation. Using evaluation enables a deep level of understanding to be gained by staff engaged in the process. The methods of evaluation involve dialogue, reflection, questioning and interpreting data and evidence. In addition, evaluation includes identifying and clarifying beliefs, and challenging assumptions and knowledge.

A TEO may use evaluative self-assessment to explore an aspect of its business it wants to know more about. The open-ended, key evaluation questions used in external evaluation and review could provide a useful starting point.

The tertiary evaluation indicators can also be useful as they present an understanding of what constitutes quality in the way TEOs operate and the outcomes they achieve. In addition, the indicators can be used to assist in:

- defining the scope of a self-assessment activity or activities
- framing evaluative conversations
- identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for innovation.

Building Evaluation Capability

Using evaluation in self-assessment can be a very challenging process and will be most successful when the organisation has a supportive learning culture and is committed to identifying areas for improvement.

An organisation that supports the use of evaluation in its self-assessment will typically:

- value the diversity of its staff and the contribution each person makes to the organisation
- engender trust between staff
- support risk-taking and accept that some initiatives will fail
- value lessons learned from mistakes.

Building capability in evaluative thinking will take time. Appendix 4 provides a checklist which includes a range of suggestions for how a TEO might approach this. The following figure presents some practice-based suggestions for implementing self-assessment.

Figure 1: Practice-based Principles for Implementing Self-Assessment

- Be open to learning.
- A collegial, inclusive process is critical to success and ongoing learning.
- Take an all-of-organisation approach – this helps self-assessment be part of “business as usual” and is integrated into strategic and business planning. It also has symbolic value and helps leaders model relevant behaviours.
- Self-assessment is an internal process – don’t contract it out.
- Take a team-based approach – bringing multiple perspectives to bear on data analysis yields richer and more valuable insights, increased awareness of other parts of the business and fosters a sense of interconnectedness.
- Share responsibility – involve academic and support staff in an inclusive process. It is non-threatening so it evokes interest.
- Invest and build in staff capability, for example hold training workshops to shift mindsets towards quality. NZQA can assist you with this.
- Self-assessment is ongoing – processes evolve over time and become embedded in business as usual.
- Focus on things that impact most on student outcomes. Find new ways to ask questions about them, to test their contribution to the outcomes.
- Be analytical. This will help build capability in using data and other evidence to inform the work.
- Be evaluative. Determine what works and what does not and take the hard decisions if necessary.
- Allow time and space – self-assessment needs to become internalised.

Q

“There is a great deal of good practice out there but it’s not celebrated, shared or debated enough”

TEO staff member

Using Self-Assessment in Your Organisation

Effective self-assessment will have the key features outlined on page 6. The process below is a guide only and offers a way to approach self-assessment systematically and from an organisational view.

This high-level approach to self-assessment can be tailored to suit individual TEOs and is represented in the figure below.

Figure 2: **Stages of a Self-Assessment**



Ultimately, it is about understanding how well your organisation is achieving its educational outcomes. You will be interested in asking questions that enable you to build up a picture of how well this is being done.

Step 1: Planning

Select an Appropriate Focus

You should develop an approach that systematically works through all aspects of your business over a defined period of time (at least every four years). Depending on the size and available resources, it may take several years to cover all aspects of your organisation.

It is recommended that you focus initially on a manageable number of important areas, to help you develop and refine your method and approach. You can broaden the scope progressively as you develop expertise and as resources allow. It is likely that you will already have some of the processes in place to gather data in the area(s) you have selected.

The area(s) of focus you choose should be of sufficient relevance or importance to learner outcomes to warrant the effort involved.

Starting with a narrow area of focus enables you to consider what data is particularly useful to you in undertaking the investigation and for your business and planning.

