

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Impac Services Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 18 January 2016

## Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction .....	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review .....	5
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results .....	7
Findings .....	8
Recommendations .....	18
Appendix .....	19

MoE Number: 7324

NZQA Reference: C19631

Dates of EER visit: 29 and 30 September 2015

# Purpose of this Report

*The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.*

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Impac Services Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 March 2000
Location:	7a Sheffield Place, Onekawa, Napier
Delivery sites:	Level 7, Davis Langdon House, 49 Boulcott Street, Wellington Unit 4, Level 1, 1 Cross Street, Newton, Auckland Unit 5B/33 Mandeville Street, Riccarton, Christchurch  The delivery of short courses takes place in temporary leased premises or at the clients' workplaces as required.
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and Safety Representative training</li><li>• Safety Co-ordinator training</li><li>• Core Health and Safety training</li><li>• Industrial Safety training</li><li>• NEBOSH International programmes</li><li>• ICAM workshops</li><li>• Management of Workplace Safety courses</li><li>• Bespoke courses to suit clients' needs</li><li>• Safe Work Practices for Employment (Training</li></ul>

Scheme) (level 2)

- National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) (Level 3)
- National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Level 4)

Code of Practice signatory: No

Number of students: Domestic: approximately 10,000 trainees per annum, in one or two-day short courses

Number of staff: 17 full-time, two part-time in the training division

Scope of active accreditation: Please use the following link:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=732419001>

Distinctive characteristics: Impac Services Limited (Impac) provides consultancy, risk management, and training services in the field of health and safety to industry and corporate clients and also for public enrolment.

Recent significant changes: A new chief executive officer was appointed in 2014, and this has led to a new strategic plan for Impac being implemented.

Previous quality assurance history: NZQA conducted its previous EER in December 2011. The statements of confidence for that EER were Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.

Impac submitted assessment material for a sample of unit standards to The Skills Organisation (the industry training organisation (ITO) for health and safety in the workplace) in 2015. This was the first such external moderation by an ITO for several years due to the merging of ITOs in recent times. Impac submitted nine samples, of which seven were accepted and minor changes were required for the other two.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the EER of Impac included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management and strategy.

The other focus areas were:

- National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) (Level 3)

This programme includes the Health and Safety Representative training modules 1-4. These modules have the largest proportion of the Impac trainees involved. Module 1 contains compulsory material required by workers for industry health and safety compliance. Parts of this programme are delivered at the client's workplace or are advertised for public admission. Some of the unit standards required are achieved from prior learning not provided by Impac.

- Department of Conservation JSA and Risk manager software workshop

This is a 'bespoke' programme designed especially for the Department of Conservation to meet its specific training needs.

These two programmes are a good representation of the distinct types of programmes that Impac provides.

## 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. 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.*

The EER consisted of a team of two NZQA evaluators, who visited the Impac office at 49 Boulcott St, Wellington over one and a half days. Senior management travelled to Wellington from other centres to take part. Prior to the EER, the lead evaluator met with the training practice leader in Wellington to discuss possible focus areas and EER procedures. Prior to the scoping meeting, Impac supplied the lead evaluator with descriptive information about the organisation and a summary of its self-assessment activities, including the changes that have occurred since the previous EER. This assisted the lead evaluator in developing the scope of this EER, in collaboration with the training practice leader of Impac.

During the on-site visit, the evaluation team interviewed the directors and owners of Impac, the chief executive officer, and senior management of the training division,

tutors and trainees of the short courses, some of the clients, a representative of the ITO and a representative of the funding agency. Many of these were able to be interviewed directly, and some were interviewed on the telephone. A range of documents was examined to clarify items that arose from these discussions.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Impac Services Limited**.

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Impac Services Limited**.

On the evidence presented to the evaluators, Impac has a consistently high level of trainee achievement. This level of achievement is further reinforced by almost completely positive feedback from trainees and stakeholders attesting to the value of these achievements.

