External Evaluation and Review Report

Community Colleges New Zealand Limited

Date of report: 23 December 2025

About Community Colleges New Zealand Limited

Community Colleges New Zealand Limited (Comcol) is a charitable organisation focussing on supporting youth in need throughout the lower half of the South Island. Comcol North Canterbury has extended its youth service to include life and work skill training opportunities that align with many community projects the organisation has begun.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	140 East Belt, Rangiora
Eligible to enrol international students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 10 students – three Māori, nil Pasifika
	International: nil
Number of staff:	35 full time, seven part-time – 37 full-time equivalents (rounded). In the academic/teaching space: seven full-time staff.
TEO profile:	[Community Colleges New Zealand](#) – provider page on the NZQA website
	Community Colleges New Zealand (Comcol) withdrew from gaining funding for Youth Guarantee from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) from 2022. From that point, Comcol focussed on youth service. In 2023, Comcol commenced delivery of training leading to youth developing life, work and study skills to support them into sustainable employment and/or further study at the North Canterbury site. In 2025, Comcol applied for Youth Guarantee funding and commenced delivering a level 2 qualification as well.
Last EER outcome:	In March 2021, NZQA was Highly Confident in the both the educational performance and

capability in self-assessment of Community Colleges New Zealand Limited.

Scope of evaluation:	Focus area 1: Learning for Environmental Awareness and Personal Success (LEAP) (Level 2) (ID: 129208) leading to New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2) [Ref: 2218]
	Focus area 2: The Goals, Resilience, Opportunity, Wellbeing (GROW) youth training programme (not NZQA-approved)
MoE number:	7428
NZQA reference:	C56107
Dates of EER visit:	21 and 22 October 2025

Summary of results

Very strong retention and the high value of training outcomes for all stakeholders ensures Comcol is meeting its purpose and charitable objectives. Rigorously collated data and information effectively supports purposeful decision-making that enables Comcol to develop, deliver and support its stakeholders with their training.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Comcol shows strong achievement in meeting individual student needs and developing life, work and study-related skills. These supports help youth to begin progressing toward sustainable employment and/or further study.

- Comcol's training provides significant value to all stakeholders including students. Regular feedback from stakeholders ensures Comcol supports purposeful achievement of valued training outcomes.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Comprehensive engagement with all stakeholders ensures the relevance of the training. Students have multiple opportunities to share their voice. Comcol uses the results effectively to make timely adjustments to support and delivery activity.

- Comprehensive moderation and regular programme-related review ensures assessment is valid, fair and consistent.

- Comcol provides a safe, supportive and inclusive environment. Goals and learning needs are understood and managed effectively for each student.

- Comcol operates with a clear purpose, ensuring sustainability while aligning decisions and operations with its charitable objectives. Staff are well qualified for their roles and feel valued by the professional development and support offered to them.

- Comcol closely manages its compliance accountabilities and regularly updates policies and procedures to ensure practice is legal and ethical.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Since 2022, Comcol has concentrated on providing a youth service. At the North Canterbury site, this has expanded to training delivery to youth engagement programmes, the main one being the Goals, Resilience, Opportunities, Wellbeing (GROW) programme funded by the Ministry of Social Development[2], which commenced in 2023. Eleven iterations of the GROW training have been completed to date. Overall, 91 per cent of these students have completed their training and 90 per cent are completing the mentoring phase.
	Achievement for GROW students is the development and growth of life, work-readiness and study skills. These include committing to attending class, punctuality, goal-setting, cooking skills, gaining a learner driver's licence, growing vegetables and preparing CVs. GROW students build confidence and self-worth along the learning journey. Priority student groups achieve at the same rate as or higher than others. The reasons for non-completion are understood and, where possible, an open door to return to training is offered.
	When Comcol delivered foundation qualification training in 2021 and 2024[3], overall qualification completions were within the 60-70 percentiles. Comcol is currently delivering a new programme to 10 students, all of whom are still enrolled and on target to complete. Additional life

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

[2] The He Poutama Rangitahi fund (Youth Employment) is where Comcol is funded from. The funding conditions dictate the number of weeks of the training and a period of post-study mentoring/pastoral care before the graduate undertakes either employment or further training.

[3] Comcol delivered a number of foundation programmes until the end of 2021. At that point, Comcol withdrew from gaining Youth Guarantee funding. Comcol delivered a level 2 Equine programme to three people during 2024 to maintain registration with NZQA.

	skills such as increased communication capability, task completion and effective teamwork are also important achievements for these students. Moderation of all assessments to date validates the unit standard achievements.
Conclusion:	Achievement is mainly of life, work and study-related skills rather than qualification completion. These support youth to begin moving towards sustainable employment and/or further study. High retention and achievement of additional skills support strong training outcomes.