Examples of areas to begin with include:

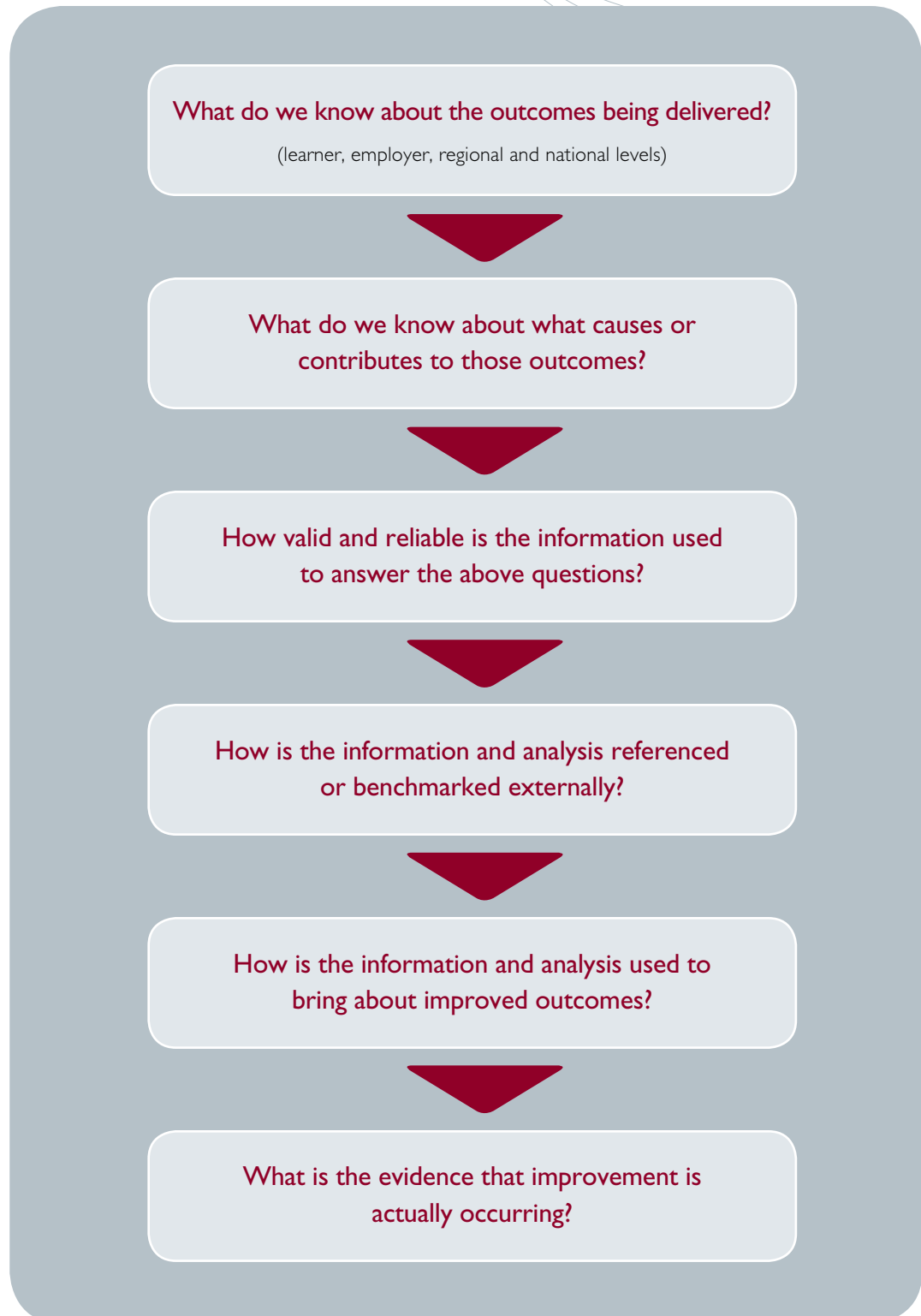
- a particular learner group, e.g. international learners
- programmes and/or services where there have been complaints
- part or all of a specific programme
- an area that is strategically important to the organisation
- high priority or high-stakes programmes or processes
- important national or regional programmes
- programmes with large enrolments
- pilot programmes and new initiatives, especially those that may be expanded if successful
- areas or programmes that are experiencing problems
- language, literacy and numeracy initiatives.

