



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Youth Cultures & Community Trust

Date of report: 18 December 2023

About Youth Cultures & Community Trust (Praxis)

Praxis provides training for youth workers at certificate and diploma levels. Programme delivery is from four sites and includes weekly classes, four annual week-long block courses, mostly on marae, and the practical application of skills two to three days a week at youth-focused workplaces.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	Level 2, 138-140 Wakefield Street, Te Aro, Wellington
Eligible to enrol intl students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 71 Māori, 25 per cent, Pasifika, 24 per cent, diverse, one; most learners are 'second-chance'; some learners have disabilities International: nil
Number of staff:	Two full-time equivalents, 18 part-time
TEO profile:	See NZQA: PTE Youth Cultures & Community Trust Youth Cultures & Community Trust, which governs Praxis, is a registered charitable trust. The most significant change at Praxis has been the transition from the chief executive and founder. Praxis is now co-led by two experienced practitioners which were internal promotions. Praxis' five sites are in: Auckland, Waikato, Whanganui, Wellington and Christchurch. Alongside the Praxis courses, Youth Cultures & Community Trust also governs an Alternative Education Centre in Porirua, established in 2000.
Last EER outcome:	Praxis was found to be Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment at the most recent external evaluation and review (EER) in 2019.

Scope of evaluation:	All programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Social and Community Services) (Level 4) ID:122461• New Zealand Diploma in Youth Work (Level 6) ID:124163
MoE number:	7542
NZQA reference:	C53839
Dates of virtual EER visit:	9-11 October 2023

Summary of results

Praxis consistently exceeds student and stakeholder expectations. The model of delivery is student-centric, values-based and authentic. Self-assessment is comprehensive, embedded and mostly effective. Ongoing self-assessment guides change and improvements that add value for all stakeholders.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Student achievement, including for Māori and Pasifika, is consistently strong across both programmes in focus.
- The delivery model enables practical application of skills learnt in student workplaces. This is augmented by regular class and block time. Assessment activities foster understanding of the relationship between the theoretical and practical aspects of youth work.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Valued outcomes for all students include gaining relevant work-ready qualifications, improved self-esteem and ongoing employment opportunities within the youth work sector. Praxis is deeply committed to its learners and the wider youth community.
- Praxis is proactive in offering academic and personal pastoral support, which includes external support for students if required.
- Governance and management functions are professional, collaborative and focused on the wellbeing of all stakeholders.
- The transition to the new co-director model was well managed and informed by external expertise. It provided an opportunity to systematically review the organisation's processes, including the student management system.
- Historical compliance issues with NZQA have been resolved. However, ongoing full compliance needs to be demonstrated for NZQA to be more than confident in Praxis' capability in self-assessment at this time.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Qualification completions for the certificate and diploma programmes (2019-22) are strong, including for Māori and Pasifika (see Appendix 1, Tables 1 and 2).</p> <p>Pasifika achieve at rates above all other students. Māori achievement is below other students, but above external benchmarks. The pandemic had minimal impact on overall achievement, largely due to the strong relationships students built with their tutors and the highly effective wrap-around support provided by Praxis. Individual students are well known to staff.</p> <p>Many students are second-chance learners. Over 70 per cent of students arrive without the level 3 National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). At selection, students are assessed on age, academic ability and the organisation where they are based. They are then offered entry to the level 4 certificate or level 6 diploma. Some students prefer to enter at certificate level as they lack confidence in their ability, often due to negative school experiences.</p> <p>Students can request recognition of prior learning (RPL) for entry to year 2 of the diploma if confidence and academic progress allows.</p> <p>Achievement data and student attendance is regularly reviewed at a range of meetings with staff, programme leaders and site managers. Student satisfaction with the certificate and diploma programmes, their tutors and partner agencies is high.</p>
Conclusion:	Most students complete qualifications. This is attributed to close tracking of attendance and proactive academic and pastoral support. There is regular review of student progress. This leads to proactive interventions that increase opportunities for students to succeed.

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 students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The Praxis model of youth work has highly valued outcomes as it builds capability and capacity in the youth work sector. Praxis has over 50 partner organisations. Work-based learning agreements sighted by the evaluators were comprehensive and up to date.</p> <p>Praxis, the students and the placement agencies collectively add value and mutually support each other. The students gain confidence and increase their skills and knowledge to work with youth. The partner agencies benefit from more highly skilled workers, and Praxis continues to promote its vision to mentor the next generation of youth workers. Eighty-two per cent of students remain in the organisation where they completed their placement. Praxis graduates are preferred for employment by external organisations.</p> <p>Students grow in confidence and self-esteem that transfers to other areas of their lives. Praxis and the students contribute positively to their local communities.</p> <p>Praxis tracks student destination data. Eighty per cent of 2021 graduates were employed in youth work six months after graduation, and over 50 per cent are still in full-time employment.</p> <p>Praxis has pathway arrangements with several tertiary organisations. Increasingly, diploma graduates go on to further study. Twenty-eight per cent of diploma graduates have transitioned to level 7 degree programmes over the last four years. Other pathways graduates pursue include teaching, social work and police.</p> <p>Tutors and partner agencies participate annually in an external survey that includes written feedback and a 30-minute focus group conversation. This leads to a report with recommendations that are actioned and tracked to determine their effectiveness.</p>
Conclusion:	Students acquire skills and knowledge that benefit themselves, their clients and partner agencies. Praxis is a highly valued member of the wider youth work sector.