This level of confidence is supported by the following factors:

1. Consistently strong and convincing achievement rates for trainees for the last few years.
2. A strong, stable business model with an eye on developments in the sector to keep the training current and relevant.
3. A very good learning experience for the learner, as seen in the feedback responses and in the interviews with the trainees.
4. High-quality resources which are customised and adapted to meet the learning situation.
5. The training is influenced by proactive initiatives to influence culture change to promote professionalism in the sector, and representation in sector development.
6. The encouragement of the motivated trainees to complete the National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) (Level 3).
7. Enhanced staff understanding and implementation of adult education principles to make the learning experience more effective.
8. A strong regime of self-assessment through the training and management processes with a view to sustaining a systematic strategy of development and improvement.
9. Good procedures for benchmarking performance against similar providers in the same field.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The evaluators found conclusive evidence of consistently high student achievement rates at Impac. This is usual for providers who specialise in providing 'corporate' or short courses to meet industry needs. Trainees are often required to attend these courses to fulfil workplace compliance needs, and in these cases the employers pay the fees for the training. Delivery often takes place during work hours at the workplace, or they are a pre-employment requirement and Impac runs programmes open to the public in leased premises.

In spite of the perception of inevitability around high achievement rates for this kind of course, the evaluators found a strong sense of value and purpose which enhances these achievement rates.

Of the many trainees that have attended the modules, a significant number (186) have completed the National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) (Level 3) programme since 2013, and 21 trainees have completed the National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) (Level 4) programme, according to Impac figures. These figures are significant in view of recent initiatives at Impac to encourage pathways of learning leading to the national certificates.

Strong self-assessment underlies the PTE's understanding of its trainees' achievements. Impac makes regular comparisons of achievement with other similar providers engaged in comparable types of training and maintains consistently high and similar achievement rates as these providers.

The figures for trainee achievement are consistently situated in the high 90-100 per cent completions range. In the two focus areas selected for this EER, the bespoke programme devised specifically for the Department of Conservation was successfully completed by all those who attended. Award of the National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) programme is derived from completion of five modules in the Health and Safety Representative and Safety Co-ordinator programmes, and the achievement of the unit standards contained within these. All the trainees who are encouraged to complete the level 3 national certificate have gained the qualification so far. This is because these trainees are fostered to complete the programme when they are already at an

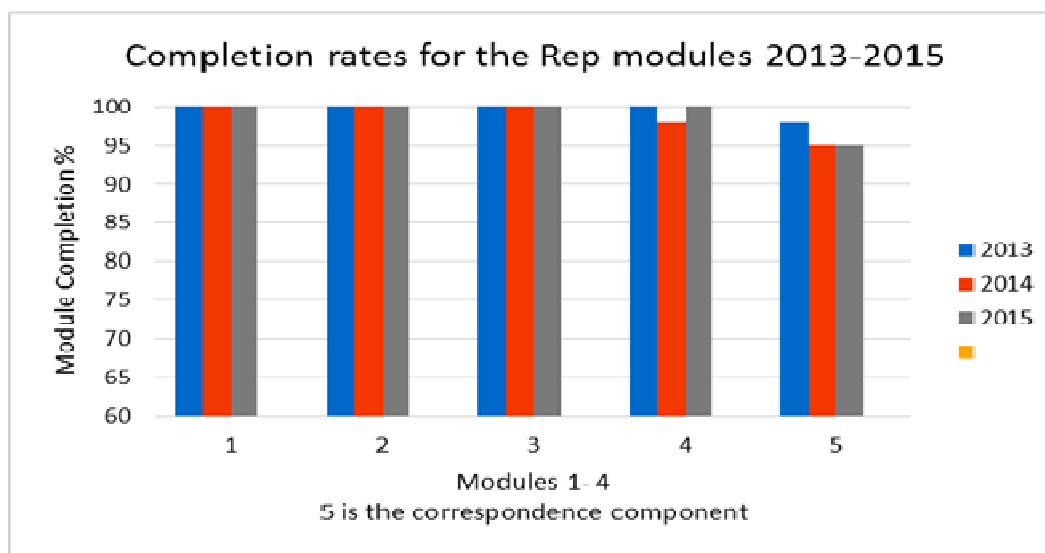
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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.



advanced stage, and have already shown motivation and application in their training. The modules make up the most significant part of the training. Trainee achievement in the modules is consistently high at over 95 per cent, as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure. 1**



*This information has been extracted from the Impac self-assessment summary for this EER.*

The figures in Figure 1 above show a slight lag in achievement for module 5, but Impac management understands the reasons for this: occasionally the workplace does not return the required attestation for work placements, or trainee work is returned for more information and is not resubmitted, so Impac cannot progress learning outcomes in those cases.

