

Report of External Evaluation and Review

National Trade Academy Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 26 August 2014

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Final Report

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:	National Trade Academy Limited (NTA)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	890 Mcleans Island Road, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	(In addition to the above location) Bishopdale Court, Christchurch
First registered:	7 February 2001
Courses currently delivered: ¹	Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Agriculture (General Skills) (Level 2)• National Certificate in Agriculture (Animal Feeding and Pastures) (Level 3)• National Trade Academy Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills (Level 2) Animal Care <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Animal Care (Level 2) Equine <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Equine (Introductory Stable Skills) (Level 2)• National Certificate in Equine (Preliminary

¹ Some courses are also delivered as part of the Youth Guarantee and Trade Academy programmes.

Coaching) (Level 3)

- National Certificate in Equine (Stable Procedures) (Level 3)

Horticulture

- National Certificate in Horticulture (Introductory) (Level 2)

English

- National Trade Academy General English
- National Trade Academy English plus Agriculture
- National Trade Academy English plus Horticulture
- National Trade Academy English plus Horse Riding

Code of Practice signatory? Yes – for trainees 18 years of age and above; also for trainees 14 to 17 years of age

Number of students: Domestic: 93 trainees (including nine Māori trainees); international: 55 trainees

Number of staff: Fourteen full-time and six part-time

Scope of active accreditation: A variety of sub-field and domains in primary production, equine industry, communication and numeracy: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=740209001>

Distinctive characteristics:

- Specialises in land-based pre-employment training, funded through Youth Guarantee and Trade Academy programmes for domestic trainees
- Nine of 93 domestic trainees identified as Māori; currently there are no Pasifika trainees
- Forty-five of 55 international trainees in 2014 are from Latin America
- Trainees' gender: 64 per cent male; 36 per cent female
- Trainees' age: 73.6 per cent are 18 years of age or under; 17.6 per cent are between 19 and 24 years of age; 8.8 per cent are 25 years of age or above

Recent significant changes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer delivers programmes in forestry. • The former Youth Training programme (with an outcomes focus on employment) transitioned to the Youth Guarantee programme (with an outcomes focus on qualification completion). • The joint venture with Telford (a division of Lincoln University) to deliver level 3 agriculture and equine qualifications ceased at the end of 2013 due to funding issues at Lincoln University.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of NTA was conducted in 2010. NZQA was Highly Confident in both NTA's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.</p> <p>NTA satisfactorily met all national external moderation requirements over the past three years and is exempt from the 2014 round of national external moderation.</p>
Other:	<p>NTA currently receives funding for Youth Guarantee and Trade Academy programmes from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the Ministry of Education respectively.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER included the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International students

Other focus areas selected were:

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

All 55 international trainees are enrolled in this programme.

- Trade Academy

The Trade Academy has a higher number of enrolments than the Youth Guarantee programme.

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.

Self-assessment materials were delivered to NZQA in a timely fashion to inform the scoping of this EER.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators and an observer from within NZQA. (The presence of the observer is for the professional development of the NZQA staff member concerned.) The on-site visit lasted one and a half days, during which the training site at 890 Mcleans Island Road was visited.

The evaluation team interviewed the managing director, academic manager, quality assurance administrator, three instructors, seven international and four domestic trainees. A range of materials and records was reviewed. A number of stakeholders were contacted by phone during and after the on-site visit.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

- Completion rates for the Youth Guarantee programme well exceeded the expectations set down by the TEC in 2013; and for the NTA Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills completion rates were very close to 100 per cent throughout the past eight years (see Findings 1.1).
- While it may be too early to see achievement outcomes for the Trade Academy given that the initiative only commenced in 2012, indications to date are largely positive (see Findings 1.1).
- Māori trainees achieve at a level similar to that of other ethnic groups (see Findings 1.1).
- Trainees acquire relevant, up-to-date and practical primary industry skills and are work-ready upon completing their programmes (see Findings 1.2).
- NTA has ongoing connections with stakeholders in the sectors/industries it operates in, possesses a strong understanding of the changing needs of the primary sector through regular contacts, and fully demonstrates how the programme content and delivery are tailored to the trainees' needs. There is strong evidence of satisfaction with and attestation to the value of the outcomes generated by NTA, both from on-shore and off-shore stakeholders (see Findings 1.2 and 1.3).
- NTA has in place necessary policies and procedures to ensure the support and well-being of both domestic and international trainees, and demonstrated organisational adaptability when circumstances required additional/specific guidance and support (see Findings 1.5).
- NTA has very effective leadership at both governance and management levels. The organisation has a clear vision and a sound business plan for executing its strategy (see Findings 1.6).