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 the training outcomes of GROW and LEAP are high for students, graduates, related families and the local community. LEAP and GROW students gain skills that support greater participation in their family and community, greater confidence and employment or further study opportunities. Eighty-seven per cent of the completed GROW graduates have achieved a positive destination result by engaging in further study and/or employment.
	The LEAP programme represents a positive further study outcome, with the majority of participating students transitioning from the GROW programme and planning to seek employment in primary industry fields.
	Student feedback attests to the benefits gained by the training from both focus programmes – in particular the establishment of routines and the ability to practise the skills and knowledge they have gained. Feedback is collected regularly and used to refine delivery for greater value. It also enhances the student support offered.
	Feedback from employers and tutors from other education organisations confirms that GROW graduates are able to remain focussed and committed and are happy to challenge themselves. The families of the graduates see the change in the students from the training, and see it as

	a 'gift' as their children re-engage with the family and take on responsibilities in the home.
	Comcol involves the local community to ensure the training is aligned with the community's goals – such as sustainable practice and providing a foodbank for families in need. Comcol students and graduates have developed a biodiversity corridor, follow sustainable gardening practices, and produce products for community consumption (via the foodbank).
	Comcol also runs Connect programmes[4], student and sustainability hubs and a student shed to support youth in their communities outside of their training programmes. Delivering a variety of equine experiences supports the local high school's student goals. Māori iwi-based organisations support Comcol in adopting greater cultural capability, with a focus on supporting greater connection for Māori students with their identity.
Conclusion:	Comcol's training provides high value to all stakeholders including students. Comcol's strong links within their local community supports the community's projects. Regular feedback from stakeholders ensures Comcol can adjust delivery to meet the needs of its stakeholders.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Involvement in local community groups and regular engagement with feedback ensures Comcol develops programmes that are relevant and needed in the community. Regular feedback opportunities are used to gauge students' and other stakeholders' opinions of activities, a section of delivery, and on the whole programme. This enables adjustments to be made promptly without relying on the iteration and annual programme reviews. Recognising that the LEAP

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[4] Art and Equine Connect opportunities allow counsellors to explore individual's issues further through engagement in a different environment.

	programme is new, a live programme tracking document – used daily by the tutor and programme developer – supports continuous learning and ongoing improvement in delivery and assessment.

Comcol tutors have a strong understanding of their students' individual needs and learning styles. 'Chunking' small aspects of theory followed by practical activity keeps students engaged and supports their individual needs and maintains connection to the learning. Because assessment is integrated and relies on naturally occurring evidence, repeated practice of skills builds students' confidence in their learning, gives tutors assurance that concepts are understood, and helps ensure the authenticity of the work. In recognition of the learning needs within the classroom, alternative assessment methods are available for students to complete written areas – such as verbal checks of knowledge.

Regular one-on-one meetings between the tutor and each student means students get individualised, targeted feedback after assessment or project completion. This helps the student to understand what they need to work on next.

Students are provided with a visual tracker to see what they still need to complete. Students interviewed indicated feeling pride in how much they had achieved. Internal moderation for unit standard-based assessment is being completed for all assessments to assure assessment is valid and consistent, and allows students to meet the requirements of the national standard. External moderation from both NZQA and the relevant workforce development council is generally positive, supporting the strength of internal processes. |
| Conclusion: | Comprehensive engagement with all stakeholders ensures the relevance of the training and that all needs are identified and responded to promptly. Highly practical experiences support learning, engagement and an understanding of emerging learning needs. Comprehensive internal and external moderation and regular review ensures assessment is valid, fair and consistent. |

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Multiple pre-application visits and documentation support the young person and their family to make informed decisions about their study commitment and options. These opportunities also allow Comcol staff to understand the students' goals for their learning. At the beginning of training, students learn how to set SMART[5] goals. This ensures students remain task-driven and experience their own achievements. Regular individual conversations with the tutor support the student to understand their progress and growth. GROW students come with diverse backgrounds and needs. Classes are kept purposefully small (a maximum of 10 students) to enable the tutor to provide an individual focus on each student. The first day of the training is carefully curated to promote group cohesion through ice-breaker activities, a shared meal and team-building. This supports friendships and potentially long-lasting relationships. The tutor actively seeks regular feedback to monitor progress and uses the student voice in turn to adjust support and improvements in delivery. Core professional development for staff around mental health issues, neurodiversity and use of culturally based teaching methodology (Te Whare Tapa Wha) supports tutors and the mentor to set up an inclusive learning environment. Stakeholders attest to Comcol being a safe, welcoming and interesting place to be. The hours and number of days per week for each programme have been carefully set to support these students' separation from old habits and unhelpful interactions with other high school students. Comcol also minimises barriers to learning and teaches sustainability-related skills to students through class group activities, using the produce they grow to make breakfasts and lunches, and providing transport where needed.