The plan needs to be sufficiently flexible to enable you to adjust your priorities if new issues emerge or the original focus area is subsequently shown to have significant impacts across the organisation as a whole. e.g. the adequacy of learner support.

“It’s all about knowing what your organisation is about and what the most important things are you are trying to do. Once that’s clear, your antennae become tuned and you can start to collect evidence in a whole wide variety of ways.”

TEO staff member

Figure 3: Getting to the Essence of Self-Assessment



Take a Strategic View Across the Organisation

Your self-assessment activities should reflect the purpose and goals of the organisation, which will be based on the needs and aspirations of your learners and other interested parties.

They also need to make explicit the educational outcomes you are trying to achieve. This set of outcomes provides the basis for testing:

- how well you achieve your educational outcomes
- what factors impact on the achievement of these outcomes
- what other information is needed and what steps need to be taken to obtain this.

Use a Collaborative Approach

Effective self-assessment will engage a wide range of people at all stages of the process, to ensure a broad view across the organisation. That includes the initial planning phase.

Senior management need to be involved to drive change within the organisation. Teaching staff, support staff, learners, employers and communities should be involved too.

Small organisations will be able to involve all staff directly. Larger organisations may need to work through a steering group, and include self-assessment as part of a programme of work.

“You can’t be complacent. You need to be honest and look at your own situation really hard and see what you need to do to improve”

TEO staff member

Involving a wide range of people across the organisation not only helps to understand and address issues but also enhances commitment, ownership and “buy-in”.

Allow Time


Be realistic about the time you will need for each area to be explored appropriately. It is important to anticipate the unexpected, such as a need for extra data or more investigation than initially planned.

Involving a wide range of staff also requires careful time management. For example, timetable issues can make it hard for staff from different parts of the organisation to meet.

Step 2: Gathering Data

What is known about the educational outcomes being achieved in the selected area(s)?

Having chosen an area for evaluation, you need to establish what it is you want to know about it. Appendix I provides key evaluation questions you could use to guide your enquiry. It shows how these can link with the relevant tertiary evaluation indicators and possible sources of evidence that you could use.



“Data may range from [the results of] recording a good conversation in the staff room to meetings with local employers – everything is valid if it helps you to provide evidence of how you meet your organisation’s own goals.”

TEO staff member

Choose questions that are relevant to the area you are looking at. For instance: “How well do learners achieve?” or “How well are learners guided and supported?” would apply if you were evaluating a programme or course, or could equally apply across the TEO as a whole.

It is also important to identify which outputs/outcomes are relevant here. You need to have a process that allows you to identify these. The tertiary evaluation indicators (Appendix 2) can help you do this.

Identify what qualitative and quantitative data (evidence) is already available to answer your chosen question(s). Identify any gaps and how you could fill them.

Appendix 3 provides a template for a “Plan of Enquiry” that may be useful for this part of the exercise.

Quantitative (numerical/statistical) or qualitative (descriptive) data can take many forms and can include:

- enrolments, learner completion and achievement
- moderation and monitoring reports
- notes from interviews, surveys and observations
- feedback from relevant groups
 - internal groups such as learners, teaching staff and management.

What is known about what causes or contributes to the achievement of the outcomes?

A mix of evidence will be needed to answer the KEQs confidently, preferably from at least two or three distinctly different sources.

Data may need additional analysis, to better understand what factors have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes.

Using enquiry questions can help you probe deeper to decide whether you need additional data or more in-depth investigation. You could use the enquiry questions listed in the tertiary evaluation indicators of your chosen KEQs. Alternatively, you may wish to develop your own lines of further enquiry.

