



Report of External Evaluation and Review

UUNZ Institute of Business

Date of report: 1 June 2010

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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.

Brief description of TEO

Location: Auckland

Type: Private Training Establishment

Size: 449 students, 41 staff

Sites: Auckland

UUNZ Institute of Business (UUNZ) was formed in 2003 as a language academy providing English language courses to international students in Auckland. Within a short time UUNZ evolved into a tertiary education provider offering business qualifications ranging from certificates to degrees, in addition to the original English language courses.

In 2004 UUNZ reached an agreement with the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) in Australia to offer its diploma and degree courses in Auckland, and began to enrol students in these programmes. In 2005 changes to the New Zealand Immigration Act favoured international students who had completed a two-year local diploma. Consequently, UUNZ extended its NZQA accreditation to be able to offer the New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus).

In 2008 UUNZ was accredited to offer the postgraduate Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Business Administration – International Business (MBAI) in partnership with the University of Southern Queensland. In 2010 NZQA accredited UUNZ to deliver the postgraduate Certificate in Business and the postgraduate Diploma in Business.

The majority of UUNZ students are international students from China, Russia, Korea, and Latin America. However, with the recent approval to offer postgraduate programmes, UUNZ has diversified its marketing focus to India and Eastern Europe.

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **UUNZ Institute of Business**.

UUNZ offers a range of programmes from levels 3-9. Students are tested at enrolment with an entry-level assessment test of reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities. Students receive ongoing individual or group support with their academic studies; this support is offered in non-timetabled class time.

Student retention rates for the MBA and MBAI during 2009 were high. Only one student discontinued study, out of the 32 students who enrolled in semesters 2, 3, and 4 in 2009.

Pass rates over these last three occurrences of the MBA and MBAI were 89 per cent, 93 per cent, and 99 per cent respectively. These are above USQ benchmarks for all USQ students. UUNZ has one of the highest pass rates across USQ and its partner organisations.

The number of students enrolled for either the MBA or MBAI in 2008 was 22; in 2009 the number was 65. This growth in student numbers indicates that UUNZ understands and is meeting the learning needs of students well.

Thirty per cent of students who enrol on the NZDipBus continue their study at UUNZ on the USQ degree programmes. There are cross-credit arrangements that assist this transition.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **UUNZ Institute of Business**

From the governing board to academic staff, UUNZ has incorporated the evaluative approach into its policies and processes. Using self-review processes UUNZ has decided to make changes to the governance and management structures to enable a more strategic approach to decision-making in the organisation. These changes will help to assure UUNZ that it is responsive to its stakeholders, can accommodate the demands of the increased student numbers, and has clear documented decisions. UUNZ has a *Self Assessment Plan, 2009-2012* which provides clear direction, is flexible, and can accommodate change if required.

TEO response

A minor amendment was made to the text.

Basis for External Evaluation and Review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

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 courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQuality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria 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).

Findings

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

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/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>

Outline of scope

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of UUNZ included the following programmes:

- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Business Administration – International Business (MBAI)
- New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus).

The MBA and MBAI were chosen because they are high-level programmes with large student numbers and are offered in partnership with USQ. The NZDipBus was chosen because it is where the majority of UUNZ students enrol.

The following mandatory focus areas were also included:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International students – pastoral support.

Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation

This section provides a picture of the TEO's performance in terms of the outcomes achieved and the key contributing processes. Performance judgements are based on the answers to key evaluation questions across the focus areas sampled. This section also provides a judgement about the extent to which the organisation uses self-assessment information to understand its own performance and bring about improvements, i.e. capability in self-assessment.

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Context

The MBA and MBAI are programmes owned by the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). UUNZ has a partnership agreement with USQ and is accredited by NZQA to deliver these programmes. Students on these programmes gain access to the extensive online resources offered by USQ. UUNZ is one of approximately 20 institutions around the world that delivers USQ programmes. USQ provides lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, resources, assignments, assessments, marking guides, and a moderation framework. The NZDipBus is where the majority of UUNZ students enrol. Students who successfully complete the NZDipBus sometimes continue their study by enrolling on the MBA or MBAI. The NZDipBus programme is monitored regularly by NZQA, and UUNZ was visited by a monitor in 2009.

