External Evaluation and Review Report

Future Skills Academy Limited

Date of report: 30 April 2025

About Future Skills Academy Limited

Future Skills Academy offers industry-relevant education and training at four Auckland campuses, including the Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus (OPAIC) for international students. Programmes are offered from level 1 to postgraduate level.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	1 Leyton Way, Manukau City Centre, Manukau, Auckland
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes
Number of students:	In 2024:
	Domestic students – total EFTS[1] were 602, including 41 Māori, 75 Pasifika and 15 disabled EFTS
	International delivery began in 2024 and there were 56 international EFTS at the end of 2024
Number of staff:	104.70 full-time equivalents including international staff.
TEO profile:	[Future Skills Academy](#) on the NZQA website
	The PTE has a long-standing history of delivering programmes to international students through its partnership with OPAIC. Future Skills has recently begun independently delivering business, building and technology programmes to international students.
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Future Skills Academy at the previous EER in 2021.
Scope of evaluation:	• Theme: Advances in technology to improve educational performance

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[1] Equivalent full-time students

- New Zealand Diploma in Building Surveying (Level 6) ID:119567-4

- New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2) ID:120283-3

- International student support and wellbeing.

MoE number:	7372
NZQA reference:	C57588
Dates of EER enquiry:	19-21 November 2024

Summary of results

Students achieve well, above the averages for the sector. Strong leadership provides a framework for effective strategic planning and management of performance to ensure strategic goals are achieved. The organisation has strong industry networks and is well positioned to continue to develop and deliver industry-relevant programmes that meet student and stakeholder needs.

	• Strong governance and leadership and an effective strategic planning framework has positioned Future Skills well to meet a range of stakeholders' current and emerging needs.
Highly Confident in educational performance	• Achievement is high overall, and benchmarking shows Future Skills is performing above sector averages for most measures. Focus area programmes effectively prepare graduates for specific roles in the building and health sectors.
Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment	• Future Skills analyses comprehensive data sets to influence educational performance and improve the student experience. Sophisticated technology solutions are used to enhance educational performance and support student success.
	• Staff in all parts of the organisation are well qualified, bringing relevant skills and experience that positively contribute to educational performance.
	• Targeted initiatives have been largely successful in reducing parity gaps for Māori and Pasifika students in recent years.
	• Future Skills does not currently monitor disabled student achievement. This is under consideration as part of the recent implementation of a disability action plan.

Key evaluation question findings[2]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students achieve well, with overall course completion rates for 2020-23 ranging from 73 per cent to 85 per cent. Qualification completion rates for the same period range from 68 per cent to 73 per cent.[3] Benchmarking of performance data at the organisational level shows Future Skills students achieving above sector averages in course and qualification completion. Data is also used effectively to identify trends and areas where intervention may be required to enhance students' chance of success. Withdrawals are tracked and processes are in place to ensure students are supported to remain in a programme if possible; or if not, the PTE understands the reasons for withdrawal. Māori participation rates overall are low at 8 per cent, while Pasifika people made up 16 per cent of students in 2024. Targets to reduce parity gaps have resulted in activity that is showing some positive signs, with Māori students achieving course completion rates above other students in 2023, with a 1 percentage point gap in 2024. The overall parity gap for Pasifika students shows significant reduction, trending down from 7 per cent in 2023 to 3 per cent in 2024 at the time of the EER. Disabled students' achievement is not currently tracked, although Future Skills is aware of expectations for monitoring disabled student achievement. This is an area for improvement. Data and reporting demonstrate a clear understanding of educational performance at course and qualification levels. Students and stakeholders also told the evaluators about the students' development of their skills and

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

[3] Details available in Appendix 1.

	abilities, including examples of improved decision-making for the building surveying students, and increased confidence and technical skills for the health and wellbeing students. Formal collection and analysis of this data may provide richer information about student gains.
Conclusion:	Achievement is high overall, with parity gaps trending down in the past two years. Data is comprehensive and well used across the organisation to benchmark against other providers in the sector, to understand trends and to enact timely interventions that lift student success. Disabled student achievement is not currently formally tracked.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The value of outcomes for students and stakeholders is high. Students in the focus area programmes gain qualifications and skills that prepare them well for work.[4] Stakeholders value the continued engagement with employers and placement[5] providers, while graduate surveys indicate high levels of agreement that the programmes meet their needs.
	Future Skills' programmes are designed with a key focus on the workplace. Students in the health and wellbeing programme complete work placements, with some students gaining work in these organisations. All building surveying students are in related employment at enrolment.
	Building surveying students engage in study to meet regulatory requirements, and for their continued employment. Graduates progress to more senior positions and demonstrate a range of behaviours that enhance their performance and decision-making.

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[4] Details of graduate destinations are included in 2.2 and 2.3.

