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External Evaluation and Review Report

Aspire2 International Hospitality &
Healthcare Limited

Date of report: 26 May 2021

About Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare Limited¹

Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare trains international learners in hospitality management and cookery, to help them gain employment and effectively work in these sectors.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	20 Hobson Street, Auckland CBD 83 Henderson Valley Road, Henderson, Auckland 144-146 Durham Street, Tauranga 289 Tuam Street, Christchurch
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 347 equivalent full-time learners
Number of staff:	Full-time: teaching 10; part-time: teaching 16 Shared services (50 per cent of Aspire2 International): 23
TEO profile:	<u>Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare</u>
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Not Yet Confident in the educational performance and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of the PTE at the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in June 2020.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Diploma in Hospitality Management (Level 6)• International Student Support and Wellbeing
MoE number:	7530
NZQA reference:	C45302
Dates of EER visit:	23-25 February 2021

¹ Aspire2 International has shared services across three PTEs. This EER visit was conducted concurrently with the Aspire2 International Business & Technology EER. Because of the shared services, much of the content in the two reports is the same.

Summary of Results

Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare provides work-ready graduates for the hospitality and cookery industries. The PTE has improved its systems and processes since the last EER, which supports the validity of learner achievement. There have also been challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic – though the PTE continues to provide valued outcomes to stakeholders.

Confident in educational performance

- Learner achievement is high, and there are high completion rates across programmes. The hospitality programmes have a 92 per cent completion rate, and the cookery programmes have a 99 per cent completion rate. Positive external moderation results underpin the outcomes. Non-completions are low, and contributing factors are well understood by the leadership team.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The programmes meet the most important needs of learners and industry. Learners gain useful skills and knowledge to help them gain employment. They are also encouraged to find part-time, related employment while they are studying. They often progress within their roles or to other related roles when they graduate – although career progression is not being clearly measured.
- Pastoral care is effective in supporting the diverse needs of learners. The principle of ‘awhi’² as wrap-around support is used to ensure that learners are supported academically and personally.
- As a PTE that was delivering solely to international learners, there have been some challenges and uncertainties due to Covid-19. However, Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare is well supported by the Aspire2 Group and shareholders.

² Meaning to surround or embrace.

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- Analysis of data and self-assessment is used well to inform ongoing improvement.
 - Compliance accountabilities are effectively monitored and managed by the leadership teams.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There are high achievement rates across all programmes. Since the last EER, the completion rate across the hospitality programmes has averaged 92 per cent. Average completion rates for cookery over the same period was 94 per cent. The validity of the high completion rates is underpinned by positive moderation results, including external moderation.</p> <p>Learners gain transferable skills and knowledge such as communication, social skills and employment skills, which support them in further study and employment. Overall, 64 per cent of graduates of the level 5 hospitality programme go on to complete the level 6 hospitality programme, which shows a clear intention to pathway to the next level, and a high retention of learners as they progress.</p> <p>Completion rates are analysed by programme leaders, management and governance teams to understand themes and trends. Often withdrawals are related to personal or family issues, and Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare tries to accommodate these situations where possible by arranging alternative options for learners.</p>
Conclusion:	There are consistently high completion rates, underpinned by positive external moderation results.

³ 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 students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare produces graduates who are able to gain employment in the hospitality and cookery sectors in New Zealand.</p> <p>Most learners progress from the level 5 to the level 6 hospitality programme, or the level 4 to the level 5 cookery programme. Data collected and analysed shows employment outcomes are typically higher for learners who complete both programmes.</p> <p>Aspire2 International initiated a graduate outcome project during 2020 to measure and analyse the outcomes for graduates and stakeholders. The project showed that 95 per cent of graduates of the level 6 hospitality programme were working full-time. Of those graduates, 84 per cent were in employment relevant to their programme of study, and 90 per cent found that the programme they completed helped them gain employment.⁴ Overall, the project indicated that outcomes for learners are high – however, data collection on graduate progression over time within the industry could be strengthened.</p> <p>Industry networks are well utilised – some employers use connections with Aspire2 International to hire graduates. The practice of inviting guest speakers, including graduates working in the industry, helps prepare learners for employment.</p>
Conclusion:	Graduates are well prepared for working in the New Zealand context, and the graduate outcome project aims to measure and analyse meaningful data to inform improvements. Staff have reported a clearer understanding of achievement and outcomes.