While the evaluation team may have some concerns with the qualifications and experience of the dedicated literacy and numeracy support person, this does not overshadow the high-quality land-based training it otherwise offers and the very positive overall performance at NTA (see Findings 1.4).

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

- NTA has a very practical and highly effective system for engaging with stakeholders, especially employers within primary industries. The managing director has connections with politicians and diplomats which assists NTA in business development activities in South America. These networks allow NTA to be highly responsive to the changing needs of the sector, and contribute to the ongoing success of business development in off-shore markets (see Findings 1.2, 1.3 and 1.6).
- The board of directors is supported by regular, succinct but informative reports. Meetings are minuted, cover an essential range of topics and are effective in reviewing the organisation's operations and providing strategic direction (see Findings 1.6).
- The current system is effective for reviewing compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (Code of Practice), dissemination of relevant information about the Code of Practice to all staff, and the ongoing supervision of off-shore agents (see Findings 1.5).
- There is room for improvement in the use of achievement data beyond meeting the reporting requirements of funding agencies (see Findings 1.1), and the full potential of the newly created quality assurance administrator position is yet to be realised (see Findings 1.4). Nevertheless, the overall effectiveness of self-assessment remains consistently high.

Findings²

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**.

There is strong evidence that all trainees at NTA achieve well. The table below shows that the 2013 educational performance indicators for the Youth Guarantee programme are well above the performance targets set by the TEC.

Course completion		Qualification completion	
NTA performance	TEC target	NTA performance	TEC target
89%	60% ³	36% or 43% ⁴	25% ⁵

Source: Data supplied by National Trade Academy, published by the TEC

The NTA Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills programme has been operating for international trainees for eight years. Of the hundreds of trainees to date, only three have dropped out of the programme (with reasons known to NTA). Effectively, this programme has programme and qualification completion rates very close to 100 per cent at all times.

As the Trade Academy is a new initiative, with some trainees enrolled for two years beginning 2013, it may be too early to judge overall achievement. Nevertheless, as shown in Graph 1 below, so far, the educational outcomes based on 2013 results reported to the Ministry of Education look promising. Most trainees gained a positive outcome (either completing the programme with qualification(s) received; retained in the programme for 2014; pathwaying to employment or other tertiary studies – the evaluation team was told that a number of Trade Academy trainees have elected to return to NTA under Youth Guarantee to complete their qualifications, studying full-time).

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

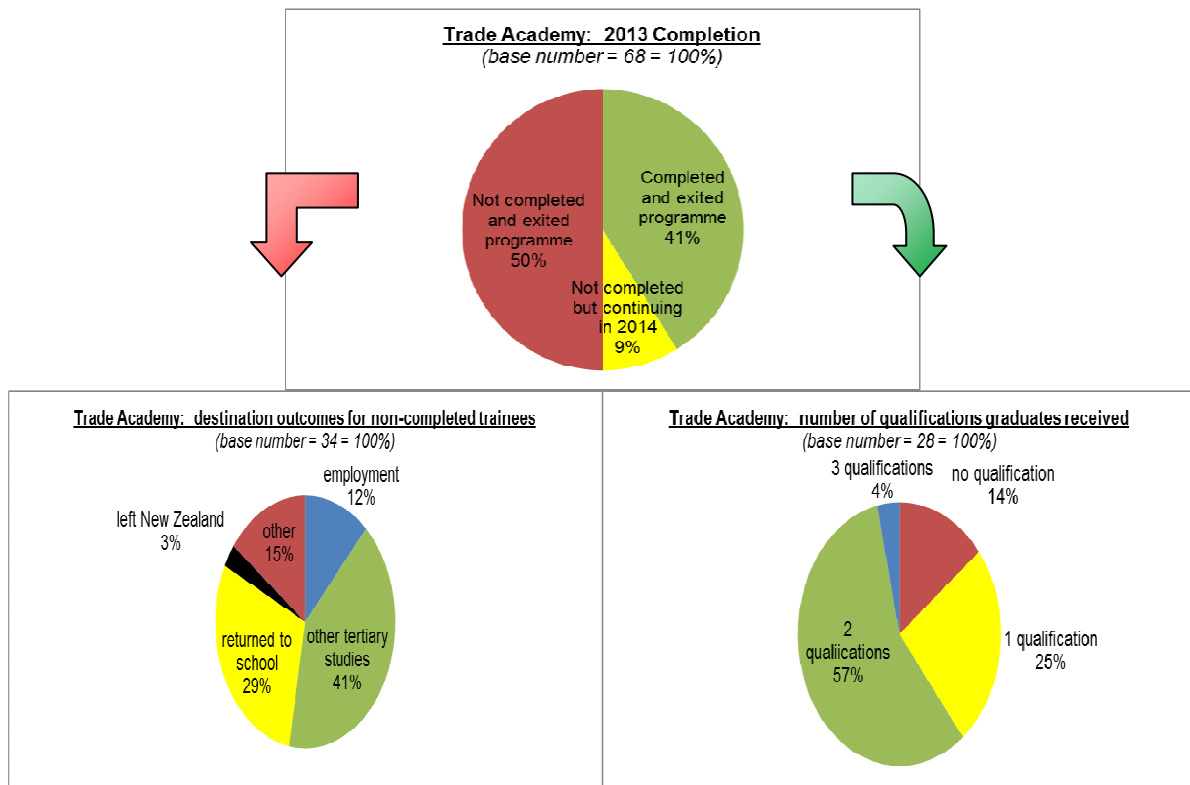
³ Target for level 2 programmes.