	They are regarded as leaders in the field of youth work education in Aotearoa.
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1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Praxis' programme design and delivery is student-centred and based on an action/reflection model. Critical reflection on a person's circumstances is informed by ongoing cycles of action and further critical reflection. This approach is evident in all aspects of teaching and learning. Partner agencies contribute to maintaining the relevance of programmes through formal and informal channels.</p> <p>Training advisory group meetings occur twice-yearly at each regional site. Organisational partners discuss student progress, programme content and emerging sector needs. Notes from advisory groups are recorded, including action steps. Actions are reviewed at staff hui and influence course delivery.</p> <p>Student confidence is supported by a focus on oral work, presentations and practical assessments early in the programme. This provides confidence for written assessments later on. Assessment activities foster understanding of the relationship between the theoretical and practical aspects of youth work. Integrated assessments, including formative and summative assessments, ensure scaffolding to learning outcomes.</p> <p>Graduate profile outcomes are shared with the students to introduce them to the knowledge and skills they need to demonstrate to graduate successfully. Marking guides clearly demonstrate the relationship between learning outcomes and assessment requirements.</p> <p>Students and tutors have face-to-face contact through regular on-site classes (once a week) and block courses (one week, four times a year). These are held on site in Auckland, Waikato, Whanganui, Wellington and Christchurch. Both certificate and diploma students attend the same block courses. Student feedback from</p>

	<p>block courses in 2022 led to the development of teaching strategies to signal when challenging topics and activities would be introduced. Previously, students had felt unprepared for them.</p> <p>A leadership and kaupapa Māori review led to greater inclusive practice at block courses. Examples include catering to students' views and accommodating diversity in accommodation at block courses. Students are nurtured to increase their participation. For example, year 2 diploma students take on leadership roles at block courses.</p> <p>An associate programme, running since 2016, enables graduates to have another year alongside the Praxis staff team. This provides valuable professional development. Students contribute to programme delivery under supervision and may gain employment at Praxis.</p> <p>The NZQA consistency review in 2022 resulted in a 'sufficient' outcome after Praxis submitted an action plan. NZQA monitoring and assessment of both the certificate and diploma programmes – while initially showing recommendations for improvements – received sign-off as compliant.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Stakeholders consistently reported that Praxis programme design and delivery contributes to highly effective learning and work-ready graduates. However, several NZQA quality assurance activities did not meet the required standard, in the first instance.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support is strong and easy to access. The support offered is integral to the action/reflection model that guides all aspects of Praxis' values, vision and delivery. Principles of kaupapa Māori are increasingly embedded across the organisation. A comprehensive, full-day orientation includes students, staff and partner organisations. The learning environment is inclusive. Gender diverse students reported that their needs were well met, both by Praxis and on site at placement agencies. Students are encouraged to respect and support each other to succeed and seek support if required.</p> <p>Student learning goals are well understood. Both online resources and printed materials provide students with comprehensive study information, which is updated each term. Praxis regularly seeks student feedback which is used to improve teaching and learning. Each year, 40 per cent of students will need a proactive extra care plan. An awahi fund for students can be used to provide a wide range of support, including for information technology, counselling and clothing and food.</p> <p>Procedures minimise barriers to learning. Praxis and the placement agencies sign comprehensive documents of agreement, as do the placement supervisor and the student. These agreements provide a triangle of support (Praxis, student, placement agency/student supervisor) for the education, practical and wellbeing needs of all participants.</p> <p>The significant strength of the Praxis model is that students apply their knowledge and skills in relevant contexts. Most students are already in employment prior to enrolling with Praxis. Word-of-mouth referrals from graduates or employers of Praxis graduates encourage youth workers to consider formal training. Praxis always has a waiting list of prospective students.</p>
Conclusion:	Student support at Praxis is accessible, comprehensive and well used. Students are highly involved in their professional practice. They take increasing responsibility