⁴ The response rates to the graduate outcome project surveys were high – overall, 47 per cent of graduates responded. Two main metrics were surveyed: ‘relevant employment’; and how helpful the programmes were for gaining employment. Both are determined by the graduate when completing the survey, using a 10-point scale. More than five points is indicative of a positive result.

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:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The existing programmes have strong links to industry to ensure that programme design meets the needs of relevant stakeholders. An industry advisory group meets twice a year to feed into programme development and review. Stakeholders that NZQA spoke to confirmed they can give input into programmes, and that their feedback is valued and acted on, when appropriate. Each campus also has relationships with its local industry, to reflect the contextual and local nature of the hospitality and cookery sectors.</p> <p>Guest speakers who are stakeholders from industry give learners insights into what it is like working in the industry. Guest lectures are recorded so that learners across campuses can view the lecture.</p> <p>Since the last EER, there has been a significant improvement in moderation practices – part of this is evidenced through an academic excellence project. External post-assessment moderation has been significantly increased to address findings from NZQA moderation activities. Internal moderation occurs for all programmes, and cross-campus moderation supports the consistency of assessor judgements across campuses. These findings feed into the quarterly programme performance reports, and the annual programme review.</p> <p>NZQA has recently completed a moderation activity for the New Zealand Diploma in Hospitality Management, in which the moderator agreed with all the assessor decisions. However, there were some areas for improvement identified, including ensuring the assessment tasks appropriately address the learning outcomes. Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare has responded that this will be considered in their ongoing review.</p> <p>There is a noticeably high use of the ‘further evidence required’ (FER) policy. This gives learners the opportunity to resubmit the part of the assessment they did not get correct in their first attempt. It is not clear whether there is a ‘first time pass rate’ expectation. However, most learners pass after their first FER</p>

	<p>(i.e. their second attempt at the assessment), which is acceptable to Aspire2 International. While an opportunity to re-attempt a task is standard practice in competency-based assessment, NZQA has expressed some concerns with the potential reliance on this policy. Given the high reliance on FER attempts by learners, this may indicate that they may not be ready for a summative assessment at the point they are being assessed. Being able to resubmit the same assessment multiple times, without any change to the task, may also reduce the authenticity of the assessments.</p> <p>The academic leadership has a good understanding of programme development and delivery principles, and there are regular meetings to cross-collaborate with campus leaders to reflect on improvements required.</p>
Conclusion:	Programmes meet industry needs well. Assessment and moderation are generally sound, and there is good reflection on programme delivery overall. However, it is too early to know how successful some improvements have been.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Learner support is managed by the Aspire2 shared services team. This team supports Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare, Aspire2 International Business & Technology, and Aspire2 Education.</p> <p>Learners are supported by the principle of 'awhi. This guides the support that the Aspire2 group offers, from orientation to ongoing support through programmes while learners are studying. Each learner has a personal development programme (PDP) which includes a formal orientation schedule. The PDP supports learners integrating into New Zealand, helps create an inclusive environment for learners of different backgrounds to engage with each other, outlines Aspire2 International expectations, and enables staff to gain an understanding of individual learner needs.</p> <p>Attendance and the academic progress of individual learners is closely monitored, and Aspire2 International acts when</p>

