External evaluation and review

External evaluation and review (EER) is an essential component of NZQA’s evaluative quality assurance framework.

What is external evaluation and review?

Through the EER process, NZQA periodically checks and reports on the quality of education delivered by non-university tertiary education organisations (TEOs).

EER provides an independent judgement on the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of the TEO under review.

How often does EER happen?

EER is periodic. The normal cycle is four years, but EERs will occur more frequently if problems in a TEO’s performance are identified.

TEOs can also request that an EER be brought forward from its scheduled date.

What is the outcome?

Every EER results in a report which records NZQA’s level of confidence in the TEO’s educational (or ITO) performance and its capability in self-assessment.
The levels of confidence are:

- Highly Confident or
- Confident or
- Not Yet Confident or
- Not Confident.

What happens to these reports?

NZQA publishes the final reports at External evaluation and review reports. These reports hold TEOs accountable, while also providing information to support improvements across the tertiary education sector.

What is educational performance?

Educational performance is the extent to which the educational outcomes achieved by the TEO represent quality and value for learners and the wider community.

For industry training organisations, which do not directly deliver education, this judgement is called ITO Performance.

What is capability in self-assessment?

Capability in self-assessment is the extent to which a TEO effectively uses information, gathered by its own processes, to understand organisational performance and make improvements on behalf of its learners and the wider community.

Who participates in external evaluation and review?

NZQA’s Quality Assurance (including external evaluation and review) Rules 2016 (Rules) require that all registered and recognised TEOs (excluding universities) must participate in EER, in accordance with NZQA’s timelines and processes.

The TEOs that will undergo periodic EERs are:

- Private training establishments (PTEs)
Institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs)
Wānanga
Industry training organisations (ITOs)
Government training establishments (GTEs)

For more information on the process for and participation in EER, see Section 7 of the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016.

How does EER work?

When NZQA schedules an EER, it formally notifies the TEO. The schedule is posted on the website at External evaluation and review schedule.

Once scheduled, the process involves four stages:

1. Scoping
2. Enquiry
3. Reaching conclusions
4. Issuing a report.

Scoping

In preparing for an EER, NZQA works with the TEO to confirm a representative sample of programmes or topics. These will become focus areas and be directly reviewed during the EER.

Enquiry

This covers the various processes, which will usually include an onsite visit, to arrive at defensible judgments on a TEO’s quality.

Reaching conclusions

This is the analytical and decision-making process NZQA uses to confirm ratings and statements of confidence for the TEO.
Issuing a report

When NZQA has formed a whole-of-organisation view of the TEO’s quality, it will release a draft report of its findings to the TEO and propose the process and timelines for finalising that report.

At the end of this stage, NZQA will publish the final report on the NZQA website.

EER’s evaluation methods and tools

During an EER, NZQA will use a number of significant evaluation methods and tools:

- TEO self-assessment
- Key Evaluation Questions
- Tertiary Evaluation Indicators (or ITO Evaluation Indicators)
- Rubrics for ratings and statements of confidence (PDF, 51KB)

For every EER case, NZQA provides the TEO under review with information on the process and timelines that are being followed.

Currently, NZQA is preparing a more comprehensive set of guidelines on how the EER process works. NZQA anticipates that this document will be published on its website in the first half of 2019.

How much does EER cost?

For EERs, NZQA:

- charges the TEO $190.00 (excluding GST) per hour for each evaluator involved in the case
- does not charge the TEO any ‘incidental’ costs incurred (e.g. travel)

The total cost of an EER depends on the size and complexity of the case and will be advised to the TEO during the scoping stage.
Further information

If you have any questions about a specific and scheduled EER, please contact your assigned Lead Evaluator or the Manager Evaluation at NZQA.

If you want to know more about the EER process, please review the Rules which provide the regulatory foundation.

If the Rules do not answer your question, please email the External Evaluation and Review team at eer@nzqa.govt.nz.