How reliable and valid is the information used to answer the questions?

To draw reasonable conclusions about the achievement of educational outcomes your data needs to be:

- valid
- reliable
- complete
- sufficient
- up-to-date.

Ultimately your quantitative and qualitative data should be robust enough to enable reliable and consistent answers to the KEQs. Having quality data should also enable you to measure and monitor the progress made as a result of improvements over time.

How is the information benchmarked or referenced externally?

Where possible, your data should be benchmarked externally to enable you to compare your educational outcome achievement with providers of similar courses or with those teaching learners with similar attributes. The benchmarking information you chose to use will need to offer a valid comparison with your own data.

“The discussions have always happened but they are generally informal without a clear purpose and means of integrating them strategically into planning and making improvements”

TEO staff member

Benchmarking data may come from a variety of sources and, for TEC-funded providers, could include SDR (Single Data Return) and TEC benchmarking information where this is available.

What about compliance issues?

All TEOs need to be aware of any legislation or regulations that apply to them. This requires identifying relevant requirements and then regularly checking that the organisation continues to comply with them.

Although this is not an evaluation activity as such, these checks should be carried out as part of self-assessment and included in any reporting. Where non-compliance is found, action plans should include remedial work to be done.

Step 3: Analysing and Interpreting the Information

To establish your level of achievement of educational outcomes, you will need to analyse and interpret the data to determine patterns, trends, themes, linkages and relationships.

For example: Is there some pattern to the timing of learner withdrawal from a course? Does this pattern require further investigation? Is this pattern replicated in any other courses? Is it important enough to investigate further? Is there any information in the learner feedback that indicates why learners withdraw at this stage? If not, how can we get this information?

Table 2 below provides an example of where further analysis and interpretation would be important. It is an extract from a summary of pass rates by ethnicity, for a single qualification in a TEO. The unusual result highlighted for the Ethnicity D group needs to be understood. Further questioning would be aimed at uncovering the reasons for the decline in the pass rate in 2007.

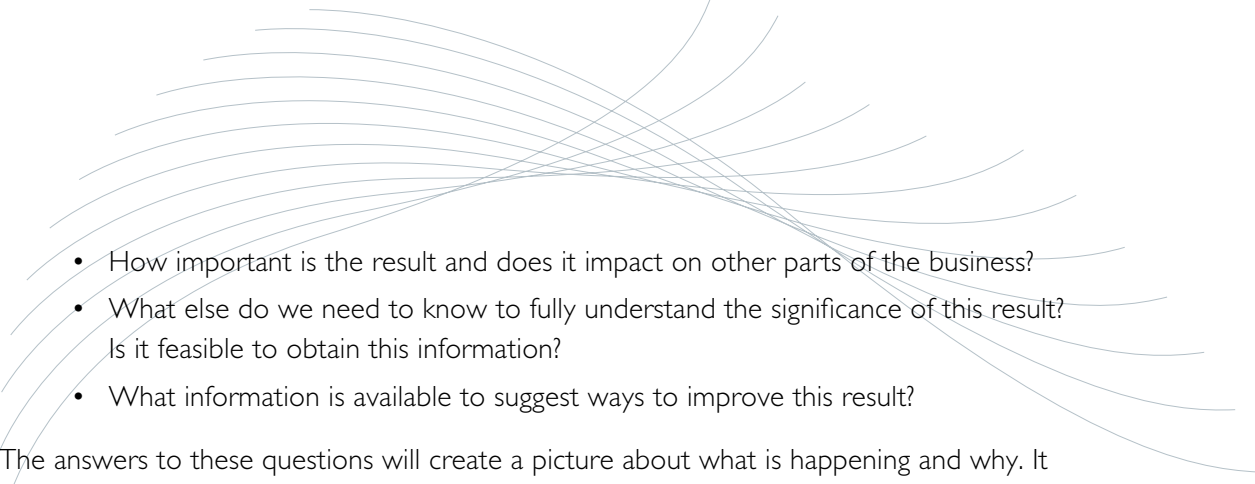
Table 2: Learner Pass Rate Data by Ethnicity

ENROLMENT PASS RATES (%)			
Student Type	2007	2006	2005
Total Student Body	79	80.78	67.23
Ethnicity A	70.69	81.48	42.86
Ethnicity B	79.31	70.48	46.51
Ethnicity C	81.35	82.16	68.34
Ethnicity D	34.78	100	83.88

How is the information and analysis used to bring about improved outcomes?