	for their learning as they gain confidence and progress through their study.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Praxis trustees are well informed and committed to the Praxis model of action/reflection. They have taken a collaborative leadership role in the many changes made since 2019. Praxis employed an external consultant who recommended improvements. These included greater commitment to Te Tiriti, the formation of a senior leadership team with co-leaders, and strengthening the quality management system (now called the 'Good Book'). The latter has become a one-stop-shop for staff questions. In the Good Book, staff self-report each term on the academic management of their local programme.</p> <p>The Praxis course manager reports quarterly to Youth Cultures and Community Trust on the operation of the course, including staffing management, student achievement, student wellbeing, programme delivery and safety. Staff participate in a performance review annually and mid-year. They gain feedback from peers and debriefing with management, who record notes and action steps, including individual professional development activities. Collective professional development activities have included restorative practice, rainbow inclusion, climate change and kaupapa Māori.</p> <p>Recruitment and development of staff is effective. Staff complete an induction process with tasks set over a six-month duration. This induction process is newly developed following emerging themes from exit interviews.</p> <p>Resourcing for teaching and learning is adequate. The learning environment is culturally responsive. Over half of Praxis students are Māori and/or Pasifika, and a third of the staff are Māori. Staff development needs are reviewed at a mid-year hui. A komiti Māori has been established. It reviews programme content and kaupapa Māori goals to better understand factors involved in Māori achievement.</p> <p>Praxis holds organisational registration with Ara Taiohi, the peak body for Youth Development in Aotearoa New</p>

Final

	<p>Zealand. Ara Taiohi delivers a code of ethics workshop to Praxis students, meets with Praxis each quarter and collaborates on advocacy projects.</p> <p>Governance supports the operations of Praxis youth work courses with an active trusteeship, and meets quarterly for a full-day meeting. Trustees are engaged formally and informally with Praxis. This includes regular attendance at block courses.</p> <p>The trustees are highly complimentary about the impact of the changes initiated since the last EER, particularly the strengths provided by the skills of the senior leadership team and the systematic recording of processes and procedures in the quality management system. This commendation is echoed by staff who feel highly valued and committed to long-term careers at Praxis.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management are guided by clear organisational purpose and direction which empowers staff to support students to grow in confidence and capability. Praxis anticipates and responds effectively to change.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The trust deed for Praxis has recently undergone review to reflect changes to legislation, the use of digital technology, commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and that the trust has adopted a co-chair model. The board is diverse in gender, culture and expertise and includes a recent graduate on a two-year trustee internship.</p> <p>Governance instigated a full review of all policies, guidance and procedures in 2022/23. A two-year review cycle has been established to ensure all policies, guidance and procedures stay relevant and up to date with legislative change. Policies, guidance and procedures are accessible to all staff in the Good Book. This data is digitised and easily accessed. Relevant compliance is proactively tabled at appropriate governance and senior management meetings in a timely manner. Delegated responsibility for decisions and tasks is documented. This includes financial</p>

	<p>management, health and safety and educational achievement.</p> <p>Academic compliance and management were strengthened in 2023 by the appointment of an academic manager. The academic manager has reviewed the internal and external moderation systems, and moderation is now regularly discussed at staff meetings, rather than being a stand-alone item isolated from assessment. Other improvements include adopting MS applications, using Teams as the online interface for students, One Note for meetings and One Drive for intellectual property.</p> <p>NZQA programme monitoring in 2022 identified a significant issue. An action plan was developed and in March 2023 Praxis met the requirements of the action plan.</p> <p>Recommendations from the 2019 EER report included closer monitoring of academic processes across delivery sites, completing the quality management system review, and demonstrating that programmes are being delivered as approved, according to the NZQF Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018.</p> <p>These recommendations were used by Praxis to guide development of stronger systems. Evidence sighted showed that consistency across sites has improved, a new revised quality management system is in operation, and that Praxis programme delivery is now compliant. Training for staff included professional development around the purpose of moderation and consistency review.</p> <p>Praxis is compliant with the Code of Practice and indicated that it rates itself as 'well implemented' for the 2023 Code attestation (due November 2023). Praxis has a complaints policy on the website. Compliance calendars for NZQA, the Tertiary Education Commission, health and safety and financial auditing ensure reporting deadlines are met. Policies and practices are legal and ethical.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Some moderation and consistency review results were a concern and are reflected in the ratings for this key evaluation question. Appropriate action plans were developed and have been accepted by NZQA. Praxis has used these quality assurance activities to make improvements to systems and inform upskilling of staff.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Social and Community Services) (Level 4) ID:122461

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 New Zealand Diploma in Youth Work (Level 6) ID:124163

Performance:	Excellent
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 Youth Cultures and Community Trust:

- Continue to use both internal and external quality assurance activities to further embed self-assessment across the organisation and to inform professional development and upskill staff
- Formally collect data on learners with disabilities to demonstrate how teaching and learning contributes to their success.

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. New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Social and Community Services) (Level 4) qualification completions 2019-22

Year	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Average pass rate
2019	75%	73%	88%	79%
2020	95%	93%	91%	93%
2021	87%	63%	90%	80%
2022	63%	79%	88%	77%

Table 2. New Zealand Diploma in Youth Work (Level 6) qualification completions 2019-22

Year	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Average pass rate
2019	88%	100%	88%	92%
2020	91%	82%	100%	91%
2021	91%	92%	87%	90%
2022	75%	100%	95%	90%

Data for these tables was provided by Praxis.

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 fraud²*
- *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.*

² 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 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs 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 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, 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 2021. 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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