



Report of External Evaluation and Review

National Trade Academy Limited

Date of report: 14 July 2010

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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.

Brief description of TEO

Location: Wigram and McLeans Island, Christchurch

Type: Private Training Establishment

Size: 131 equivalent full-time students (EFTS); (85 Telford, 30 Targeted Training, 16 international)

15 full-time and five-six casual staff.

Sites: Christchurch only

National Trade Academy Limited (NTA) was established in 2000 to offer a range of pre-employment training programmes for entry into land-based industries. NTA currently delivers agriculture, farm skills, horticulture/forestry, equine and, more recently, English language courses. The majority of courses are unit standards based. While most learners enrol under Training Opportunities and Youth Training programmes, NTA also delivers courses under contract to Telford Rural Polytechnic (Telford) and in cooperation with several secondary schools.

The practical components of the courses are delivered at NTA's farm and equestrian centre at McLeans Island, where the entire operation will be located by the end of the year. More recently NTA has established courses for international students, notably those from South America.

The most recent quality assurance visit by NZQA was an audit in 2007, when NTA met all requirements for ongoing registration.

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **National Trade Academy Limited**.

National Trade Academy's stated priority is to offer courses that lead directly to employment. According to the reported outcomes and comments from students, staff, and stakeholders, NTA is an effective provider which consistently performs at a high level.

Domestic students achieve well against their goals of acquiring practical vocational skills. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) requires Targeted Training student outcomes of at least 60 per cent. Since National Trade Academy began offering the Targeted Training programmes in 2001, it has consistently exceeded this target.

International students also achieve well against their goal of acquiring practical vocational skills. In 2008 NTA enrolled international students for the first time. To date, completion rates have been 100 per cent. Telford Rural Polytechnic, which sub-contracts with NTA for delivery of some courses, requires completion rates of at least 50 per cent. NTA has consistently achieved 80-90 per cent completion rates.

Students report that, for them, other achievements are equally important. For example, they reported greater motivation and confidence, improved literacy, overcoming personal problems, and minimising barriers to learning. There is a waiting list for many of the courses, but a funding cap prevents NTA accepting them.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **National Trade Academy Limited**.

NTA meets or exceeds its TEC requirements. This enables management to plan ahead, be proactive, and market its courses to students.

Management uses several sources to benchmark NTA's results, including Telford's overall reported outcomes and data from the Canterbury Private Providers' Association. NTA also tracks its own performance from year to year, setting new goals for "doing better each year than what has been done before".

All staff are involved in the strategic direction of NTA and work to each other's strengths for the greater good of the academy.

The evaluation team was impressed that a variety of data is collected for explicit reasons, analysed, discussed, and acted on. The effects of actions are tracked and recorded for future review. This ongoing review cycle is "business as usual" for NTA.

TEO response

National Trade Academy Limited has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Basis for External Evaluation and Review

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

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

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQuality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Findings

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

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>

Outline of scope

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of NTA included the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- Student support, including international students.

The following focus areas were included as the majority of students are enrolled in these courses.

- NTA Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills (Level 2)
- Telford Certificate in Equine Studies (Level 3)
- Landbased Industries Forestry Skills (Level 2).

Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation

This section provides a picture of the TEO's performance in terms of the outcomes achieved and the key contributing processes. Performance judgements are based on the answers to key evaluation questions across the focus areas sampled. This section also provides a judgement about the extent to which the organisation uses self-assessment information to understand its own performance and bring about improvements, i.e. capability in self-assessment.

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 **Excellent**.

Context

The NTA Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills is a 12-week course with four and a half days covering both practical and theory components, a half-day of self-directed learning, and two weeks of work experience. Students can achieve the National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 2), and develop skills and work habits for further training or

employment in the farming and rural service sectors. The Landbased Industries Forestry Skills certificate introduces students to land-based industries in New Zealand, with an emphasis on forestry. Many students on these courses are referred from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), Canterbury high schools, or Youth Services.