Evaluative conversations involving all levels of the organisation can be useful to interpret the information by asking questions such as:

- Is this result expected or unexpected?
- What are the probable reasons for this result and what evidence is there to support them?

- 
- How important is the result and does it impact on other parts of the business?
 - What else do we need to know to fully understand the significance of this result?
Is it feasible to obtain this information?
 - What information is available to suggest ways to improve this result?

The answers to these questions will create a picture about what is happening and why. It will then enable decisions to be made about whether more information might be needed, whether it is possible to find that, and what needs to be done to make improvements.

Step 4: Making Decisions

By this stage you should have a good understanding of how well you are achieving educational outcomes in the areas you have evaluated. You can now consider what actions you might want to take to improve performance, either in a particular area or more broadly. Findings in a specific area may have implications for the organisation as a whole.

Good decisions will be justifiable and evidence-based.

Each TEO will need to be clear about where the responsibility for the various decisions lies.

Step 5: Reporting and Action

It is essential that your self-assessment process, its findings, and the actions taken as a result are documented and reported to senior managers, councils or business owners.


Reports need not be lengthy but must be useful. Most importantly each TEO should have a clear process for ensuring that self-assessment results are used to make real improvements.

This is important for your own internal management but also as evidence for any subsequent external evaluation and review. Such documentation will allow you to demonstrate to the evaluators, or any other internal or external groups, that you are using self-assessment successfully to make improvements.

If self-assessment is robust, and record-keeping meticulous, the external evaluation and review process can be relatively non-intrusive. Records may also include file notes, reports to Boards or owners, etc.

Step 6: Monitoring Improvements

Once you have decided what actions to take to bring about improvements, you will need a plan to help you implement these. This should also capture any opportunities for innovation you may have identified.

The plan should build on existing good practice, monitor whether the actions lead to improved educational outcomes, and, if so, integrate the actions into your overall business and strategic planning. 

Useful Evaluation References and Resources

Davidson, E.J. (2005) Evaluation methodology basics: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation. CA: Sage.

Kufmam, R., Guerra, I., Platt, W. A. (2006) Practical evaluation for educators: Finding what works and what doesn't. CA: Sage.

Owen, J.M. (2007) Program evaluation: Forms and approaches. New York: Guilford Press.

Patton, M.Q. (1997) Utilisation-focussed evaluation (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Scriven, M. (1991) Evaluation thesaurus (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

For other resources see list at end of Appendix 4.

Websites

American Evaluation Association <http://www.eval.org/>

Australasian Evaluation Society: <http://www.aes.asn.au/>

Canadian Evaluation Society <http://www.evaluationcanada.ca>

National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence <http://www.akoatearoa.ac.nz> 

Appendix I: Linking Key Evaluation Questions, Possible Evidence and Indicators

HOW WELL DO LEARNERS ACHIEVE?	
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learner achievement data (retentions, completions etc) • destination data • feedback from learners, staff and other interested communities or individuals • outcome information
Relevant sets of Tertiary Evaluation Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outcomes for learners and communities • fostering effective learning environments • minimising barriers to learning • managing change strategically • assessment supports learning • organisational purpose and direction
WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OUTCOMES FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING LEARNERS?	
Some possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of feedback from relevant groups and graduate data • graduate satisfaction feedback • outcome information • employment data • destination data • analysis of sector benchmarking information
Relevant sets of Tertiary Evaluation Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment supports learning • outcomes for learners and communities • engaging with communities • providing relevant programmes • managing change strategically

HOW WELL DO PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES MATCH THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS?