[5] Health and wellbeing students undertake work placements where they can apply their skills and knowledge in real-life settings.

	A systematic process gathers rich information about graduate destinations and the value of the education for graduates and stakeholders. Ninety-eight per cent of Future Skills graduates indicated in a recent survey that the education they had received was valuable to them.
Conclusion:	Most Future Skills graduates gain employment related to their study, or progress within their roles if already employed. Many students engage in further study. Comprehensive evaluative data is used to understand stakeholder needs and valued outcomes and make improvements where needed.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Future Skills designs its programmes to meet specific industry needs and to prepare graduates for roles in the workforce. Focus area programmes are closely aligned with and largely meet employer expectations. Some evidence was provided to show where changes had been made to better meet the needs of students and employers.
	Systemic improvements have been made to ensure assessments are developed and pre-moderated to assure quality before use. Post-assessment moderation is thorough and comprehensive. Post-moderation findings have been used to inform development activities, with an example being a team workshop to improve consistency of assessor feedback across the programme.
	A review of health programmes following the previous EER identified some inconsistencies in programme implementation that had affected student engagement and achievement. Programme implementation now includes a collaborative approach between delivery, academic management and student support teams to plan delivery to ensure student needs are met.
	Continuous review of programme performance in monthly meetings and at the end of cohorts enable minor changes

	to be made quickly to ensure the student experience is optimal.

Peer observation and peer moderation provide a view of consistency across programmes. Future Skills uses an app to track moderation. This tool also enables staff to read previous feedback and actions taken in response to moderator feedback.

Annual programme evaluation review reports are completed by all teams and provide a point for reflection and review of data and action plans. There was variability in the level of analysis of important data across the reports viewed, including use of stakeholder feedback. However, ongoing development of the programme review process aims to improve data analysis to establish a consistent and comprehensive review of programme performance across the whole organisation. |
| Conclusion: | Programmes generally meet the needs of students and stakeholders. A key focus on assessment and moderation has improved processes and oversight of assessment quality across programmes. Programme review is in a development phase and is showing early improvements. |

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	A student success strategy with clear objectives underpins Future Skills' strong, student-centred approach to student engagement and achievement. Academic and student services staff work collaboratively and with the students to help them to achieve successfully in a safe learning environment. Supportive and respectful relationships are evident between staff and students and within student peer groups.

Student needs are well understood and well met by academic staff, student support specialists and organisational processes. Integrated technology and effective communication between teams enables timely responses to student needs. Information about activities is analysed and used to review their effectiveness. |

	A range of academic support sessions are customised to meet student needs, informed by staff feedback, analysis of achievement trends, and student self-referrals. Student-facing apps, the student portal and the learning management system provide flexibility for students to access information and support remotely.
	Future Skills uses student forums and focus groups to gain feedback with a view to improving the students' experience. A programme team recently clarified pre-enrolment information to ensure students understood the expectations of the course and their roles in the workplace to enhance retention in the programme.
	Surveys are well used, have strong response rates[6], and report high overall levels of satisfaction[7] with the student experience.
Conclusion:	Future Skills' students are involved in and engaged with their learning. Staff support the students to provide useful feedback in a range of modes. This information provides insights into student perspectives and data for improvements that enhance the learning experience and student achievement.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Future Skills has strong governance and strategic leadership and is well positioned to maintain and grow the current level of quality, relevant education provision. There has been significant change at Future Skills since the previous EER, with a new organisational structure and a shift in focus to higher-level programmes. International student numbers have been increased to ensure sustainability in a changing sector.

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[6] There is some variability by programme, and low response rates are noted for action in programme review improvement plans.

[7] A recent survey showed 92 per cent of students were satisfied with their learning experience.

	Ongoing engagement and collaboration with industry has aligned the organisation's portfolio to priority areas identified by industry bodies and tertiary education sector needs.

A suite of integrated technology tools enables effective processes and systems that support streamlined operations and enhance the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and support activities. Future Skills has sophisticated data systems that provide real-time and trend reporting on student progress at programme and organisational levels. Staff and management track performance against targets to drive improvement year on year. This appears to have been a successful approach to improving educational performance.