Impac has systems in place to capture trainee achievement data, and uses comparisons with other similar providers and comparison over time with the results of previous years to help it understand its achievements, to maintain them and improve on them. These figures show that there has been steady improvement and uptake in the achievement rates of the national certificate programmes. In these programmes there has been a steady increase in achievement rates for 2013-2014. The figures for 2015 are not yet finalised, but are tracking well at this point.

Impac has a high rate of achievement which includes all 'at-risk' learner groups, and this indicates that its training strategies are effective for all groups. In spite of this, Impac management acknowledges that more could be done to capture specific data on the achievement rates of Maori, Pasifika and trainees under the age of 25 years. Although gathering such data is difficult among providers of work-based training programmes – mainly because of the short nature of the training – Impac understands that it has a responsibility to these groups.

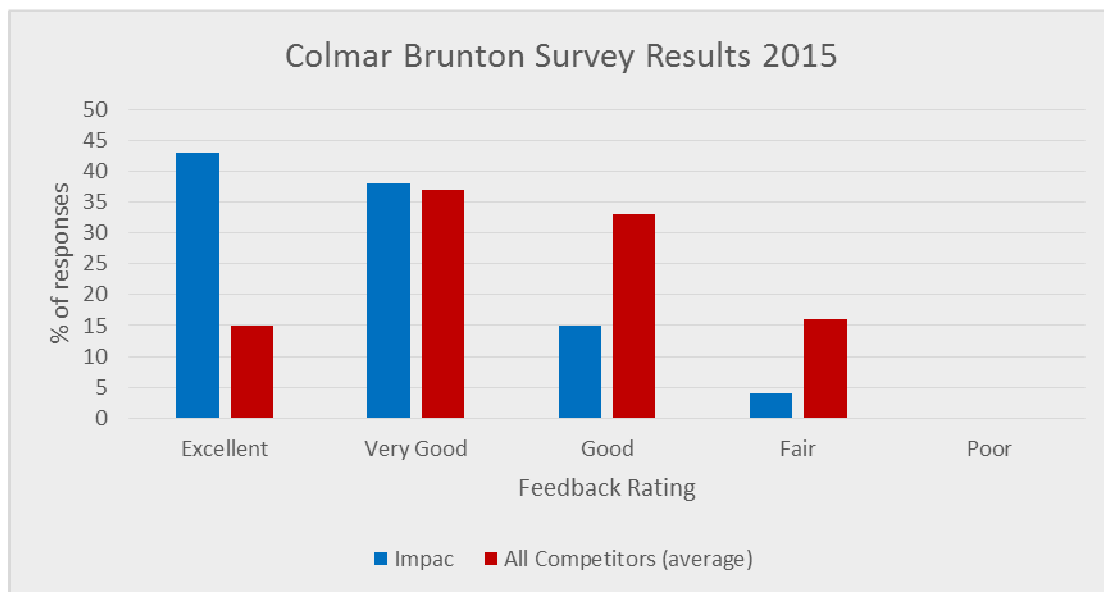
## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Impac training provides very good value. Impac collects comprehensive feedback from its stakeholders, principally from the trainees and company clients. It has compared feedback on its services with that of its main competitors, as shown in a recent Colmar Brunton poll comparing satisfaction rates for training in this sector (Figure 2).

**Figure. 2**



*This information has been extracted from the Impac self-assessment summary for this EER.*

Figure 2 shows that Impac compares very favourably with the average feedback rating of competitors (other training providers in the same field).

Impac has ongoing relationships with a variety of New Zealand government clients that have an interest in health and safety training. These include the Department of Conservation and the Accident Compensation Corporation (which is both a client and a funding agency). The evaluators learned that Impac is the preferred provider of health and safety training for these clients, who provided positive views on the quality of the training.

Impac provides value by designing and adapting short programmes especially to meet the needs of clients. These bespoke programmes can include unit standards or not, according to the client's requirements. Where they contain unit standards, these can be assessed and the results recorded on the trainee's record of learning, and can add to the ability of the trainee to achieve qualifications.

There is a high level of engagement with the sector through the other health and safety activities of Impac, namely in a consultancy and advisory capacity. These activities help to inform and illustrate the training and assist to keep Impac abreast of sector developments.

Impac sees itself as a major player in the health and safety training field, and exercises its responsibility in this area by actively engaging in qualifications and standards development working groups, and sector advisory groups. For example, Impac directly participated in the Government's working group on new health and safety legislation.