Possible sources of evidence

- results of analysis of feedback from relevant groups
- entry requirements for course and programmes
- employer feedback on graduates
- feedback from graduates in employment
- learner achievement information (trends over time)

Relevant sets of Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

- minimising barriers to learning
- assessment supports learning
- engaging with communities
- providing relevant programmes
- managing change strategically
- organisational purpose and direction

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE TEACHING?

Possible sources of evidence

- learner feedback on teaching
- results of peer observation of teaching
- feedback from relevant groups
- interviews with staff and learners
- teaching and learning plans

Relevant sets of Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

- fostering effective learning environments
- minimising barriers to learning
- assessment supports learning
- managing change strategically

HOW WELL ARE LEARNERS GUIDED AND SUPPORTED?	
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learner feedback on learning environment • feedback on learner support services • analysis of information on non-completion rates (attritions) • learner destination data • learner and staff opinion
Relevant sets of Tertiary Evaluation Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating learning pathways • assessment supports learning • fostering effective learning environments
HOW EFFECTIVE ARE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT IN SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT?	
Possible sources of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports, minutes and records of the activities of the governance body • records and reports of consultation e.g. with whanau, communities, employers, business • strategic and business plans with evidence of the approach to meeting identified needs and aspirations
Relevant sets of Tertiary Evaluation Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging with communities • managing change strategically • organisational purpose and direction

Appendix 2: Tertiary Evaluation Indicators – An Overview

Indicators are shown in the right hand column.

The column on the left indicates the sets to which the indicators belong.

OUTCOME INDICATORS	
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete formal qualifications • acquire useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities • improve their well-being and enhance their abilities and attributes
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge is created and disseminated • TEO makes a contribution to community life
PROCESS INDICATORS	
Facilitating learning pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive and timely study information and advice is provided • continued support is provided to assist learners in pursuing their chosen pathways
Fostering effective learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners • responses to the well-being needs of learners are appropriate • teachers and learners relate effectively to one another • learning activities and resources are effective in engaging learners • learners have opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts
Minimising barriers to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learning environment is inclusive • policies and procedures minimise barriers to learning
Assessment supports learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment is valid, sufficient, fair and transparent • assessment provides learners and teachers with useful feedback on progress

Engaging with communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is active engagement with communities • stakeholders are clearly identified and engagement is appropriate and ongoing • stakeholders are informed of developments, barriers and possibilities • effective community engagement is encouraged at all levels in the organisation
Providing relevant programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programmes maintain relevance to communities • programme planning is informed by ongoing needs analysis • programmes reflect changes in subject content, resources, teaching practice and technologies
Managing change strategically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anticipating and responding to change • responding to results of self-assessment • balancing innovation and continuity
Organisational purpose and direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose and direction is clear • leadership is effective • resources are allocated to support learning, teaching and research • policies and practices are legal and ethical • recruitment and development of staff is effective • staff are valued

Appendix 3: Self-Assessment Plan of Enquiry

Below is a worksheet you may like to use for planning. It has been partially filled in to show how to use the document.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	ENQUIRY QUESTIONS	SOURCES OF SELF-ASSESSMENT INFORMATION (Are sufficient information sources identified to demonstrate the likelihood of credible and reliable findings?)								
How effective is the teaching?	How well do teaching approaches respect and respond to different ways of learning?	Programme self-assessment reports	Conversations with staff/management							
	How well does teaching and learning match the needs of the qualification?									
	How well do learning activities engage learners?						How well do learners achieve?			
Continue as required										

Appendix 4: A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity

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The purpose of this checklist is to provide a set of guidelines for organizational evaluation capacity building (ECB), i.e., for incorporating evaluation routinely into the life of an organization. The checklist, which was developed from case study data and an extensive literature review, can be a resource for a wide range of stakeholders in organizations seeking to increase their long-term capacity to conduct and use program evaluations in everyday activities.

