



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Real World Education Limited

Date of report: 12 September 2023

About Real World Education Limited

Real World Education delivers online laboratory training programmes and micro-credentials for the laboratory industry. The organisation also provides training for secondary school science laboratory technicians.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	8th Floor, TSB Tower, 1-19 Fitzherbert Avenue, Palmerston North
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 60 (22 equivalent full-time students); Māori 10; Pasifika three; students with a lived experience of disability, seven International: one full-time student
Number of staff:	4.2 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	Real World Education Limited provider page on the NZQA website Real World Education has partnering agreements with a range of laboratories across New Zealand for students to complete their practical internships.
Last EER outcome:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER), conducted in May 2019, NZQA was Highly Confident in both Real World Education's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postgraduate Diploma in Analytical Science (Level 8) (ID:122358) (Ref: 3743-3)• Laboratory Skills Programme (Level 4) (ID:117615-3) (Ref: 2551-1)• New Zealand Laboratory Education Water Sampling Certification (Micro-credential) (ID:127308) (Ref: 4545)• General Laboratory Safety (Micro-credential)

(ID:127691) (Ref: 4677)

MoE number: 7170
NZQA reference: C52972
Dates of blended EER visit: 24-26 May 2023

Summary of results

Real World Education is meeting the important needs of its students and stakeholders, supported by an individualised teaching approach and relevant work-based learning tailored to learner contexts. Self-assessment processes are ongoing and identify areas for improvement.

- Overall course completion rates have remained consistently strong, and results show students are gaining qualifications. There is parity of achievement for Māori and Pasifika students.
- Highly Confident in educational performance**
- Students gain valuable skills and knowledge which they apply in their workplaces, and project outputs are used to enhance their employing organisations. Extensive consultation and stakeholder feedback processes ensure the programmes align with the needs of relevant professions.
- Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment**
- Real World Education has significant capability in online delivery. Regular online meetings with students provide important opportunities for students to gain academic and wellbeing support.
 - The PTE conducts regular, comprehensive programme reviews, leading to identification of areas for improvement and further programme development.
 - NZQA's 2021 monitoring of the Certificate in Laboratory Skills found that some areas in assessment and moderation needed improvement. Real World Education has strengthened its moderation policies and procedures and closely monitors external moderation activities to inform improvements. External moderation outcomes have been positive and inform programme review.
 - Self-assessment is ongoing and fit for purpose. Real World Education uses good quality information to monitor educational performance and student outcomes. The information gained is continually used to inform organisational decisions and improvements.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Real World Education has rolling intakes. The PTE interviews enrolling students to establish their preparedness and capability to undertake the mostly online courses. Overall course completions have been consistently strong across programmes.² Completions for the Postgraduate Diploma in Analytical Science have been variable, with a decline in 2022. This is attributed to students' work and life challenges, programme extensions and career changes.</p> <p>Māori and Pasifika student enrolment numbers are small for each year. Māori and Pasifika achievement is the same as other groups across most programmes.³</p> <p>Students with a lived experience of disability self-identify at the enrolment stage. In 2022, Real World Education reported that seven students reported a disability at enrolment. Each student's needs are established, and support is provided where the student requires it. In some instances, Real World Education works closely with the partnering laboratory to ensure the student is well supported to succeed.</p> <p>Student achievement is well understood, and data is analysed to make improvements. Student progress is monitored through several processes and discussed regularly to enable effective management and maintenance of strong achievement performance. Increased oversight could be gained by formalising overall monitoring processes to identify any trends. This would support already effective self-assessment.</p>
Conclusion:	Achievement is consistently strong across programmes.

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

² Refer to Appendix 1.

³ This is based on the percentage of attempted modules successfully completed. See Appendix 1.