Explanation

Student retention rates for the MBA and MBAI during 2009 were high. Only one student discontinued study, out of the 32 students who enrolled in semesters 2, 3, and 4 in 2009. Pass rates over these last three occurrences of the MBA and MBAI were 89 per cent, 93 per cent, and 99 per cent respectively. These are above USQ benchmarks for all USQ students. UUNZ has one of the highest pass rates across USQ and its partner organisations. The number of students enrolled for either the MBA or MBAI in 2008 was 22; in 2009 the number was 65. While Grade Point Averages (GPAs) achieved by UUNZ students are slightly below those achieved by USQ domestic students, anecdotal evidence suggests this is not unusual, particularly for international students who do not have English as their first language.

Enrolment numbers and retention and pass rates in the MBA and MBAI indicate that these programmes are meeting market needs and satisfying student requirements. USQ staff spoken to confirmed that UUNZ students perform well above USQ benchmarks for the MBA and MBAI programmes. Student feedback sighted showed that students also believe they improve their self-confidence and English language skills as a result of their study on these programmes.

NZDipBus is a national programme, offered at many educational institutions. Students enter the programme for a variety of reasons and at different stages. For example, many students pick up papers at different institutions and may only partially complete the NZDipBus in order to gain entry and cross-credits towards a university business or commerce degree.

The NZDipBus programme at UUNZ has achieved steady growth, with 149 students enrolled during 2007 and 2008, and 233 students enrolled over 2008 and 2009. This indicates the programme is meeting the needs of students. While there are no formal benchmarks for this programme, anecdotal evidence suggests a 65-75 per cent pass rate across the programme. More language-intense papers, such as Commercial Law and Business Communication, are likely to produce rates below this for international students. UUNZ pass rates for individual papers, the programme as a whole, and the results from the *NZDipBus Monitoring Report*, completed after the monitor's visit, indicate that UUNZ students have been performing well when benchmarked against other providers of NZDipBus in New Zealand.

Pass rates for each paper are monitored at the end of each semester and these are reviewed in relation to the 65-75 per cent pass rate norm. Any results outside the norm are discussed with the tutor concerned and appropriate action taken.

Apart from academic success, emphasis is also given to developing skills around group work, presentations, and case analysis. This helps the student develop interpersonal and analytical skills.

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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Explanation

The first intake of students completed their MBA in semester 2, 2009. Most students return to their country of origin after graduation, therefore there is no information available, at this time, on employment outcomes. However, students interviewed by the evaluation team said that postgraduate qualifications from an English-based university programme are highly valued in their country of origin. UUNZ recognises the value in maintaining contact with graduates, and is working with USQ to track UUNZ graduates through the development of an alumni association.

After graduation the NZDipBus marketing staff keep in touch, informally, with NZDipBus students. Members of the marketing team told the evaluation team that many students go on to further degree-level education or gain employment in their own countries. UUNZ recognises that it needs to develop a more formal process for tracking these student outcomes.

In 2010 the organisation plans to establish a system of exit interviews to gather information about students' experiences at UUNZ and their future goals. This information will be collated and analysed and used to inform future programme design and marketing initiatives.

UUNZ encourages students to contribute to the wider community in paid work and voluntary roles. For example, one student was a volunteer fire warden. He conducted workshops at UUNZ to keep staff and students informed about New Zealand fire safety regulations. His contribution was valued by the organisation and the local fire service as it created fire safety awareness among international students, many of whom had little knowledge or experience of such standards.

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**.

Context

Students are provided with a handbook outlining the general requirements of both the masters and diploma programmes. Information provided includes attendance policy, study schedules, the code of conduct, and pastoral care practices. In addition, study guides are provided to all students for all programmes. These outline the requirements of each paper and include information on assessments. The organisation has up-to-date facilities, and in response to lecturer and student requests has installed updated software packages and provided access to online resources such as newspapers, academic magazines, and government websites. All students are tested at enrolment using an entry-level assessment (ELA) test.

