

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Corporate Academy Group

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 22 May 2013

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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.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Name of TEO: | Corporate Academy Group (CAG) |
| Type: | Private training establishment (PTE) |
| Location: | 98 Kerrs Road, Wiri |
| First registered: | 9 July 2002 |
| Courses currently delivered: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate for Health Care Assistants (Level 5)• Certificate in Health Care Assistant (Level 4)• Youth Guarantee: Defence Force Preparation, Automotive and Early Childhood Education and Care• Intensive Literacy and Numeracy: Defence Force and Health Care• Training for Work: Lifeguards, Ambassadors and Health Care (Level 2)• Gateway: Early Childhood, Sport, Retail, Automotive and Core Skills• Student Achievement Component (SAC) funded levels 1 and 2: Retail, Health Care and Automotive Skills |
| Code of Practice signatory?: | Yes |
| Number of students: | Domestic: approximately 210 equivalent full-time students (EFTS). In 2012, 39 per cent of the |

students were Pasifika and 33 per cent were Māori.

Number of staff:

21 full-time equivalents

Scope of active accreditation:

- Certificate in Community Care and Emergency Response (Level 4)
- Certificate for Health Care Assistants (Level 5)
- Certificate in Defence Force Preparation (Level 3)
- Certificate in Health Care Assistant (Level 4)
- Certificate in Health Care Skills (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Motor Industry (Entry Skills) (Automotive Electrical and Mechanical) (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3)
- National Certificate in Health, Disability, and Aged Support (Foundation Skills) (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Retail (Level 2)
- Vocational Pathway (NCEA Level 2)
- Certificate in Automotive Skills (Levels 1 and 2)

Distinctive characteristics:

CAG receives Youth Guarantee and Intensive Literacy and Numeracy funds from the Tertiary Education Commission and Training for Work funds from the Ministry of Social Development.

The Youth Guarantee funding is spread equally among Defence Force Preparation level 3, Automotive level 2 and Early Childhood level 3.

CAG also offers training in levels 4 and 5 in the area of Health Care through SAC funding.

CAG's learners are mainly Pasifika and Māori.

The provider has a good record of increasing the number of Pasifika and Māori students enjoying

educational success.

All learners participate in voluntary work.

Māori and Pasifika tutors and support people have been employed to help mentor learners.

Recent significant changes: CAG was successful in gaining SAC funding for levels 1 and 2 qualifications to be delivered in 2013 and 2014.

The position of programme coordinator has been established to supervise and assist tutors, carry out recruitment interviews and develop individual learning plans.

The Defence Force Preparation programme in 2013 enables the learners to achieve NCEA level 2, as do the other two Youth Guarantee programmes. All Youth Guarantee programmes now include achievement standards instead of some of the unit standards, and alignment with vocational pathways has been identified as being important.

Student numbers at CAG are growing rapidly. In 2012, there were approximately 140 EFTS while in 2013 there will be approximately 210 EFTS.

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA in 2009, CAG met all the requirements of the quality standard in force at the time. Two sets of assessment material submitted in 2012 met national external moderation requirements, and the assessor decisions were verified. Two more were approved and two others required modification. Some of the assessor decisions were not verified. CAG has since reviewed its action plan and taken steps to improve this situation.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

In accordance with NZQA policy, the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy was included in the scope of this external evaluation and review. The Certificate in Health Care Assistant (Level 4) was selected as a focus area as it the largest SAC-funded programme delivered by CAG. The Youth Guarantee programme (Certificate in Defence Force Preparation (Level 3)) was

selected as a focus area as it is a programme that has been delivered over a number of years by the provider.

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.

The external evaluation and review was conducted over two days by two NZQA evaluators. The evaluation involved interviews with:

- The director of training
- The operations manager
- The general manager
- The programme coordinator
- Four tutors from the focus area programmes
- A class from each focus area
- Ten stakeholders including employers, graduates and advisers
- Other stakeholders by phone

The evaluation also involved a review of relevant documentation such as student achievement data, the 2013 investment plan, student destination data, the strategic plan, appraisal data, enrolment material, student and tutor evaluation forms, meeting minutes, self-assessment reports, material from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), individual learning plans and work experience feedback forms.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Corporate Academy Group**.

The learners at CAG achieve very high levels of performance. From 2009 to 2011, CAG students funded through SAC exceeded the sub-sector median, and those on youth programmes exceeded both occupancy and labour market outcome benchmarks. Very positive outcomes are also recorded both in terms of employment and further training. The learners improve their skills across a wide range and the wider community benefits from the learners' involvement with the community while at CAG.