⁴ Official results published by the TEC for the 2013 qualification completion rate for the Youth Guarantee programme is 36 per cent. However, NTA has advised the evaluation team that a data entry error has since been identified – upon rectification the qualification completion rate is 43 per cent. The TEC has been advised, although the published figure will not be corrected.

⁵ Target for 2013. Target for 2014 is 40 per cent.

Graph 1: Trade Academy, achievement and destination outcomes, 2013

Source: Data supplied by National Trade Academy, illustrations by NZQA



NTA has very small proportion of trainees with a Māori and/or Pasifika background. Of the 2013 Trade Academy cohort of 68, only 10 (15 per cent) and one (1.5 per cent) identified themselves as Māori and Pasifika respectively. The evaluation team examined the current data, which shows that Māori trainees are achieving at a similar level to trainees of other ethnic backgrounds. This is in line with past performance of NTA – where 67 per cent of Māori trainees on the 2011 Youth Training programme achieved a positive outcome, compared with the overall NTA rate of 68 per cent.

NTA met all national external moderation requirements for the past three years. This indicates that all assessments were to the national standard, and so trainees' results are valid and consistent with requirements.

Beyond achieving qualifications, the domestic trainees, who often struggle in the mainstream secondary education system, reignite their interest in learning through practical training, and gain a purpose in life. Trainees improve their attitudes and behaviour and become more disciplined. International trainees acquire valuable, practical farming skills and have the opportunity to apply those skills in New Zealand before returning to their home country with the acquired knowledge and experience.

Overall, trainees' achievements at NTA in terms of educational performance are highly satisfactory. In terms of self-assessment under this key evaluation question, while NTA has recently upgraded its information systems for trainees' records and progress monitoring, the potential of the system is, as acknowledged by NTA management during the on-site visit, yet to be fully realised. The evaluation team is of the view that there is room for improvement in analysing and using raw data to better understand the overall organisational performance in educational achievement beyond meeting the reporting requirements of funding agencies.

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**.

NTA identifies a variety of stakeholders, both on and off-shore.

Domestic trainees on the Youth Guarantee and Trade Academy programmes acquire practical, relevant skills in primary industries and pathway into the sector, ready for employment. Trainees realise the importance of mathematics through learning in a practical environment, which in turn motivates them to acquire a higher level of numeracy, either through NTA or their enrolled secondary school. Schools, which are partners in these programmes, highly commended NTA's contribution to the trainees' learning and positive changes in behaviour (see Findings 1.1), helping the trainees to become better members of their community.

NTA maintains regular contact with domestic employers to ensure the relevance of its programme content and the employability of trainees/graduates (see Findings 1.3). The evaluation team noted abundant evidence from employers attesting to the value of outcomes generated, in particular the work-readiness of NTA's graduates (both in skills and attitude).

Off-shore stakeholders equally recognise the value of outcomes produced by NTA. International trainees facilitate knowledge and cultural exchange through their study towards the NTA Certificate in New Zealand Farming Skills, and through their subsequent work experience organised by NTA. Given the desire to learn modern methods of capital-intensive farming, such exchanges are highly encouraged in South America, as demonstrated through the offering and continued renewals of a government scholarship by the Chilean government year after year, a number of memorandums of agreement with Columbian tertiary institutes, and pathway arrangements with a private farming corporation in Chile.