Academic oversight is strong, with a range of committee structures and quality assurance processes that are managed centrally to support continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Self-assessment is well embedded, and there is a strong organisational focus on continuous improvement using information collected from staff, students and stakeholders. Data analysis effectively provides a comprehensive, high-level understanding of organisational performance. However, there is some opportunity to use information more effectively to gain a more complete understanding at programme and department levels. |
| Conclusion: | Future Skills has experienced and knowledgeable strategic leaders, supported by strong management, clear communication and reporting systems, and an explicit focus on educational quality. Effective self-assessment is data-led, resulting in ongoing improvements that have real impacts on educational achievement. |

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Future Skills has clear systems and processes to ensure important compliance accountabilities are managed effectively. The governing board takes a hands-on approach to compliance management, with detailed monthly reporting and review of compliance, health and safety, and risk matters. The PTE's self-review of the Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners Code of Practice is comprehensive, with a clear action plan reviewed by the board monthly. This is published on the Future Skills website along with definitions of critical incidents and complaints. Technology is used well to streamline and automate the management of compliance activities to ensure required actions are completed as required. Staff are aware of relevant compliance obligations, and teaching staff are aware of and monitor compliance with the approved programme documentation. Polices and procedures are available to all staff in the staff hub. Students also have access to relevant policies and processes. Systematic review of the quality management system is undertaken regularly. All attestations have been provided on time. Compliance has been a key focus for Future Skills since the previous EER, and ongoing improvement is evident.
Conclusion:	Compliance accountabilities are well managed and are a key focus for governance and management. Staff at all levels of the organisation are aware of their own compliance responsibilities.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Theme: Advances in technology to improve educational performance

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Future Skills has undertaken a range of projects since 2021 that have improved processes and had positive impacts on the student experience, the way staff work, and the availability of data and information to inform self-assessment. Positive impacts for staff include improved access to information, automation of tasks, and the ability to monitor performance. The moderation and placement apps have significantly improved the efficiency of academic processes. The streamlining and integration of systems enables operational efficiencies throughout the student journey, and include significant enhancements to data availability and use. Students experience joined-up systems, from enquiry to graduation, with information shared and used to support their success. Apps for students have improved their access to relevant programme information and results. The customised online platform provides open access for academic oversight of the quality of teaching and learning activities. The platform also enhances consistency of teaching through shared lesson plans and student guides across different delivery sites.
Conclusion:	Future Skills is involved in an ongoing plan of work that started in 2021. Implementation of technology solutions has made staff processes more efficient, improved access to information for students and staff, and enabled more sophisticated data analysis and use to enhance self-assessment. Internal software development expertise is a key organisational investment leading to the improvements to date.

2.2 New Zealand Diploma in Building Surveying (Level 6) ID:119567-4

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The Diploma in Building Surveying is a successful programme that meets the needs of local government organisations for staff to gain the skills required to meet *Regulation 18 of Building (Accreditation of Building Consent Authorities) Regulations 2006*.
	Data gathered about graduates from 2021-23 showed that 91 per cent of respondents were still employed in the sector at the time of the survey in 2024. Fourteen per cent of graduates were engaged in further study.
	Students and graduates were positive about the skills and knowledge gained, as were employers. Many current students planned to progress to the degree programme at Future Skills. There is sound evidence of students' career progression during their study and following graduation.
	Staff have relevant experience and qualifications and remain closely connected to industry. Staff research plans have been completed, and some research activity is in progress. Staff regularly attend conferences held by the Building Officials Institute of New Zealand, and they hold leadership positions in national industry groups.
	Feedback from employers and the advisory committee identified some challenges with meeting the needs of all employers due to different staffing structures in local government departments. Students and graduates identified issues with the currency of some of the learning resources. However, the teaching team is aware of the issue and is working to make the changes required.
	Future Skills maintains strong connections with industry and employers, and new programme leadership is actively developing key relationships. There is a need to engage more formally with industry and employers during programme design and development to demonstrate clear alignment with industry needs.

Conclusion:	Highly motivated students achieve well above the sector average. Graduates' skills and knowledge are valued by their employers. More formal engagement with industry would strengthen programme review and development.

2.3 New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2) ID:120283-3

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Achievement on the programme is generally strong, but with some unevenness across years (refer Tables 3 and 4, Appendix 1). High rates of early and academic withdrawals have been persistent in the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2). Withdrawals are monitored, and although targeted support has been provided, student retention did not significantly increase.

New staff with teaching and relevant sector experience have been recruited. Changes made to the programme appear to be contributing to achievement levels, which are consistently above the sector benchmark.

Health and wellbeing graduates for the period 2020-23 indicated they were either working in the sector (62.52 per cent) or using what they had learned as volunteers in the community (8.4 per cent). Twenty-four per cent of graduates had progressed to further study.

The online learning environment is engaging, with access to multiple tools and resources to enrich student learning. Simulation rooms provide students with opportunities to use industry tools and to prepare for placement. Work placements are used to provide the students with real-life experiences that enable the students to apply their skills and knowledge in various scenarios.

Programmes are well structured. Shared lesson plans help to maintain consistency of teaching and learning across different cohorts, while student guides provide comprehensive learning resources for students to access online when needed.