National Trade Academy is sub-contracted to deliver the Telford Certificate in Equine Studies. This is a 38-week programme based at the NTA equestrian centre at McLeans Island, Christchurch. Students attend classes for the first six weeks, followed by four days in class and one day of work experience. Students can achieve the Telford Certificate in Equine Studies and the National Certificate in Equine Stable Practice (Level 3). Students who achieve these qualifications are able to demonstrate a good standard of horse care and stable management and are able to ride a variety of horses for exercise.

In 2008, for the first time, NTA enrolled international students. The majority came to New Zealand from South America to study on a 12-week agricultural course. At the time of the evaluation visit there were 16 international students: 14 from Chile, one from Japan, and one from Malaysia.

Explanation

NTA's stated priority is to offer courses that lead directly to employment. According to NTA's reported outcomes as well as comments from student groups, stakeholders, and staff during the evaluation visit, the academy is an effective provider which consistently achieves good results.

Domestic students achieve well against their goals of acquiring practical vocational skills. TEC requires Targeted Training student outcomes of at least 60 per cent. Since NTA started the Targeted Training programmes in 2001, it has consistently exceeded this target, until 2009 when outcomes fell marginally, due to the economic recession, below this level for the first time. Telford requires completion rates of at least 50 per cent for courses delivered by sub-contractors. NTA has consistently achieved 80-90 per cent completion rates.

NTA advised the evaluation team that during the pre-recession period of low unemployment the academy accepted WINZ clients and school leavers who required even greater assistance to gain both the qualifications and employment than clients in previous years. Many Training Opportunities clients enrolled in courses only because WINZ case managers said they would otherwise lose their benefit. Many of these students became disruptive and affected the learning of other students. Some opted out of the course onto the sickness benefit, further affecting the learner outcomes. Some of the unsuccessful students have now gained employment, which NTA discovered as part of its destination survey process. The actual outcomes are, therefore, higher than what was reported.

As a result of the 2009 experience, NTA has now put in place measures to increase outcomes even further, including stricter interview criteria and a two-week trial period for students. NTA has also started an employment consultancy to help students with job placements.

Because NTA meets or exceeds its TEC requirements, management is able to plan ahead, be proactive, and market its courses to domestic students. Domestic students have positive

learning experiences and acquire relevant vocational skills that lead to employment in areas where there are known labour shortages. Students reported that the small class sizes, of ten to 12 students, allow tutors to work with them on an individual basis to help them achieve their goals. Feedback from students indicates that tutors are meeting their learning needs and are providing a friendly, fun, effective learning environment.

International students achieve well against their goals of acquiring practical vocational skills. In 2008 NTA enrolled international students for the first time. To date, completion rates have been 100 per cent. International students acquire vocational skills and English language skills to improve their communication levels in conversing and understanding work-specific terminology. They enjoy cultural experiences in New Zealand which broaden their worldview. NTA benefits from recommendations and repeat business from overseas contacts.

Management uses several sources to benchmark NTA's outcome results, including Telford's overall reported outcomes for similar courses and data from the Canterbury Private Providers' Association. NTA also tracks its own performance from year to year, setting new goals for "doing better each year than what has been done before".

There is ongoing self-assessment through tutor and course evaluations. The process includes central collation of results, written comments from tutors about the results, feedback from managers, and agreement on any actions that need to be taken. These factors are discussed at full staff meetings, presented to the advisory committee, and followed up as part of appraisal. Students are informed of actions taken/to be taken and "spot-checks" are made to evaluate effectiveness.

The evaluation team was impressed with the variety of data on student outcomes that NTA collects, analyses, discusses, and acts on. The effects of actions taken are tracked and recorded for future review. This ongoing review cycle is "business as usual" for NTA.

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**.

Explanation

Targeted training is highly successful because students are being prepared for jobs where there are identified skill shortages. Employment rates are high, with 60 per cent of students gaining employment within two months of the completion of training. NTA is working with clients from WINZ and Youth Services who have had long periods of unemployment and/or health and personal issues which have made it difficult for them to commit to work.