The evaluators saw that Impac understands the need to change client workplace culture to be truly effective as a trainer. To help facilitate this change of culture, Impac has adopted an "ensuring people return home from work safely to their loved ones every day" philosophy as a masthead for this endeavour. There is value to New Zealand industry in this approach, and while the improvements in reducing the rates of workplace accidents cannot be attributed to one training provider, Impac has anecdotal and documented opinions that the workplace safety of its clients has improved. It is also significant that Impac is fostering professionalism of the health and safety sector and trying to promote career options within the field. This fostering of professionalism is evident in the manner in which Impac encourages suitably motivated trainees to complete the national certificate qualifications.

The evaluators note that the graduates of the modules who were interviewed as part of the EER feel that the programme workbooks produced and supplied by Impac are of a high quality and are valuable after the completion of training as workplace reference books.

All the feedback gained by the evaluators in interviewing and telephoning trainees and stakeholders is positive. The trainees' feedback is gained by way of an end-of-programme evaluation, which is scrutinised by the trainers first, then analysed by management, and the ensuing report is supplied to the trainers to highlight trends. This is a useful tool in developing and improving the delivery and value of the programme.

### 1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Impac is meeting the needs of its trainees and clients well. During the EER visit the evaluators heard in the interviews with stakeholders and staff members how this is being done. Some of these needs have been mentioned elsewhere in this report. Briefly, the needs being met are as follows:

- Raising the consciousness of the need for a culture of health and safety in the sector.
- Encouraging provider application of the “ensuring people return home from work safely to their loved ones every day” philosophy.
- Informal evidence that workplaces of client organisations are becoming more safety conscious with fewer accidents being reported over time.
- The development of short courses specifically to meet the needs of the clients.
- The development of quality learning resources to supplement the training.
- Trainee achievement of standards can count toward a qualification, and can be recorded on the trainee’s record of learning.
- The training assists clients and trainees to meet legislative requirements for workplace health and safety.

There is a lot of positive feedback from stakeholders that supports the effectiveness of the factors listed above. Impac is one of the largest providers of health and safety training in New Zealand, is the preferred provider for several government agencies, and has a lot of repeat business. These are also strong indications that Impac is meeting the needs of its clients and stakeholders.

One of the most popular programmes offered by Impac is the Health and Safety Representative training modules 1-4 (and a fifth component of distance study). Module 1 contains compulsory material and so has the most trainees, and it is significant that that increasing numbers of trainees are continuing with other modules and there is now a significant uptake of the qualifications, especially at level 3.

Feedback from clients of Impac shows that the training contributes in a worthwhile way towards a better working environment and working culture. The evaluators learned that a few clients’ managers attended their programmes to upskill and to understand what their workers are learning. Further feedback indicates that the clients have tried other providers but return to Impac as being the more reliable option, and they even send their own trainers to Impac for training.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The management of education and provision of training at Impac is effective. There are some useful initiatives underway at Impac such as the increased awareness of adult educational principles in the training. Management acknowledges that this has been an area that could be improved and has made

efforts recently to align the learning with these principles. While there is a plan to provide staff training in this area, the evaluators believe that setting targets for this training in the trainers' performance agreements would improve the timeliness of this initiative.

Impac is conscious of the need for a safe learning environment. It engages in detailed scrutiny of venue suitability before training begins. The appropriateness of the learning experience is determined, in part through the collection of feedback on the training and the venues from the trainees and the tutors.

Impac attempts to add value by promoting learning beyond the mandatory requirements. As stated earlier in this report, learning pathways are fostered, options are promoted, and trainees who proceed far enough are steered towards completing the qualifications.

The PTE develops its own assessment material and this is moderated by The Skills Organisation before use. It engages in ITO external moderation of sampled unit standards with generally acceptable results. There have been a few small issues which are rectified quickly. ITO moderation, complemented by robust internal moderation, ensures that assessment is valid, consistent and appropriate.

Impac engages in trainee evaluations of the training programmes, and these have an 80 per cent response rate, all of which are distinctly favourable. Evaluation of how well employers' needs are met is also all positive. Workplace examples are incorporated into the bespoke courses. Trainers all have a practical working background in health and safety and illustrate the lessons with personal anecdotes.

Impac has a formalised system of staff performance management which is complemented by a supported professional development programme for training staff. Performance data of individual trainers is collected and analysed to find strengths and areas of improvement. The outcomes of this process influence the professional development content for the trainers.