NTA also maintains contact with some graduates through informal channels, such as social media and periodic visits as a member of delegations to South America.

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**.

Performance under this key evaluation question is particularly impressive, contributed by the connectedness of NTA with stakeholders in the various sectors/industries it operates in (explained below but also in Findings 1.6).

NTA collects and updates industry intelligence through regular contact with primary sector employers, to whom NTA regularly sends trainees for practical experience and work placements. As an example, all international trainees are visited by their instructor at least three times while on practicum (with some visited four times during their six-month practical period), and the perspectives from both the trainees and the employers are gauged during these visits. The evaluation team sighted a selection of visit records and was highly satisfied with the effectiveness of the visits and the associated records. Throughout the on-site visit and through contacting stakeholders, the evaluation team noted exceptionally strong evidence in NTA's understanding of the changing needs of primary industries, and ensuring their pre-employment training caters to such needs. Many employers have a long-standing relationship with NTA, an indication that they are satisfied with the quality and work-readiness of NTA trainees/graduates.

NTA has partnered with a number of secondary schools in Christchurch to run evening classroom-based lessons in agriculture. This is in response to demand within the boarding school community, where a proportion of students from rural backgrounds want an extra-curricular activity. The initiative has been successful, especially in connecting these students with relevant theories and skills in today's New Zealand agriculture setting, as well as assisting some learners to realise the importance and relevance of numeracy skills even within primary industries. Furthermore, one of the schools is now engaging NTA in designing the curriculum for delivering agriculture as an NCEA subject in that school.

The needs of the trainees are clearly understood through initial interviews and ongoing monitoring. NTA is aware that many domestic trainees are being placed on the Youth Guarantee and Trade Academy programmes as second-chance learners. Trainees' suitability for the programme is assessed through an initial interview prior to admission, including English language proficiency assessment for international trainees prior to arrival. Trainees' achievements and behaviour are closely monitored while on the programme (see Findings 1.1 and 1.5). Literacy and numeracy support is provided to domestic trainees (see Findings 1.4), and English language tuition is available as a mandatory component at the beginning of the programme, with optional support afterwards for all international trainees.

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**.

Training is effective at NTA. All instructors are selected on the grounds of relevant work experience in primary industry and are carefully and effectively inducted into the organisation. NTA supports ongoing professional development and contributes to all its instructors acquiring adult teaching qualifications, if not already previously obtained. NTA also organises seminars to be delivered on site by other organisations (for example, Ako Aotearoa) on selected topics, such as literacy and numeracy. Instructors are observed and receive feedback from management at least once annually, and are advised of the outcome of trainee evaluations for continuous improvement.

NTA's training is appropriately balanced between theory and practice. The training delivery site at Mcleans Island Road is expansive and fit for purpose. Trainees are given hands-on opportunities in primary sector tasks, such as erecting sheds and constructing fences, as well as opportunities for practising relevant farm skills, such as driving a tractor safely through rough terrain. Instructors work closely with trainees, and provide lots of feedback through formal and informal, on-the-spot channels. The use of an individual learning plan allows parties to regularly reflect on progress and achievement, and acts as another communication bridge between the trainee and the instructor. The mutual respect and rapport between instructors and trainees facilitate an effective training environment. Trainees' satisfaction is confirmed in regular trainee evaluations, some of which were sampled by the evaluation team during the on-site visit.

The managing director demonstrated full understanding of the change in priority when the Youth Training programme transitioned to Youth Guarantee (where there is a shift of focus in outcomes from employment to credit achievement/qualification completion), and is well aware of the importance of ensuring instructors and employers share the same understanding. As part of the requirement for completing NCEA level 2, and in line with the Tertiary Education Strategy, literacy and numeracy skills are given more attention within NTA than previously. A dedicated person for literacy and numeracy has been identified, who provides group and individual support alongside other duties. The evaluation team commended the initiative, but has some reservations at this stage given that the support person has no qualifications, experience or background in literacy and numeracy support. Having said that, the evaluation team acknowledges that the staff member concerned is passionate about the topic and is currently undertaking the necessary training, supported by NTA.