Staff visit students during work experience and follow up students in paid employment to ensure they are settled. NTA surveys students and employers after two months and incorporates any feedback received. Knowing they are being trained in areas where there is a labour shortage motivates the students to attend classes and work hard at their study.

Students told the evaluators that achievements other than course completion are equally important to them, for example greater motivation and confidence, improved literacy, overcoming personal problems, and minimising barriers to learning.

Staff help students with a wide range of issues, both educational and personal. They are interested in each student as “a whole person”. Students in the forestry course, many referred from WINZ, said the courses were a good mix of theory and practice. One student commented that he enjoyed the hands-on experience in combination with the theory to back it up. Another said, “You could call this place a place of opportunity. I wouldn’t still be here without the help and encouragement of the staff”.

The focus on individual needs means barriers to learning are minimised. Students feel valued, which increases their attendance record, which in turn helps them to make progress on their course-work. Staff also encourage and emphasise the importance of students taking responsibility for themselves and the results of their actions. Successful completion of the course raises their self-esteem which helps them to present themselves confidently at job interviews and to gain employment. Staff assist trainees by referring them to appropriate agencies for their personal issues and providing help with literacy and numeracy issues.

NTA provides international students with opportunities to experience New Zealand culture, learn English and, through the homestay scheme, be part of the immediate community. All international students stay with local homestay families, arranged by a professional homestay company to ensure an appropriate match to students’ needs.

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 **Excellent**.

Context

In 2006 NTA was involved in a trade mission to Chile with New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. The management of NTA saw the opportunity to bring Chilean students to New Zealand to experience New Zealand land management and culture. NTA is currently involved in a Pilot Immigration Project with the New Zealand Immigration Service. The Chilean youth attend classes at NTA with 16 weeks of theory and practical training and two weeks of work experience. The students are then able to work for six months when they complete their study. There are currently 19 students on the Pilot Immigration Project at NTA.

Explanation

Programmes for the farm, forestry, and equine courses are well matched to the needs of individual students. This means that NTA has turned down approaches to offer a programme if there has been no identified skill shortage, or if another provider is already successfully offering the course.

For international students, NTA establishes local links with homestay families sourced through a homestay company. The students are met by NTA staff on arrival in Auckland and have a week-long orientation in Christchurch. This includes one week of English lessons, information about life in New Zealand, applying for their 18+ card, and help to arrange internet banking and organising an IRD number. Students have a range of social opportunities, such as barbeques, with homestay parents and NTA staff. NTA employs a staff member in Chile who is in charge of the South American marketing for international students.

The student handbook has been translated into Spanish and is sent to students prior to their arrival in New Zealand. This will assist with the transition to New Zealand for Spanish-speaking students. NTA's pilot Study to Work immigration project is groundbreaking and reflects NTA's proactive approach to meeting a market need. International students have a range of opportunities to experience English language and New Zealand culture while at NTA.

For domestic students, literacy and numeracy are embedded in the course materials. The individual and group work expected of students helps them appreciate that they are part of a team and that this comes with rewards and responsibilities to others. This parallels the workplace experience. Learning to work as a team is essential for students whose experience of learning to date has been negative and has lowered their self-worth.

NTA also works with several secondary schools in Christchurch and runs safety training courses for diverse organisations such as the Department of Conservation, pest control operators, farmers, and surf lifesaving clubs. A farm education park is also being established on the McLeans Island site.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

Explanation

NTA staff are committed, knowledgeable, and well qualified subject specialists, dedicated to ensuring trainees achieve on the course and obtain employment. Teaching is effective and is matched to individual student need. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with their tutors' knowledge base, teaching resources, and teaching styles. They appreciate being taught by industry specialists with recent workplace knowledge, who willingly use their industry contacts for work experience and post-course employment options. Effective teaching enables students to reach their goals of skill acquisition, work experience, and employment.

NTA staff are highly regarded. For example, two equine tutors have the highest-level qualification from the British Horse Society of Instructors. There are only seven pony club national coaches in New Zealand, and two of them are NTA tutors. For this reason, students come from all over New Zealand to study at NTA.