CAG is committed to its students and the community. The stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team gave positive feedback, endorsing the value of the outcomes and viewing the relationship between CAG and its stakeholders as akin to a partnership. Both the students and the stakeholders emphasised the importance of the pathways to courses at higher levels as they gave direction to students who may have lacked it in the past. The students are also provided with holistic support and practical material over and above the requirements for assessment, such as how to take the blood pressure of people for whom they are caring, so that they are well prepared for their chosen destinations after graduation. The needs of the students are always paramount, and the tutors are passionate about their subjects and experienced in their fields.

The leadership of CAG exemplifies the passion, commitment and inclusiveness of the organisation. Family values are a strong theme at CAG and the feeling of belonging supports the students. CAG ensures its programmes are aligned to the Tertiary Education Strategy. The current period of rapid growth is testimony to CAG's innovative approach and commitment to student achievement.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Corporate Academy Group**.

CAG has an abundance of self-assessment data, much of it provided through evaluations of student performance in each overall programme and each individual unit standard within those programmes. This data is systematically collated and the main points are listed for further consideration. Some changes have been made to the teaching material based on this data.

If this system continues during the current period of rapid growth, there is a possibility that it will become cumbersome. There is scope for rationalisation so that less data is accumulated, although this should be the valuable data essential for good decision-making. More attention can then be paid to the stages of self-

assessment after the data has been collated. These are the stages of reflecting on the data, deciding on actions to take in response and evaluating whether the changes are having the desired effect. This has already happened in some cases, such as the introduction of student calendars in 2011. Thorough consultation took place before the decision was made, it was carefully implemented and a thorough review was undertaken of the results.

Some decisions are made in CAG on the basis of information gleaned from discussions with stakeholders. This collection of anecdotal information is important and needs to be formalised and systematic to be truly useful. The challenge for CAG is to review its self-assessment system so that its clear strengths are retained while plans are put in place to cater for the demands of a larger organisation.

Findings¹

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**.

The learners at CAG achieve very high levels of performance. The Tertiary Education Commission noted that in the three years 2009-2011, CAG's students funded through SAC exceeded the sub-sector median, and those on youth programmes exceeded both occupancy and labour market outcome benchmarks. The provisional overall course completion rate for CAG's students in 2012 is 91 per cent, another reflection of the high standards being achieved. The provisional qualification completion rate for the Certificate in Health Care Assistant is 84 per cent in 2012.

Of the 17 students who completed the Defence Force Preparation programme in 2012, 11 moved on to further training (six of them at Manukau Institute of Technology) and four into employment, representing a positive labour market outcome of 88 per cent. The average credits per learner were 76 on this programme in 2011, and the provisional figure for 2012 for those students who completed the programme is 100 credits, once again illustrating high levels of achievement. It is also significant that in 2011, 100 per cent of the Māori students and 67 per cent of the Pasifika students on this programme achieved positive labour market outcomes, compared with 60 per cent of the students from other ethnic groups.

The individual literacy and numeracy progressions kept for each learner reveal that many learners move up a level between the initial and midway assessments for each aspect, and another level between the midway and final assessments. The tutors maintain these records and recognise the significant gains being made by the students.

CAG is committed to self-assessment and is knowledgeable about the students' levels of achievement. These are already high, but CAG stresses that they can still be improved. Dialogue is being established with another health care provider, and this will assist CAG to benchmark achievements in this area of study. TEC figures are the main source of benchmarking at the moment, but it is often difficult to be certain of comparing 'like with like'. CAG could also benefit from considering changes in achievement levels across different time periods to identify whether any trends are developing that might require corrective action.

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

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 **Good**.

The outcomes being achieved by CAG's students are valuable in all respects. The evaluation team met two groups of stakeholders, including employers, graduates and advisers, who were unanimous in their endorsement of the value of the programmes being offered, and the students were similarly convinced. Reference has been made to some of the positive outcomes achieved by the students on the Defence Force Preparation programme. Students on the Certificate in Health Care Assistant programme achieve similarly. Each year, between 20 and 30 per cent of the students move on to study the Bachelor of Nursing at Manukau Institute of Technology. Most of the others gain employment in the health care field. The evaluation team met a manager of a private hospital who has employed eight people trained on CAG's programme in the last four years. She was particularly impressed by the skills the learners exhibited when they came on work experience. Manukau Institute of Technology was so impressed by the outcomes achieved by CAG's students that it considered approaching CAG to deliver a foundation nursing programme. A number of employers also expressed a preference for employing CAG's graduates.

Even for those health care students not searching for employment or further study, the course was valuable as it taught transferrable skills and gave experience that could be used at a later stage, such as working occasional night shifts or caring for people in the student's own family. Valuable skills are also an important outcome of the Defence Force Preparation programme. The learners are taught discipline and gain considerable confidence in their abilities. They and their tutors are conscious of the way in which their interpersonal skills have grown, and in particular their communication skills.