	Regular monitoring and understanding of individual outcomes support ongoing improvements to educational performance. More formalised overview processes would benefit self-assessment.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are gaining useful practical skills and knowledge which they can apply immediately in the workplace and are directly related to work done in the laboratory industry.</p> <p>Some of the programmes require students to be placed in a laboratory for a period of their learning. Laboratory partners provide the practical skills training alongside the online theory training provided by Real World Education. The PTE's longstanding reputation for quality training and high standards affords students opportunities to gain placements which can lead to employment in the placement laboratory or other laboratories on successful programme completion. Real World Education demonstrated through their student destination data that, between 2021 and 2022, 90-100 per cent of graduates gained relevant employment or undertook further study within three months of successful completion. Some students are already employed in a laboratory and develop their skills in a particular area of specialised need which leads to career advancement.</p> <p>Regular practical training enables students to build their confidence to manage technically challenging and critical work in laboratory settings. The postgraduate diploma student project work is directly related to the work being done in their laboratory. This allows students to contribute to working solutions and see a project as a valued outcome for their organisation. In some instances, the project work may lead to research outputs that are published.</p> <p>Stakeholders value the skills, work-readiness and professionalism of the graduates. Employers attest to graduates being adaptable and professional, and are preferred employees because they are well prepared, understand the industry's safety culture and are familiar with organisational practices.</p> <p>The PTE tracks graduate destinations each year and uses</p>

	ongoing stakeholder engagement to understand employment outcomes and the needs of industry.
Conclusion:	Real World Education can show strong outcomes through its review processes. Most graduates are gaining employment or accessing higher-level programmes. Ongoing, regular stakeholder engagement contributes to programme design and delivery improvements.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Real World Education uses industry consultation, input from NZQA and programme review to develop and change programmes to meet the needs of industry and students. This led to the development of 13 new micro-credentials that address necessary industry skills required in niche areas, where training was not available. Programme updates are ongoing to match the industry and technological changes.</p> <p>Distance learning offers students flexibility and industry-related material via pre-recorded videos. In the case of the level 4 programme, students are sent laboratory supplies because laboratory internships are difficult to secure for this level of study. Using innovative technology, tutors can observe and record live activities and assess students' knowledge in real time, ensuring online practical assessment tasks are authentic and valid. At the higher-level programmes, students are placed in internships where project work and assignments can be carried out under the supervision of laboratory staff. The practical training is related to work in the laboratories.</p> <p>Teaching staff are well experienced and knowledgeable in laboratory work. Educators have progress meetings with the students when required, and students access academic support and feedback via an appointment booking system. When students are ready, they can book to complete assessments online. Real World Education is leading developments in online live assessment systems.</p> <p>In certain programmes, the PTE conducts internal moderation through a two-step marking process where two markers</p>

	<p>independently mark assessments to ensure consistency of marking. Where there is significant difference, a third marker is engaged to arrive at a fair consensus. Other programmes are internally moderated using a sample of assessments.</p> <p>Discussions about assessment outcomes inform improvements to assessment practice. Self-assessment is being completed, but formalising capture of these activities could further inform overall trends.</p> <p>Industry experts conduct external moderation and provide detailed feedback and recommendations which Real World Education use to inform assessment practice and improvements.</p>
Conclusion:	Programmes are relevant and well matched to student and stakeholder needs. Programme and assessment outcomes are reviewed to inform improvements. A documented overview of outcomes and improvements would be beneficial.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Pre-enrolment interviews allow Real World Education to gain an understanding of student learning goals and career aspirations. This information is used for appropriate internship placements, and support is well matched to students' learning requirements.</p> <p>Barriers to learning are identified early and addressed with individual students. Real World Education works closely with laboratory partners to ensure continuous support for students with a lived experience of disability. The learning environment is appropriately set up to guide students through a step-by-step process, and students find it easy to work with the online resources in their own time. The laboratory placements provide scheduled work to support the students when they are learning laboratory tasks under the supervision and guidance of experienced laboratory supervisors. This provides authentic learning experiences for the students.</p> <p>An educator is allocated to students for the period of study to monitor progress and have check-ins as needed. In addition, students are encouraged to book appointments through the automated booking system to gain individual academic or wellbeing support when needed. The booking system does not</p>