Explanation

The language school provides support at five levels, ranging from elementary to advanced. Students who meet the ELA requirements in writing, reading, listening, and speaking are encouraged to attend general English language classes and tertiary programme support (TPS) workshops, which focus on tertiary skill acquisition required for successful academic study. Students are given flexibility to attend language support and TPS to fit in with their programme of study. Students have opportunities to use their English language skills on visits to the city and surrounds.

Many students enrolling in the MBA at UUNZ have limited business experience. This has led to the introduction into the MBA programme of "live business projects" where students work in the community. These projects help develop transferable skills, such as communication and interpersonal skills. These transferable skills are integrated into the assessments. The projects help prepare students for work in New Zealand and overseas. They also help UUNZ foster valuable relationships with local businesses.

One such relationship has led to a partnership with a local human resources and recruitment company which assists UUNZ students, prior to graduation, to prepare for their career. The company also helps UUNZ to source employers who might be able to offer future business

projects for students. Employers surveyed said the input from the students in the projects had been of benefit to their business as students provided a fresh approach to issues. Other feedback from businesses involved in the pilot business project has led to further enhancements and refinements which will be introduced in 2010.

Further expected benefits from the live projects are the potential for joint research opportunities, business seminars, and sourcing potential advisory council members. A paper on the live business projects initiative was presented at the USQ partner conference in 2009. It is the only project of this type offered by any of USQ's partner organisations and generated considerable interest.

Like other USQ programmes, the MBA/MBAI is subject to relevant USQ policies and practices, such as external moderation, which ensures the assessments are current, relevant, and meet the ongoing needs of stakeholders. Much of the ongoing engagement is with USQ faculty advisory boards, which are made up of independent members of the community with an interest in USQ and the various disciplines within the business faculty.

The lectures for the programmes are mostly held in the evenings and weekends. This enables greater flexibility for students and means they can have part-time work to help support their study costs. It also enables UUNZ to draw on a larger pool of experienced teaching staff, including a number who teach at New Zealand universities.

In order to address a range of learner needs, UUNZ recently successfully applied and gained approval and accreditation to offer a postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma in business as stand-alone qualifications. UUNZ also provides exit qualifications within the MBA and MBAI. The introduction of these programmes is intended to grow and strengthen the MBA and MBAI programmes by offering more choices to students.

The focus of the NZDipBus is on developing practical skills. Assessments and activities are designed to facilitate an understanding of real business environments and incorporate requirements that help develop strong communication and analytical skills. An example of this was a lecturer who used a workshop approach to help students understand the impact of the recent financial downturn on the New Zealand economy.

Thirty per cent of students who enrol on the NZDipBus continue their study at UUNZ on USQ degree programmes. There are cross credit arrangements that assist this transition. The transition arrangements between the NZDipBus, Bachelor level qualifications and the MBA and MBAI papers are unique; currently UUNZ is the only organisation in New Zealand offering USQ's MBA and MBAI degrees. This meets the needs of international students well as they can complete degree-level qualifications with one provider.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Context

All staff teaching on the USQ programmes must be approved by USQ. Pass and retention rates and student evaluations are used to monitor the quality of the teaching on all programmes at UUNZ, including NZDipBus. Most MBA/MBAI teachers are part time; many are in the process of completing their doctorates. Doctoral completion was a goal prized by the institution, individual teachers and students alike. Positive consideration towards creating a team of permanent staff is considered an important goal to achieve.

Explanation

Students interviewed said their lecturers were well prepared, understood their subject areas, and regularly sought informal feedback from their students. Student evaluations are used as a source of ongoing dialogue with teaching staff to pinpoint any performance and development needs. If any are identified staff are directed to relevant professional development resources, such as teaching workshops or USQ online support tutorials. Each semester teaching staff are required to review their teaching experiences by completing the *USQ Partner Business and Academic Review*. Teaching staff also use the USQ “Study Desk”, an online facility, which enables ongoing communication with the USQ unit leader of each paper. Staff interviewed said they were well supported by USQ staff and that the resources available from USQ were excellent.