Staff develop action plans with students to address any issues that might be barriers to their learning. Early recognition and discussion of barriers enable students and staff to develop open, honest relationships. This proactive engagement with students means that for some students, real learning occurs for the first time.

Teaching is appropriate and well resourced for the practical vocational training offered at NTA. Teachers have their own classrooms and are provided with extra resources when required. There is limited use of computer technology in the teaching, the emphasis being on a tutor-initiated and practical approach. Students have access to the purpose-built farm and equine facilities at McLeans Island.

Staff have excellent rapport and work effectively as a team. They told the evaluators that one of the best things about working at NTA is their colleagues. They said they could be autonomous, feel trusted, are kept well informed by management, work well together, and have freedom to develop their own teaching methods and materials. Tutors meet formally every week and there is a full staff meeting once a month.

NTA understands that moderation is important to ensure assessment is fair and valid.

Moderation occurs regularly, both internally at NTA and externally with Telford and through the agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and equine industry training organisations.

Excellent collegial relationships mean staff have created an atmosphere that is positive and caring. Their enjoyment in their work transfers to students who reported that they are positive and enthusiastic about their study and future work prospects. The clear processes and procedures and the shared mission at NTA enable the staff to be creative, involved, committed, and efficient.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

Both international and domestic students are well supported and appropriately guided.

Explanation

Students are provided with comprehensive and timely study information and an inclusive learning environment. A Spanish-speaking staff member is able to assist students in their first language.

There is an integrated model of academic and pastoral care. Students report having different avenues for the reporting or discussion of academic or pastoral concerns, including tutors, the same-language counsellor, and homestay parents. A student advisory group meets once a year. Feedback from this group is discussed at staff meetings and significant issues are discussed with the advisory committee which meets several times a year. Any problems that students identify are followed up and resolved. Good skills acquisition and pastoral guidance and support result in high levels of student satisfaction with their time spent at NTA.

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 **Excellent**.

Context

The NTA board has three members: the managing director who owns the majority of the business and two other directors. One is a dairy farmer and the other has business experience. The board meets ten times a year.

Explanation

Governance and management at NTA are highly effective. The integrity of vision of NTA is clearly stated and followed through at all levels of operation. The quality management system is a living document which is regularly reviewed and updated. It is written in plain English and referred to regularly by staff. NTA has two distinct and diverse groups of students: Targeted Training and international students. It shows equal commitment to and understanding of both groups. NTA has a clear, sustained vision and delivers learning programmes and activities according to its professed values and market needs.

NTA intentionally employs more full-time than casual staff. To create full-time staff positions many staff have a mix of roles. Staff are supported and encouraged to take professional development opportunities and further study. The managers are readily available to staff and students and are fully involved in the operation of the academy. An external stakeholder said the managing director is very good at appointing appropriate people. The staff are fully engaged with the organisation and the organisation with them.

NTA's decision to seek international students was significant, planned, and innovative. It involved significant commitment, building links in Chile with education and government bodies, and linking with New Zealand education and immigration organisations. The result is the ground-breaking pilot Study to Work immigration project for which NTA won the innovation category in an international programme award at the International Education Conference in 2008. The growth of international student numbers means NTA has been able to increase student numbers in a capped environment, meet a need in South America, and provide intercultural experiences for international and domestic students and local homestay families.

NTA has an excellent reputation among other providers and industry. It has been approached by TEC and several industry training organisations to offer programmes. Two staff have worked with the Equine Industry Training Organisation to help develop qualifications, and the pony club manual was rewritten by an NTA staff member. NTA is committed to the future of land-based industries in New Zealand. It demonstrates this by providing training at secondary schools, a tangible way to invest in the next generation and introduce them to the career opportunities available in this industry. NTA values staff and students and understands the factors that contribute to a successful business.

Part 2: Performance in 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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: International students, pastoral support

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: NTA Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills (Level 2)

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Telford Certificate in Equine Studies (Level 3)

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

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

2.5 Focus area: Landbased Industries Forestry Skills (Level 2)

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

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

Actions Required and Recommendations

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Recommendations

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

NZQA

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