There are other useful means of monitoring training at Impac:

- A further innovation for staff to communicate observations and suggestions for improving the training is the use of an 'Issues Log' on the intranet.
- The trainers also complete reflective feedback for the management after each delivery of the programme. These are reviewed and used to inform development of the programmes and the resources.
- There are scheduled observations of training practices as part of the performance management of training staff.
- There is consistent and systematic recording and reporting of trainee achievement results.
- New trainers are 'buddied-up' with more experienced trainers until they gain confidence in their roles.

There is also room for more focus on the needs of specific types of learners, such as those of diverse cultural backgrounds and those with special learning needs.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Support is offered to learners in a variety of useful ways. The learner resources, particularly the handbook, are very professional productions and have lasting value to the learners as a reference point in the workplace after the training. The learner handbook is also a useful support tool with much worthwhile information around support for various learning difficulties and on the academic rules.

Impac has a system integrated into the admissions process which assists in the identification of known learning disabilities in the trainees. In geographical areas where there is a concentration of minority culture (e.g. South Auckland), attempts are made to specifically design the training to suit the cultural learning styles. As the short courses are only of one to two days in duration, and often the trainees are at their workplace, there is not the need for pastoral care of the usual type required in a school situation.

In its self-assessment summary for this EER, Impac has identified that it could do more to ensure that the learning styles of Maori and Pasifika students are understood and supported across the organisation. It intends to do this for its training staff through professional development in the near future. The evaluators agree that this is an area that Impac could focus on and they recognise that the provider is responding to this challenge.

## 1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The evaluation team found that the area of governance and management at Impac was strong. The organisation has two owner-directors who have hands-on roles within the organisation but have largely delegated the running of the organisation to a professional chief executive, who has been in the position for a relatively short period of time. The board of directors occupies itself with the overall policy decisions of the business, and leaves the operational side to the chief executive. The board recently appointed an independent chairperson to provide a more objective influence on its functions.

The chief executive has spent time observing and analysing the various functions of the business and has added some management staff to the training arm of Impac to expand the skills in this area. The positions of training development manager, training administration manager and training manager have been added recently to administer this growing area. The chief executive has identified key areas of development for Impac and has developed a three-year plan to implement them.

The business has four offices located in Wellington, Auckland, Napier and Christchurch. Management considers that this allows them to be more accessible to regional locations. A comprehensive quality assurance system is in place to review processes and promote continuous improvement.

Any issues are dealt with efficiently and appropriately. There is a functional quality management system which is reviewed regularly, and steps are being taken to ensure that new and existing staff members are all engaging with the quality management system policies and procedures. There is a clear vision to build an active culture of health and safety in the workplace.

It is an advantage that Impac provides a multi-faceted service in health and safety as these complement each other and provide resources and industry awareness for the training. There is good development and moderation of training resources, assessments and workbooks. The evaluators saw that the consultancy feeds into the training. The provision of software services for health and safety risk management is a significant part of the services. Management personnel are very active in advisory groups in the health and safety sector, and in training and education circles. They provide feedback on the implementation and structure of unit standards to the ITO and they are very conscious of the training needs of the changing marketplace.

Governance and management tracks the effectiveness of its internal performance and has a strong focus on self-assessment and how it interrelates with the industry. As a result, Impac has initiated a number of improvement programmes. These include:

- A strategy of enhancing staff awareness of the needs of Maori and Pasifika students and those under the age of 25 years.
- Responding to the changing landscape for health and safety in New Zealand industry.
- Taking proactive steps to engage with The Skills Organisation to assist in the Targeted Review of Qualifications process (TRoQ).
- Engaging with contemporary training media, including online learning.
- Taking steps to create its own competency framework, to improve the educational service it is able to provide its clients.

These factors have contributed to the evaluators' finding that the governance and management at Impac is strong. The few areas for improvement, like the tracking of at-risk learner groups, have already been identified and Impac is taking steps to remedy them, although the anticipated improvements have yet to be seen.



# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

## 2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (Workplace Safety) (Level 3) including the Health and Safety Representative training modules 1-4

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

## 2.3 Focus area: Department of Conservation JSA and Risk manager software workshop

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Impac Services Limited:

1. Consider implementing a system of external peer review of its training and assessment materials.
2. Set targets for upskilling staff in adult education techniques.
3. Consider a stronger focus on meeting the needs of specific learning groups, like Maori and Pasifika.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.*

*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](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

*The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.*

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