Internal pre- and post-assessment moderation of all the papers in the MBA/MBAI is undertaken by USQ. The marks allocated for each paper delivered over the previous three semesters is monitored and any discrepancies are investigated with the appropriate staff member. No significant issues were identified in 2009.

External moderation of assessments is undertaken by a senior staff member in the business faculty at Auckland University of Technology. All assessments to date have met moderation requirements and any recommendations suggested have been incorporated into future assessment materials.

Lecturers on the NZDipBus are observed regularly and evaluated for their teaching style, teaching techniques, lesson content, and ability to communicate with their students. Feedback is provided to the teacher and any issues identified are addressed. Students evaluate teachers each term. The information is collated and discussed with the teacher concerned and an appropriate way to improve any issues is identified. An example of this occurred in 2008, when students enrolled in the Organisation and Management paper requested more cases and class discussions to help them understand management structures and leadership styles in New Zealand businesses. The lecturer addressed this request by using the cases from a New Zealand applied management book.

There is a focus on interactive learning. This approach encourages students to improve their communication skills, including their English language skills, and increases participation rates and engagement with learning. This is particularly important for

international students who come from learning backgrounds where active learning is less prevalent. This interactive style also allows the teacher to gauge the students' understanding and pace lessons appropriately.

The majority of the teaching staff are part time, and UUNZ recognises that while it is evident that current teaching practices are meeting the needs of students the appointment of more permanent part-time and full-time teaching staff could lead to further improvements, for example by creating more opportunities to share good teaching practice.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Context

USQ provides all the teaching materials and online resources for students. These include study guides and access to its comprehensive online library facilities. Each student has an individual study plan. All MBA/MBAI lectures are supported with one-hour tutorials.

Explanation

Students interviewed said that because English is their second language, they often find it difficult to communicate, understand, and reproduce information in an academic style. This can affect their motivation and self-confidence. UUNZ manages this issue by encouraging students, in the first instance, to approach their teacher for assistance with course material or with understanding the requirements for an assessment. Students interviewed said teachers happily made appointments with them, outside class time, to discuss these issues.

If students require extra help, UUNZ provides ongoing language support through tuition and workshops. The programme is developed to help guide and support students with their assessments. Students attend workshops around referencing, paraphrasing, and critical analysis; the aim is to help students develop the skills required to cope at the tertiary level. All students at UUNZ have access to language support for their assessments. This might involve help with interpreting assessment requirements, or feedback on grammar, sentence structure, and spelling on their draft assessment.

The marketing and support staff at UUNZ comprise first-language speakers of Russian, Chinese, and Korean. They are available to support students who need help with English language and to assist with induction and orientation. UUNZ also has a full-time student welfare officer who can help with visa and homestay issues, insurance, and banking, and questions about policy and procedures. There are student counsellors to assist all nationalities, and who can provide help with problems such as adjusting to life in New Zealand.

In response to student feedback, improvements have been made to student resources and facilities such as setting up a postgraduate student area with computer access, wireless modems, and kitchen facilities. While relevant technology is used and is available to support student learning, an upgrade of current computer facilities would further enhance

the learning environment. For example, currently only MBA/MBAI students have access to the wi-fi network. Extending this access to NZDipBus students would add value to their study experience; this issue has been raised with management.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Context

UUNZ is a private shareholding company run by a chief executive officer (CEO) with a strategic advisory board. An executive management team as well as an academic board report to the CEO. The board chairperson met with the evaluation team to describe changes made to the board structure as a result of their self-assessment. These include the advisory board being renamed the advisory council, to better reflect its role as “friend of UUNZ”. A more formal governance board is to be set up with a business role to provide strategic direction and goals, academic performance measurement, budget approval, key performance indicator measurement, oversight of student and external stakeholder needs, and responsibility for ensuring NZQA requirements are met. This board will meet four times a year, and is answerable to the shareholders and each board member, as well as having collective responsibility, and will also be accountable for an individual area of responsibility. It will take responsibility for the strategic direction of UUNZ.