	<p>facilitate a real-time response. However, Real World Education is developing technology to have a quicker response rate.</p> <p>Students on placement are visited at least once during their placement. This allows Real World Education staff to maintain good relations with laboratories and get feedback on student progress. Students work individually, although an opportunity to collaborate with other students may support further learning and a more social learning experience.</p> <p>Real World Education gathers placement trainee evaluation and student feedback from the students and supervisors at the end of placement. Real World Education also uses exit interviews to be informed and guide improvements. Feedback information is considered on an individual basis and feeds into organisational decisions for programme improvement and better support of the students. Collating feedback (with small student numbers) would allow another layer to current fit-for-purpose self-assessment.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are highly engaged in their learning and are well supported by Real World Education's support systems and partnering laboratories. Feedback informs changes where needed.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Real World Education's strategic purpose is to help students start or advance laboratory careers. The PTE provides specialist training in a niche industry and constantly innovates to meet the needs of laboratory professionals. They achieve this through effectively maintaining close working relationships with industry stakeholders. Real World Education uses industry input for direction and guidance in programme review and developing specialist training in response to the laboratory industry's needs.</p> <p>Real World Education management and staff are reflective and responsive to industry needs. Management uses an open-minded management style and focuses on empowering staff by listening and responding to their ideas, issues, ways of thinking and approaches to their work. Staff are involved in developing programme solutions and collaborate effectively as a small team. It may be beneficial to include contract staff in some of this</p>

	<p>collaboration.</p> <p>Teaching staff are well supported in their professional development. Staff are engaging in research projects to enrich their own professional development and inform programme review and development. Staff are also encouraged and supported to pursue adult teaching qualifications. All staff are employed for their experience and working knowledge of laboratories. Research-active staff and students have their research papers published in notable journals or presented at conferences. Staff succession planning and development is well considered by management.</p> <p>Real World Education is gathering and reviewing information from students and stakeholders as it is collected. There is a good level of information-sharing and reflection and a clear focus on improving outcomes at an individual student level. Overall review, collation of outcomes and streamlining processes to analyse data would further inform overall understanding of educational performance.</p>
Conclusion:	An innovative management team supports the highly experienced and knowledgeable teaching team to ensure educational goals are being met. An overview of collated and analysed data would benefit self-assessment.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance matters are managed appropriately and in a timely manner by management staff.</p> <p>NZQA requirements are up to date, including attestations and self-review against the Code of Practice 2021. Staff are well informed of the Code and support each other's roles, providing another check on process.</p> <p>The 2021 NZQA monitoring of the level 4 programme raised some academic and delivery concerns which required Real World Education to review and strengthen its assessment and moderation policies and procedures. Real World Education is working with NZQA and the relevant workforce development council to ensure programme changes to levels 4, 5 and 6 are</p>

	<p>meeting standards and requirements.</p> <p>Real World Education has one international student enrolled. The PTE plans to grow the international cohort in 2024, but only for the postgraduate programme. Real World Education continues to work with trusted international agents who understand their responsibilities in meeting the Code of Practice.</p> <p>A research plan and evidence of overall research outcomes and relevance to programme improvements and development would be beneficial.</p>
Conclusion:	Important compliance accountabilities are generally well understood and managed.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Postgraduate Diploma in Analytical Science (Level 8)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Laboratory Skills Programme (Level 4); New Zealand Laboratory Education Water Sampling Micro-credential; General Laboratory Safety Micro-credential

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Real World Education Limited:

- Collate and analyse student and stakeholder feedback data to further inform overall understanding of educational performance.
- Document programme review, evaluation and actions resulting from all moderation for ongoing monitoring of educational performance.
- Use research plans to monitor research outcomes and evidence of subsequent influence on programme review or development.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Percent of Attempted Modules Successfully Completed (Completion Year)									
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019-2022				
					Māori	Pasifika	Female	With impairments	International
School Science Laboratory Technician Programme	100	100	100	93	100	NA	98	100	NA
School Laboratory Manager Programme	NA	100	50	100	100	100	100	100	NA
Laboratory Skills Programme	100	100	91	71	90	100	92	55	100
Laboratory Technician Comprehensive Programme	100	100	98	100	100	100	100	100	100
Postgraduate Diploma in Analytical Science Programme	100	100	87	68	100	NA	82	NA	100

Qualification Completion									
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019-2022				
					Māori	Pasifika	Female	With impairments	International
New Zealand Certificate in Applied Science (Level 4)	12	20	8	14	6	2	41	2	8
New Zealand Diploma in Applied Science (Level 5)	0	2	1	12	0	1	0	0	12
New Zealand Diploma in Applied Science (Level 6)	8	2	15	4	4	3	21	1	9
Postgraduate Diploma in Analytical Science	1	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	3

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud⁴*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

⁴ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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