Organizational Context: *Be aware of the internal and external organizational context, power hierarchies, administrative culture, and decision-making processes.*

1. Cultivate a positive, ECB-friendly internal organizational context.

- Make sure that key leaders of the organization support and share responsibility for ECB.
- Locate existing and enlist new evaluation champion(s) in the organization.
- Determine and work to increase the organization's interest in and demand for evaluation information.
- Determine if and to what extent the internal environment is supportive of change.
- Provide opportunities for sufficient input in decision making, ensuring that people in the organization are able to use data to make decisions.
- Organize opportunities for socializing around evaluation activities during the workday (for example, working on a survey collaboratively or discussing evaluation findings at brown bag lunches).

2. Understand and take advantage of the external environment and its influence on the organization.

- Identify external mandates/accountability requirements and expectations, and integrate them into the ECB efforts.
- Determine if and to what extent the external environment is supportive of change (for example, accreditation agencies encourage innovation, professional communities promote evaluation activities, external stakeholders provide support for evaluation).

ECB Structures: *Purposefully create structures—mechanisms within the organization— that enable the development of evaluation capacity.*

3. Develop and implement a purposeful long-term ECB plan for the organization.

- Establish a capable ECB oversight group (composed of members of the staff, board of directors, and community) to initiate, evaluate, and advance evaluation processes continually in the organization.
- Generate an appropriate conception of evaluation for organizational policies and procedures.
- Create a strategy for conducting and using evaluations in the organization that applies existing evaluation frameworks, guidelines, and professional standards.
- Integrate evaluation processes purposefully into organizational policies and procedures.
- Make sure that a detailed written ECB plan exists, is distributed throughout the organization, and is used to assess progress.
- Evaluate the capacity building activities routinely to insure that capacity is increasing and the evaluation function is growing.

4. Build and reinforce infrastructure to support specific components of the evaluation process and communication systems.

- Create organizational structures that will facilitate evaluation activities (for example, framing evaluation questions; generating needed studies; conducting needs evaluations; designing evaluations; and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data).
- Assign responsibility for facilitating the ongoing development and evaluation of evaluation processes.
- Build individuals' readiness and skills to implement evaluation activities.
- Develop and use an internal reporting/monitoring/tracking system.
- Develop an effective communication and reporting capability to explain evaluation processes and disseminate findings, both positive and negative, to stakeholder groups.

5. Introduce and maintain purposeful socialization into the organization's evaluation process.

- Establish clear expectations for people's evaluation roles and provide sufficient time during the work day for evaluation activities.
- Offer tangible incentives for participation in the evaluation process.
- Provide or make available formal training, professional development, and coaching in evaluation.

- Promote and facilitate people's learning evaluation by involving them in meaningful ways in evaluation planning and implementation ("learning by doing").
- Model a willingness to be evaluated by insuring that evaluations and the ECB process itself are routinely and visibly evaluated.

6. Build and expand peer learning structures.

- Emphasize and implement purposeful trust building (both interpersonal and organizational) and interdependent roles in the evaluation process.
- Incorporate a feedback mechanism in the decision-making process and an effective communication system so that people will learn from evaluation activities.
- Create ongoing learning activities through which people interact around evaluation processes and results.
- Provide ample opportunities for both individual and group reflection (for example, databased discussions of successes, challenges, and failures in the organization).

Resources: *Make evaluation resources available and use them.*

7. Provide and continuously expand access to evaluation resources.

- Use evaluation personnel effectively (for example, have internal professionals model high quality practice, teach evaluation processes by engaging staff in evaluation activities, have external consultants present findings to staff).
- Provide easy access to relevant research bases that contain "best practice" content for evaluation in general and for evaluation in specific program content and to examples of high quality evaluation descriptions and reports.
- Ensure the availability of sufficient information on how to access existing evaluation resources (for example, websites, professional organizations, evaluation consultants).