These outcomes are valuable not only to the students but also to the wider community. The community benefits from the rise in the students' skill levels and from the involvement of all learners in voluntary work. In 2012 for example, the students on the Defence Force Preparation programme participated in a range of community ventures, including a three-day mini-Olympics for young children in the Otago region, the sale of poppies and the maintenance of veterans' homes for the Returned Services Associations, and blood donations.

Through a comprehensive work experience programme, CAG is able to check the value of its courses. Written feedback is received from the managers and the students' buddies at the workplace, along with similar feedback from the students and their tutors. Such feedback is supplemented by the close contact tutors keep with many ex-students. Although this informal feedback is effective, the growth of

CAG into different areas will necessitate a more formal approach so that CAG can ensure its self-assessment is comprehensive.

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 **Good**.

CAG has a good understanding of its students' needs and adjusts its programmes accordingly. The initial interview for all students before they start provides CAG with information about the student's personal goals, study goals, ways to overcome obstacles to the achievement of goals and the type of job being sought. A Visual, Aural, Read/Write and Kinesthetic (VARK) questionnaire is carried out for identifying preferred learning styles, and a self-esteem survey is also conducted. This information for all students is listed on their individual learning plans and is updated at regular intervals throughout the course.

This detailed information about the needs of the learners is effectively used by CAG to tailor the programmes and activities. The course times for the Health Care course are set to fit in with school times to help those students looking after young children. When CAG saw that student attendance dropped during the school holidays, it adjusted the course so that the hours during this time are flexible and enable students to catch up on work they have missed and to have individual tuition. Although this change suited the students, little evidence was seen by the evaluation team of any measurement of the effects of the change on student achievement. The provision of data like this is the next step for CAG to take in order for it to be assured that its ongoing self-assessment is comprehensive.

The use of work experience (clinical) on the Health Care course is another good example of how CAG tries to ensure its programmes match all stakeholders' needs. Clinicals satisfy the need for the students to have practical experience and to be confident that the programmes are current and relevant. Stakeholders confirmed to the evaluation team that students from a wide range of CAG's courses were well prepared for employment. The health care settings are varied to suit individual needs such as proximity to home or the need for experience in a hospital. In 2012, the clinical was increased from four to eight weeks at the suggestion of the advisory board, but in 2013 it has been reduced to six weeks as learners found it difficult to fit eight weeks into their home schedules. The changes not only demonstrate CAG's commitment to making changes in the hope of enabling improvements, but also the possible benefits of accumulating the data needed so that changes are not made as frequently.

CAG emphasises the importance of providing educational pathways for the students. The staircasing arrangement for learners to move on to the Bachelor of Nursing programme at Manukau Institute of Technology is particularly well

established. Close contact is also maintained with the New Zealand Defence Force for those students considering further courses. It is pleasing to see that CAG is now committed to strengthening its advisory group so that it represents a wider range of stakeholders.

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 **Good**.

The very good achievement rates, positive labour market outcomes, positive feedback from the students and the stakeholders, the high levels of student engagement seen by the evaluation team and the good relationships between the learners and the tutors are all indicators of highly effective teaching. The tutors are experienced and qualified and have subject expertise. The tutors on the Health Care course, for example, are registered nurses and maintain the currency of their qualifications by engaging in part-time clinical work.

There is a good mix of theory and practice on both the courses selected as focus areas. On the Defence Force Preparation course, for example, activities such as the organisation of sports events are used as a vehicle for teaching academic skills such as the mathematical skills associated with measurement. Additional practical components, such as the taking of blood pressure, are added to the Health Care course. The tutors on this course keep a close watch on the students when they are participating in their clinicals by visiting them each day. The tutors on both of the courses use group work effectively and the resources are good.

Thorough professional development of the staff takes place and the appraisal system has a good coverage of ways in which both staff member performance and CAG's management could improve. Internal moderation is comprehensive and constructive feedback is given to the tutors. Some minor concerns have been apparent in external moderation, but CAG reacts quickly in such circumstances. An example of this was its strengthening of internal moderation procedures for pharmacy unit standards when an external moderator suggested plagiarism was becoming an issue. Industry training organisations contacted by the evaluation team were satisfied with the verification of the work of CAG's assessors.

Learners are kept aware of their progress by charts showing the achievement of proficiency in unit standards for each student. Further records of progress are kept in the individual learner plans and progressions. The records of the Defence Force Preparation students' literacy and numeracy progressions are particularly detailed.