One of the recent changes within NTA was the creation of a quality assurance administrator position, responsible for ensuring adequate and fit-for-purpose systems, processes and documentation to support high-quality training within NTA. The change occurred in early 2014, and the evaluation team sighted a number of

outputs since the creation of the role, such as selection of lesson plans and a self-developed reference booklet on moderation. This is another positive example that demonstrates the effectiveness of NTA's self-assessment (in terms of identifying and addressing needs within the organisation). Given what can be reasonably expected from such a new initiative, the evaluation team looks forward to more cohesive, comprehensive outputs in the next round of evaluation.

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**.

Trainees are very well supported and guided. Class sizes of a maximum of 10 per instructor ensure sufficient individual attention is given to each trainee. Attendance policy is adhered to: 66 of the 68 trainees on the Trade Academy programme in 2013 had an attendance rate of 80 per cent or better. The evaluation team noted a family-like, caring training environment and that all instructors interviewed showed passion in ensuring the success of every trainee. Regular trainee evaluations are conducted. Evaluation forms sampled confirmed that most trainees are highly satisfied with the guidance and support provided by NTA.

NTA demonstrates sincere, genuine efforts in supporting all its trainees, many of whom come with various challenges and may not have succeeded in the mainstream secondary education system. For example, 11 of the 68 trainees on the Trade Academy programme in 2013 had some special needs requirements. Albeit concerns aforementioned, the employment of a dedicated literacy and numeracy support person is acknowledged (see Findings 1.4). The evaluation team heard a particularly impressive story through a state secondary school, which had sent a 'transgender'⁶ trainee to NTA's Trade Academy programme. Many were initially surprised by the trainee's gender characteristics, with some trainees reacting inappropriately or in an insensitive manner. NTA immediately responded by organising a relevant support agency to speak to all staff and trainees on site. The secondary school and the trainee concerned were extremely satisfied with the outcome. Since then, another transgender trainee has been sent to NTA, recognising their success in handling the situation.

Based on what the evaluation team sampled, NTA is fully compliant with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Annual compliance reviews are undertaken. The managing director is up to date with Code of Practice knowledge and regularly disseminates information to staff. Some off-site pastoral care duties, such as airport meet-and-greet and homestay arrangements, are contracted to a specialist

⁶ The term 'transgender' is used liberally here to cover homosexual, bisexual, transsexual and any other individual who questions their sexual identity.

provider who is also a signatory to the Code of Practice. International trainees interviewed by the evaluation team confirmed that they enjoyed their time at NTA and had no concerns about their pastoral care and support. Evidence is noted that comprehensive information about the training programme and about living in New Zealand is given to international trainees prior to their departure from South America. The evaluation team is satisfied that a system is in place within NTA and is effective in ensuring all its agents behave ethically and comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice.

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**.

Effective leadership is provided by the managing director, who demonstrates a very high level of passion for land-based training and a thorough understanding of NTA's operations, strategy and employers' needs within the primary sector. The managing director also serves on the board of ITENZ (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand), and is well connected not only in the primary sector, but also with politicians and diplomats. Such connectedness contributed to NTA's success in exploring and developing the South American markets, including an annual scholarship programme sponsored by the Chilean government and a number of memorandums of agreement signed with Columbian tertiary institutes.

The managing director's connections within the primary sector provide timely and valuable intelligence about the operating environment, which in turn ensures NTA anticipates and responds to change effectively (see Findings 1.3).

NTA has a clear vision. A business plan exists and was recently updated by the board of directors. The evaluation team reviewed the business plan and found its contents comprehensive, its strategy well thought-through, and its stated targets challenging but achievable and well-aligned with business objectives. Board meetings are regular and minuted. The board is fully informed by routine reports on NTA's business performance, staffing matters and other items of interest.

NTA staff interviewed by the evaluation team appear engaged and motivated and share the director's passion for training. There is clear evidence that staff are well informed, aided by the participatory style of leadership and family-like business model instilled by management. The evaluation team heard of how the restructure of administrative and support services within NTA in 2012 was handled professionally, carefully balancing changing business requirements while still ensuring the dignity of those affected.

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

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: Trade Academy

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

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

The ratings for the Trade Academy focus area reflect the fact that evidence of trainee achievement will not be available until after 2014. There is also room for improvement as noted in Recommendations.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that National Trade Academy:

- Ensure the support person for literacy and numeracy is appropriately trained and qualified in that field.
- Investigate opportunities within the current information systems to improve educational performance reporting at an organisational level to senior management and the board of directors.
- Continue to utilise the new appointments within the management team to improve the self-developed reference materials and the quality of support to trainers.

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).

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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