8. Secure sources of support for program evaluation in the organization.

- Assure long-term fiscal support from the board or administration—explicit, dedicated funding for program evaluation activities.
- Provide basic resources (copying, equipment for data collection and analysis, computers and software, etc.).
- Allow adequate time and opportunities to collaborate on evaluation activities, including, when possible, being physically together in an environment free from interruptions.
- If needed, develop revenue-generating strategies to support program evaluation (for example, selling copies of data collection instruments or serving as evaluation consultants to other organizations for pay).

Useful Resources/References

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Appendix 5: Glossary

Term	Definition
Accountability	An obligation to demonstrate that commitments have been met.
Activities	Programmes, systems and services that the organisation delivers.
Analysis	A part of the evaluative approach that involves evaluating parts or aspects in order to gain an underlying meaning.
Audit	A systematic and independent examination that includes determining whether a TEO is complying with its own quality management system and meeting the requirements of external quality standards.
Benchmark	A point of reference against which something can be measured for the purpose of stimulating organisational improvement.
Continuous improvement	A systematic ongoing focus on improving the quality of an organisation's processes and outcomes.
Evaluation	The systematic determination of the merit (quality), worth (value) or significance (importance) of the quality of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders and processes that contribute to this (Scriven, 1991). The evaluative process includes a planned approach to gathering, analysing and synthesising evidence from multiple sources.
Evaluative conversations	Discussions that explore what a TEO knows about outcomes for learners and other interested parties and what processes contribute to these.
Key evaluation questions	High-level, open-ended questions intended to elicit answers that inform judgements about the quality of educational outcomes and the key processes that influence these outcomes.
Evaluative judgements	The conclusions that identify the quality and value of outcomes for learners and stakeholders rather than simply describing activities.
Evidence	Information that is gathered to inform evaluative judgements about the quality and value of outcomes for learners and other interested parties. Evidence includes information from interviews, observations and written documentation. It must be valid and reliable.
External evaluation and review	A periodic process carried out by a quality assurance body that leads to judgements about the quality and value of a TEO's activities as these relate to outcomes for learners and other interested communities or individuals. It encompasses, but is not restricted to, validating the organisation's self-assessment process.

Inputs	People and things that are put into or accepted into an organisation.
Outcomes	Changes that happen to learners, employing organisations, communities and the economy that are at least partially caused by the organisation's programmes and activities.
Outputs	"Products" and trained learners that are produced by, or through the organisation's programmes and activities
Quality	<p>Quality is dynamic and will look different in different contexts. In tertiary education, it is the value that learners gain from their learning experience, the utility of their qualifications and the extent to which positive longer term outcomes occur.</p> <p>The extent to which identified needs and other relevant standards are met in respect of a specific purpose or outcome.</p>
Quality Assurance	The planned and systematic actions needed to provide confidence that a TEO's activities satisfy requirements for quality.
Self-Assessment	The ongoing process whereby TEOs evaluate the quality and value of their own performance and educational provision.
Stakeholders	<p>Individuals, groups or organisations with a legitimate vested interest in a TEO's work and outcomes.</p> <p>Internal: learners, staff, councils/boards, owners</p> <p>External: funding bodies, iwi, professional groups, employers, industry, regions, other educators, parents, future learners</p>
Community of interest	An individual, group or organisation, within or external to the TEO, with a legitimate and purposeful interest in a TEO's work and outcomes.
Tertiary evaluation indicators	These describe valued tertiary education outcomes and the key inter-related processes likely to be contributing to those outcomes. They provide a frame of reference for external evaluation and review and can be used by TEOs to inform their self-assessment processes.
Value	The usefulness or benefit to an individual, organisation or community of an organisation's activities.

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