CAG collects an abundance of self-assessment data. The teaching material for each unit standard is thoroughly reviewed by the tutors and the students and the information gained is used to make changes. Further evaluation forms about the overall programmes are completed by both these groups. In all cases, the results

are collated and recorded for action to be taken when necessary, but more reflection about the collated results would be advantageous. This is more likely to take place if less data is collected, and this is an area where CAG could simplify its approach. Reflection has resulted in the appointment of a programme coordinator, and improved efficiency is already apparent. A review of the Defence Force Preparation course resulted in an alignment with NCEA level 2 and the replacement of unit standards with achievement standards. Reflection also led to the rotation system of tutors within the youth section being discontinued for 2013. There is therefore evidence of good reflective practice.

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 **Good**.

Learner support is a notable strength of CAG. It starts at the beginning with a careful check that each student is enrolling in the most appropriate course. A holistic approach is taken throughout, and the students gave very positive feedback about the support they receive. Interviews are held at regular intervals and further one-to-one sessions with the tutors are also held. A Māori and a Pasifika mentor are available and are used effectively to support the students. The approach is learner-centred and the learners respond well.

The tutors provide high levels of support, such as the daily visits to the Health Care students when they are on their clinicals. Guest speakers are regularly used on all the courses to provide guidance to the students. The Health Care students going on to Manukau Institute of Technology are provided with additional assistance in the form of endorsement if the students have performed well, as well as other forms of encouragement. In addition, the students are encouraged to support one another, and the students acknowledged the effectiveness of their peers' contributions.

Interviews with the stakeholders convinced the evaluation team of the high levels of engagement between CAG and its stakeholders. The feeling of partnership that is engendered provides valuable feedback to CAG about the effectiveness of its support. The close interaction CAG has with both the students and the stakeholders leads to a good understanding of gaps in support needing to be filled and the forms of support recognised as having the most benefit. Further understanding of support needed is revealed when CAG checks each student's literacy and numeracy progressions. CAG therefore has a good understanding of this area of its operation and uses the data to effect improvements for individuals on a case-by-case basis. Some of the improved outcomes are not conclusive. CAG would benefit from more accurate data so that it can be more confident about the interventions that are more likely to be successful.

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 **Good**.

CAG is imbued with passion for its students and the courses they pursue. The leadership exemplifies commitment and vision. CAG is experiencing rapid growth but retains its emphasis on supporting the educational achievements of the students. The leadership is very aware and very proud of the students' achievements and recognises them at every opportunity. Separate graduations celebrating achievement are held for each course, and awards are made for the outstanding students. Members of the founders' family hold the senior staff positions and the family atmosphere engendered pervades CAG. Students and staff expressed to the evaluation team how they were made to feel part of the organisation and how this encouraged them to achieve. Their views are considered by CAG's leadership. A good example of this was the suggestion through the 'bright ideas' box for the day of the Polyfest (a Friday) to be treated as a holiday. This improved attendance on the Thursday and eliminated the issues that had arisen in previous years surrounding attendance on Friday.

The leadership responds well to change and is always considering new directions. CAG is currently developing international relationships in nursing. The director of training has a high profile in the tertiary sector and TEC highly values the provider. In the recent competitive process for funding in 2013 and 2014 of SAC-funded level 1 and 2 programmes, CAG was one of the few successful PTEs, scoring 12/12 for capability and experience in delivering foundation learning and 6/6 for literacy and numeracy capability. Mention has already been made of the high level of community involvement, and the stakeholders met by the evaluation team endorsed this.

The CAG leadership recognises the need to adapt to the rapid growth it is experiencing. It recently strengthened the support for the tutors and the students, for example by appointing a programme coordinator. This appointment also strengthened communication processes. CAG also recently established a governance board in recognition of the widening responsibilities being undertaken.

As befits a good organisation, CAG is very responsive to circumstances and is frequently making changes. Some of these involve thorough consultation beforehand, and implementation and review of the effects of the change. A good example of this was the calendar created in January 2011 to identify the tutorials and lessons that the students are required to attend. The impact of the calendar was reviewed in April 2011 and positive feedback was received from the tutors and the students. The move to the new premises also occurred after considerable reflection. A recent human resources issue resulted in a formalisation of the process for resolving employment issues so that a second management person is now involved. Similar formalisation of the change process could benefit CAG,

particularly now that it is growing so quickly. Most changes at CAG occur after discussion. The challenge now is to be confident that thorough consultation has taken place before any change is implemented and to establish indicators to be used to judge the effects of the change.

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 **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: Certificate in Health Care Assistant (Level 4)

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Youth Guarantee programme (Certificate in Defence Force Preparation (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 **Good**.

Recommendations

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

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.

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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

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 EER process 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).

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/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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