The existing management team structure will be retained with a new set of summary reporting requirements to conform to the new board’s responsibilities and expectations. Similarly the academic board will be retained with its own reporting parameters. The CEO will be a member of all boards and management teams in an ex officio role. He will appoint separate chairs for these boards, freeing him to operate at a strategic level. Advisory council members will continue as before and new appointments will be made by the CEO to the governance board. All members of the advisory council and half the members of the governing board are external members of the community and will provide guidance about how external stakeholder needs, particularly employer needs, are being met.

Explanation

The advisory council has members who were able to assist with business contacts for the business project initiated for the MBAI students in 2009. Collaborative arrangements with other USQ partner organisations are being considered, such as staff and student exchanges and ways to share best practice across these organisations.

UUNZ recruits carefully to balance the needs of programmes and learners. A particular concern is maintaining the balance between full-time and part-time staff, permanent and fixed term.

In 2009 the postgraduate area was strengthened by the appointment of a senior part-time postgraduate advisor. This role will be consolidated into a permanent position in 2010 to provide the leadership required for the growing number of postgraduate programmes.

The review of the governance and management structures at UUNZ has resulted in changes to board and committee roles. These include adopting a more proactive approach, where the board will take greater responsibility for the strategic direction of UUNZ. This is an important change as it will allow the board to support management during a time of rapid growth at UUNZ. This is particularly important for the postgraduate programmes, where research and publication of academic papers is a requirement for teaching on these programmes.

UUNZ's response to these challenges has been to establish a staff research fund, produce the 2009 edition of the *USQ International Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, pay research time for staff engaged in writing a paper for publication, develop a database of external research funding sources, develop a staff research profile and post it on the UUNZ website, and tie active research outcomes to ongoing teaching appointments made in 2011. UUNZ also intends to introduce relevant key performance indicators and link these to the six key evaluation questions to ensure the evaluative approach underpins all aspects of UUNZ's governance and management structures and processes.

Part 2: Performance in 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 **Good**.

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

2.2 Focus area: International students – pastoral care

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

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

2.3 Focus area: NZ Diploma in Business

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Master of Business Administration/Master of Business Administration – International Business

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

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

Statements of Confidence

The statements of confidence are derived from the findings within and across the focus areas. A four-step scale is used: highly confident, confident, not yet confident, not confident.

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **confident** in the educational performance of **UUNZ Institute of Business**

Key reasons for this are:

- Students are engaged and complete their programmes of study.
- Student numbers have grown significantly over the last three years, indicating student needs are being met.
- Student pathways for progressing study options are clear.
- Students are well supported with their study by experienced English language tutors, same-language counsellors, and a full-time welfare officer.
- Students are taught in an interactive teaching style which encourages active participation.
- Students evaluate tutor performance and programme content regularly, and there is evidence that changes are made from these evaluations.
- Students learn about New Zealand business culture and practice and some students undertake project work in the community.
- UUNZ recognises that to provide level 9 qualifications and maintain credibility with government, academic staff, students, and other providers it needs to foster an active research culture and encourage research outputs from within the staff group.
- UUNZ recognises that it needs to balance staffing and reward tutors who perform well, particularly those who contribute to the research culture, with ongoing employment and promotion opportunities.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **UUNZ Institute of Business**

Key reasons for this are:

- All staff have been involved in discussing self-assessment and are convinced that it is essential to monitoring and progressing teaching and learning at UUNZ.
- UUNZ governance and management has enthusiastically adopted an evaluative approach and is committed to ongoing self-review, including aligning key performance indicators to the NZQA evaluative quality assurance approach.

- *The UUNZ Self-Assessment Plan 2009-2012* shows the key focus areas to be reviewed at institutional and programme level over a three-year cycle.
- *The UUNZ Self-Assessment Plan 2009-2012* includes the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy, in all three-year cycles.
- *The UUNZ Self-Assessment Plan 2009-2012* is flexible and recognises additional focus areas may need to be added or changed as a result of ongoing internal self-review and reflection, or in response to external factors.

Actions Required and Recommendations

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's regular scheduling policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Recommendations

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

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