Current students and recent graduates noted good support for learning, that they were well prepared for placement, and that the programme ensured they were realistic about |

	the sector's work expectations. This has been a key focus of staff.
Conclusion:	Students achieve well and gain real-world skills that lead to employment. Staff are well qualified and support the students to succeed. Formal programme review could be strengthened to include evidence of student skill development in addition to course and qualification achievement.

2.4 International student support and wellbeing

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	At the time of the EER there was limited evidence of the effectiveness of international support, as only a small number of international students had been engaged in study for more than a few weeks. Current international students are well supported, using established systems and processes that have been in place for OPAIC international students.[8] This experience and knowledge is now being shared and adopted where relevant within the collaborative student success team across both the domestic and international student support teams. Student files sampled during the EER showed no issues of concern.
Conclusion:	Future Skills has established systems and processes from their long experience working with OPAIC to support international students. The evaluators are confident that international students will be well supported in their learning and wellbeing.

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[8] Future Skills has been subcontracted to manage and support all international delivery for Otago Polytechnic at the OPAIC campus in Auckland for over 10 years.

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 Future Skills Academy Limited:

- Continue to develop and improve the annual programme review process and enhance team capability to analyse the comprehensive information available and identify strengths and improvements that will have a positive impact on educational outcomes.

- Introduce monitoring and reporting of disabled student achievement to provide a clear picture of the achievement of all priority students. This will provide important evidence as part of the implementation of the disability action plan.

- Consider enhancing reporting on student achievement to include achievement of skills and knowledge alongside the high-level use of formal educational performance indicators.

- Develop and implement processes to more formally capture industry and stakeholder feedback to strengthen aspects of programme review and development.

Requirements

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

Appendix 1

All data provided by Future Skills.

Table 1. Key performance indicators 2020-23 and four-year cumulative

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	4-Year
Total Learners/EFTS	539/240	788/430	951/460	1084/496	3362/1676
Course Completions	81%	77%	73%	85%	81%
Qual Completions	68%	73%	68%	71%	70%
Progressions	33%	56%	42%	40%	41%
Retention	82%	87%	53%	76%	72%

Table 2. Course completions by priority groups 2020-23, 2024 year to date, four-year cumulative and sector

Course Completions	Learners	2020	Learners	2021	Learners	2022	Learners	2023	Learners	2024*	4-Year	Sector
Overall	539	81%	788	77%	951	73%	1084	85%	1556	85%	81%	76%
Māori	50	68%	72	74%	84	72%	76	91%	81	84%	78%	70%
Pasifika	129	72%	185	68%	173	61%	140	81%	169	82%	71%	69%
Others	376	82%	532	80%	682	79%	819	88%	1027	85%	83%	80%

*YTD as of 30 October 2024. Students may identify as more than one ethnicity.

Table 3. Focus area – Health and Wellbeing (Level 2)

Course Completions	Learners	2020	Learners	2021	Learners	2022	Learners	2023	Learners	2024*
Overall	77	85.6%	72	79.6%	66	77.2%	124	78.9%	151	89.0%
Māori	7	66.7%	10	86.9%	6	57.7%	7	96.8%	10	92.3%
Pasifika	19	92.8%	21	83.7%	29	82.3%	35	80.9%	32	92.1%
Others	51	86.2%	41	77.2%	31	74.5%	82	76.6%	109	86.1%

*YTD as of 30 October 2024. Students may identify as more than one ethnicity.

Table 4. Focus area – Health and Wellbeing (Level 2)

Qual Completions	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
QC Overall	77.2	74.2	74.6	73.8
QC Māori	40.0	85.7	20.0	87.1
QC Pasifika	84.7	77.9	80.8	70.0
QC Others	78.0	70.3	78.6	73.9

Table 5. Focus area – New Zealand Diploma in Building Surveying (Level 6)

Course Completions	Learners	2020	Learners	2021	Learners	2022	Learners	2023	Learners	2024*
Overall	73	95.70%	120	75.80%	184	87.30%	215	95.10%	168	95.14%
Māori	4	100.00%	12	70.80%	29	83.40%	26	97.40%	21	95.05%
Pasifika	1	100.00%	2	50.00%	8	79.00%	17	100.00%	15	86.67%
Others	68	95.40%	106	76.80%	147	87.90%	172	94.30%	132	96.36%

*YTD as of 30 October 2024. Students may identify as more than one ethnicity.

Table 6. Focus area – New Zealand Diploma in Building Surveying (Level 6)

Qual Completions	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022**	FY 2023
QC Overall	60.00%	68.80%	69.08%	89.90%
QC Māori	100.00%	50.00%	66.67%	50.00%
QC Pasifika	33.30%	33.30%	62.50%	100.00%
QC Others	63.60%	88.90%	69.92%	92.20%

**2022 TEC data not available. Internal data used.

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 fraud[9]*

- *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.*

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[9] 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 2022, 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 excluding universities, and*

- *maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 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, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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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