	<p>necessary to support learner progress. Teaching staff, programme leaders and academic managers are in regular contact so that they are aware of learner progress.</p> <p>Small class sizes mean that learners are well supported, and their needs are understood by the tutors. Aspire2 Education, part of the Aspire2 Group, has recently gained programme approval and accreditation, with an intent to deliver to domestic learners – these learners will attend the same classes as the international learners. Tutors are optimistic about the diverse and inclusive environment this will create, and domestic students will receive the same support as international learners. However, the PTE has not fully considered challenges and different needs when delivering to domestic and international learners at the same time.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Wrap-around pastoral care and academic support enables learners to achieve in their studies. The Aspire2 Group will be delivering programmes to domestic learners shortly. While all learners will receive the same level of support, any different or additional support required has not been fully considered.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare management team is also part of Aspire2 International, and the overall Aspire2 Group.</p> <p>The management teams have a purpose and clear direction in delivering effective learning to support career advancement, supporting learners to gain employment relevant to their study.</p> <p>The governance and management teams are effective in supporting educational achievement, and the leaders understand teaching and learning well. Regular reporting, including educational performance indicators, are discussed at governance and management meetings, and any resulting actions are delegated effectively to ensure changes are implemented. Systems and data are used effectively to measure performance and create actions which are tracked and reviewed.</p>

	<p>Tutors conduct peer observations and are supported by the learning and development manager in their professional development. Some professional development opportunities are not mandatory, but the staff that NZQA spoke to highlighted that it is encouraged and supported.</p> <p>Learners and teaching staff have been supported during Covid-19. During the pandemic lockdowns, teaching has continued online, and relevant resources were provided to tutors so that they could continue teaching their learners.</p> <p>The main business of Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare is centred on international studies, so the closing of the borders in 2020 and 2021 has had a significant impact, and the organisation has downsized its teaching team. The remaining staff members feel valued and supported.</p> <p>While there have been significant challenges during Covid-19, there has also been investment in external moderation, the graduate outcome project, and the academic excellence project. Aspire2 International is future focused, with a determination to continue supporting educational achievement and outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	The leadership has been effective in supporting educational performance, especially during challenging times. Self-assessment is generally robust, and any gaps are not significant and are managed well.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance accountabilities are generally well managed. A compliance calendar outlines the key compliance requirements that need to be met, and when they need to be met.</p> <p>The requirements of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice are closely monitored. Accurate information is provided to learners, and material is regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose. Review of the Code of Practice is collaborative, and input is given across Aspire2 International.</p>

	<p>A number of student files were randomly sampled by NZQA to check that entry requirements had been met, that learners had an appropriate visa, and that they had sufficient insurance. There were no issues identified.</p> <p>Attendance is monitored and reported on weekly to ensure learners comply with their visa conditions. To date there has been no disciplinary action required for lack of attendance.</p> <p>Learners are encouraged to gain employment (particularly relevant employment) while they study, though Aspire2 International works with them to ensure they are meeting visa/INZ requirements.</p> <p>Relevant NZQA attestations are present and have been submitted on time.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Compliance is understood and well managed by the leadership team. The requirements of the Code of Practice are understood by staff, who also have the opportunity to contribute to the self-assessment review.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Hospitality Management (Level 6)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 Focus area: International Student Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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.

NZQA recommends that Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare Limited:

- Collect graduate destination data at multiple intervals over a period of time to analyse and understand the impact of completing a programme on career advancement.
- Review the 'further evidence required' (FER) section of the assessment policy to consider ways to reduce the frequency and potential reliance of students on FER attempts, to strengthen good practice assessment principles.
- In the event that Aspire2 International Hospitality & Healthcare commences delivery to domestic learners, it is recommended that the provider consider the differences and challenges in supporting domestic and international learners in the same classroom.

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 1

Table 1. Qualification completion rates 2020

Qualification	Completion rate
New Zealand Diploma in Hospitality Management (Level 5)	92%
New Zealand Diploma in Hospitality Management (Level 6)	93%
New Zealand Certificate in Cookery (Level 4)	99%
New Zealand Certificate in Cookery (Level 5)	99%

Source: Aspire2 EER self-assessment summary 2021 and Aspire2 completion rates of non-enduring programmes + Cookery

Appendix 2

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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