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[5] Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

	Sharing food as a group and undertaking physical challenges (such as hiking) mean students develop a trust and rapport with their tutors and staff at Comcol. Students attest to finding it easy to approach any of the staff for support purposes if their tutor is unavailable. The multiple occasions of group activity also provide the tutors with opportunities to monitor any emerging support or learning needs among their student group.
	Comcol's youth service arm provides strong connections with a variety of external support services within the community. This ensures students can gain the right support easily. GROW students have wraparound support as a next step by moving them to a mentor after completing their training. The mentor supports them to grow further in their readiness and preparation for the next step, depending on individual need.
Conclusion:	Students feel safe and welcomed at Comcol. Purposeful decisions have effectively minimised barriers to learning and created an inclusive learning environment for the students. Goals and learning needs are understood early on and managed through regular individual conversations. Multiple opportunities to hear the student voice supports timely adjustment to support and delivery activity.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	As a charitable organisation, Comcol has a set of objectives which underpin a clear organisational purpose and vision embedded in decision-making and organisational operations and strategy. A very experienced governance and management team have relevant backgrounds and experiences that ensure effective organisational, academic and personal leadership. Growth is purposefully planned to ensure the organisation continues to operate sustainably. This has supported the successful retrenchment and expansion of training activity that has occurred since the last EER.

	Comcol has developed strong, live, accessible management systems within which all activity, information and data is collected and collated for use in decision-making at all levels of the organisation. Regular reporting and meetings between all staff support the effectiveness and deliberate nature of the decision-making. Comcol's community focus has led to practical resources being developed to support the training alongside community projects. Staff are recruited not only for their qualifications but also for their passion for working with youth and their ability to work with a diverse range of people. On recruitment, new staff are mentored by other tutors and management for as long as needed. New tutors undertake the 4098 unit standard training very early in their tenure to meet consent and moderation requirements. Where possible, management staff also undertake some teaching roles to keep in touch with the students and to support the tutors. A flat structure means that management is always alongside staff to ensure they are well supported and aware of the direction and vision of Comcol. The 'classroom' hours are set to ensure there is time for the staff to prepare for coming lessons, discuss what they have observed the previous week, and also to pursue projects that 'feed their souls'. Staff feel very valued.
Conclusion:	Comcol operates in a deliberate and purposeful way that supports the organisation's sustainability and ensures its charitable objectives are upheld in both decision-making and daily operations. Staff are well qualified for their roles and feel valued by the support offered to them from governance and management.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	All of Comcol's policies and procedures have been digitised, which effectively guides practice throughout the organisation. Regular checks of the policies and procedures ensure they remain up to date and reflect expectations, as well as ensuring they remain legal and ethical. Strong health and safety protocols ensure students and staff are kept safe, particularly when doing practical activities in outdoor spaces. With a number of conditions required by the Ministry of Social Development as well as the TEC and NZQA, regular management discussions ensure all staff are appropriately updated. Compliance accountabilities are also managed using a calendar and diary system. A wall-mounted reminder of due dates and working periods for each accountability is placed in the staff room for all staff to see. Quarterly reporting to the director ensures his overview is maintained. The annual Code of Practice self-review is completed by management using collected data and regular conversations with staff to inform the process. Strategic wellbeing goals are identified and monitored. Formal complaint and critical incidents are defined and reported on in this document before it is loaded to the organisation's website. Comcol maintained a strong process for reporting credits to NZQA during and prior to 2022. Reasons for late reporting were understood and managed. The impact of one of three students needing longer to complete studying impacts the 2024 reporting percentage, but Comcol is aware of this and of the disproportionate impact of such small numbers on data. Comcol retained their programme portfolio from 2022 to 2025 despite only using one programme in 2024. After discussions with NZQA, a number of programmes were retired. Comcol is reminded that any programmes they

	maintain approval for will need an accreditation application before any new delivery.
Conclusion:	Comcol closely manages its compliance accountabilities and regularly updates policies and procedures to ensure practice is legal and ethical. A deeper awareness of NZQA's approval and accreditation rules will support the redevelopment of programmes for approval and use.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Learning for Environmental awareness and Personal Success (LEAP) (Level 2) programme

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**

2.2 The Goals, Resilience, Opportunity, Wellbeing (GROW) youth training programme

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**

Recommendation

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 Community Colleges:

- Develop a deeper awareness of NZQA's approval and accreditation rules to support ongoing compliance when redeveloping programmes for use.

Requirements

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

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

Appendix

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[6]*

- *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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[6] 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/.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz