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External Evaluation and Review Report

Koru Institute Training Education

Date of report: 26 November 2020

About Koru Institute Training Education

Koru Institute Training Education is a Māori-owned registered private training establishment in the Marlborough region which has been providing education programmes to the local community since 2001.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	5 Sutherland Terrace, Blenheim
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 59 ¹ International: nil Māori: level 3, 30 per cent and level 4, 39 per cent Pasifika level 3, 11 per cent and level 4, 15 per cent
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See Koru Institute Training Education
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in self-assessment
Scope of this evaluation:	New Zealand Certificate in Business (Administration and Technology) (Level 3 and Level 4)
MoE number:	7445
NZQA reference:	C31068
Dates of EER visit:	4 August 2020

¹ Funded for 36 EFTS (equivalent full-time students) in 2019

Summary of results

Koru meets the needs of its students and stakeholders. Its flexibility and responsiveness to teaching and learning and an integrated approach to pastoral support is a strength. An experienced and effective governance and management team has ensured Koru remains a quality, viable and relevant Māori provider in the Marlborough region. Gaps in assessment and compliance has weakened performance.

Confident in educational performance

- Koru has a strong focus on students achieving academic success and personal growth. This is evident in its educational performance data and the range of positive outcomes achieved by graduates.
- Teaching is individualised and responsive to meet a diverse range of academic and pastoral care needs.
- Programme design and assessment allows students to progress at their own pace in an inclusive learning environment. The programme content, materials and assessments are designed internally and would benefit from external review.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Educational performance is underpinned by strong leadership, a whānau-centred culture of success and inclusiveness, and robust self-assessment systems and processes used to inform ongoing improvement.
- Compliance management was a weakness and has been rectified.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Koru achievement results (course and programme completion) have been consistently over 80 per cent since 2016, across all programmes, inclusive of priority learners. Quality assessment has been assured through internal/peer moderation, external moderation from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (until the end of 2017³). More recently, one unit standard has been externally moderated by NZQA.</p> <p>Students and graduates attested to gaining valuable skills and knowledge that were immediately applicable to their home, work and community contexts. Students also grew in confidence, self-esteem and self-worth, which reflects the positive teaching and learning environment created by Koru.</p> <p>Student achievement data – inclusive of academic results and personal growth – is monitored formally (through weekly kaiako and director reports) and also informally. Koru is now looking to understand and analyse its contribution to longer-term outcomes aligned with its mission, vision and values.</p> <p>Benchmarking academic achievement and external review of programme resources and assessment would strengthen self-assessment and the validity of educational performance.</p>
Conclusion:	Students consistently achieve well at Koru. Koru uses good self-assessment processes to understand and improve student success.

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 Koru was subcontracted to Te Wānanga o Aotearoa to deliver business and computing programmes. This arrangement ended in 2017 due to a policy change by Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Koru has a strong understanding of the valued outcomes for students and stakeholders gathered through destination data, exit interview data, student focus groups and community engagement (formal and informal). The information gathered demonstrates students are using their skills and knowledge in a range of contexts (including paid work, owner-operated businesses, voluntary work in the community and family/whānau contexts). In some cases, graduates have found full and/or part-time employment in related work; and/or progression to further study.</p> <p>Koru has regular engagement with community stakeholders who use the PTE's meeting room facilities on a weekly basis. The staff, management and directors are committed to ensuring outcomes for learners that also benefit the growth and development of the wider Marlborough community. Koru management live in the community. They regularly receive formal and informal feedback from families, business and community-based organisations about their graduates, and feedback on the relevance of the programmes. In some cases, participation on Koru programmes is intergenerational, which is further evidence of the value Koru provides to whānau and families.</p> <p>As noted in 1.1, Koru is looking to review and analyse the evidence it has gathered over many years to demonstrate how it is making a positive impact on community wellbeing. This form of self-assessment will strengthen its evidence base and validate Koru as an exceptional provider delivering valued outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	Students gain value from their study at Koru. Students are applying their skills and knowledge in a range of contexts, which is contributing to wider whānau and community wellbeing.

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:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Programme design and delivery is well aligned to the needs of the students. Tutors provide useful feedback to students on their progress. Learning materials and classroom activities are tailored based on student feedback. In particular, learning journals are used for activity-directed learning purposes. Learning materials embed culturally relevant content which reflects the many ways Koru normalises te ao Māori into the learning environment for all learners.</p> <p>The teaching pedagogy is responsive to the learning needs of the students. Internal peer moderation is formally monitored at academic staff meetings.</p> <p>Koru intends to engage an external person to review its programme, learning materials and assessment tools. This is an important piece of work as it will provide Koru and its stakeholders assurance that students are gaining the skills and knowledge appropriate to the qualification level. Consideration should also be given to an external moderation partner to supplement the external moderation provided by NZQA. This will also provide some validation of the positive achievement results.</p> <p>Koru has an effective system to manage activity-directed learning, including learning journals, online activities and videos which is monitored by teaching staff. Students are given an opportunity to attend tutorials to keep up with, and seek advice on, activity-directed content and to prepare for assessment. Koru did not however have a convincing system for assuring itself that the required hours of activity-directed learning are being achieved.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery effectively meets the needs of students and stakeholders. Teaching staff are adaptive and responsive. However, the programmes (learning materials, content and assessments) would benefit from independent external review.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at Koru are well supported to engage in their learning and achieve success. Koru has a thorough enrolment process designed to ensure that students are aware of the commitments required and to ensure they have the supports in place that will help them to succeed.</p> <p>Support plans are put in place to ensure learners with specific literacy and numeracy needs are given the extra support and assistance they need. All students have a learning journal that they keep updated as part of their activity-directed learning. The journal is reviewed by the tutor regularly, and more content and activities have been provided to extend the students based on student feedback.</p> <p>Academic and pastoral support is integrated and is a strength of the organisation.</p> <p>Koru moved all its content online to support students to access content during the Covid-19 lockdown. Hard copies of learning material were also made available. Staff were also in regular contact with students by phone or email, taking into account that some students were looking after family members and/or involved in community-led Covid-19 responses.</p> <p>Students described the learning environment as engaging, supportive and affirming: 'We are not just people on a course, it's about family, we are made to feel like we can achieve'. Students are supported to work at their own pace; teaching is individualised. Students felt they were encouraged to extend themselves beyond what was required.</p>
Conclusion:	Koru has a strong whānau culture characterised by caring and competent staff who are invested in the wellbeing of the students. Students are encouraged to be involved in their own learning.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Koru is a whānau-led and run training establishment which has been offering education and training in the Marlborough community for nearly 20 years. The whānau-centred nature of the PTE is a strength, with professional boundaries maintained at all times. The governance and management team are well connected to the Marlborough community and have strong educational and governance experience. Governance meets annually, and as needed. More frequent formal meetings is recommended as the PTE starts to increase enrolments and expand provision.</p> <p>The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy, purpose and values which is evident throughout the organisation. Despite changes in programme offering and a reduction in student numbers, the organisation has managed its resources well to remain sustainable while it looks for new opportunities. Staff are valued for their expertise and are provided with the right support and opportunities for professional development to support them in their roles.</p> <p>Self-assessment and reflection is both structured (embedded through systems) and informal, which allows the organisation to be proactive to matters as they arise.</p> <p>Issues pertaining to compliance management and programme review are weaknesses. However, these matters are being addressed.</p>
Conclusion:	Koru has a clear vision and effective leadership. It is strongly connected to community and to enhancing community wellbeing through education.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Koru has not managed all its important compliance accountabilities effectively, which resulted in the lapse of its PTE registration at the beginning of 2019. The lapse was a result of Koru not meeting the registration requirement to provide an approved programme within a 12-month period.⁴ This matter was immediately addressed by governance and management which resulted in the reinstating of the registration within a month of it lapsing. The issue did not impact on students or staff. However, Koru has used this incident to sharpen its knowledge of compliance and to strengthen its compliance calendar to better monitor and track compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>The evaluation team engaged in evaluative discussions regarding Koru's quality management system, funding obligations and financial accountabilities and found no concerns in the management of compliance.</p>
Conclusion:	Koru has weaknesses in its compliance management system which are being strengthened.

⁴ Refer section 234(1) of the Education Act.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Business (Administration and Technology) (Level 3 and 4)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

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.

It is recommended that Koru:

- engage an external person to independently review its programme, learning materials and assessment tools.

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 fraud⁵*
- *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.*

⁵ 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 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

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 including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, training schemes 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 2016. 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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