

External Evaluation and Review Report

Making Futures Happen International
Institute Limited trading as
FocusFutures

Date of report: 24 October 2024

About Making Futures Happen International Institute Limited trading as FocusFutures

FocusFutures offers courses and educational events designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for employment, career development and success in everyday community life.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Levels 3, 4 and 6 Grand Central Tower 76-86 Manner Street, Wellington
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes ¹
Number of students:	Domestic: 48 equivalent full-time students made up of approximately 300 enrolments in short courses and educational events International: nil (so far in 2024)
Number of staff:	Six full-time, eight part-time
TEO profile:	See FocusFutures profile on the NZQA website.
Last EER outcome:	In October 2020, NZQA was Confident in the educational performance, and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of FocusFutures.
Scope of evaluation:	Focus areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intensive English (Level 3) (Training Scheme) Ref: 121773/1• Education to Employment programmes (E2E)²
MoE number:	7575

¹ FocusFutures does not actively recruit international students; however, it occasionally enrolls onshore international visitors for short-term study periods.

² Following the EER visit, Focus Futures was informed of funding changes to the E2E programme, particularly from Wellington City Council. The funder clarified (to NZQA) that these changes were due to shifts in funding priorities and were not a reflection of Focus Futures' performance. Consequently, Focus Futures has since scaled down its E2E delivery.

NZQA reference: C58617

Dates of EER visit: 27 and 28 August 2024

Summary of results

FocusFutures is providing quality education and training coupled with strong student support. This results in high levels of satisfaction and positive outcomes for its students, stakeholders and the community.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Students are highly engaged in their learning and are well supported to succeed in gaining confidence, English language proficiency and interpersonal skills while studying at FocusFutures. On each of the measures identified as important by FocusFutures (refer 1.1 for details), the results the EER observed are universally positive.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Stakeholder satisfaction rates for the E2E programmes have improved over time, and remain high. Contract fulfilment rates for these programmes remain consistently high. There is an evident, widespread organisational commitment to the support, wellbeing and success of all students.
- FocusFutures regularly reviews and updates its programmes to meet the emerging needs of stakeholders, relying on long-established relationships to gather input. Stakeholder feedback indicates that FocusFutures is clearly a valued part of the communities it serves.
- FocusFutures demonstrates sound management practices and has a clear philosophy and purpose that permeates throughout the organisation. Staff are valued and well supported, and activities are appropriately resourced. While FocusFutures generally manages its compliance responsibilities well, adopting a more effective process for monitoring compliance obligations would provide a more robust and proactive approach to their management.
- Analysis of data for self-assessment purposes is very effective. FocusFutures is gathering extensive and valuable data on student achievement and value, using measures such as participation, completion rates and

student/stakeholder satisfaction. The PTE is also starting to make good use of opportunities to conduct deeper analysis of this data, to understand the factors that drive strong performance or highlight areas for improvement.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FocusFutures uses unique measures to understand student achievement and value, given the absence of formal summative assessments.</p> <p>On each of the achievement and value measures identified as important by FocusFutures⁴, the results are universally positive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FocusFutures surveys school staff, students and employers for each E2E event, and has received consistently positive feedback on how it assists them in achieving their goals. School, employer and student satisfaction rates for the E2E programmes have steadily improved over time, and remain high. FocusFutures has contracts with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) for these programmes. Contract fulfilment rates remain consistently high. Students involved in E2E programmes engage in interactive learning activities and gain useful knowledge about possible career paths. However, FocusFutures currently lacks insights into the long-term benefits of these programmes. Tracking of Intensive English graduates over the past four years indicates that 95 per cent of learners have reported significant improvements in their language abilities, lifelong learning skills, confidence, social

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁴ Measures for the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training scheme include contract consumption rates, learning hours and average teaching ratios. Measures for the E2E programme include contract completion rates and stakeholder satisfaction rates. Measures for the Employment Placement Service programmes include enrolment rates, 31-day placement outcome rates and 182-day placement rates. See Appendix 1 for additional details.

	<p>participation and overall wellbeing as a result of their participation in the programme. The Intensive English programme has produced consistently strong results throughout the four years since the last EER. Measures include participation rates and average learning hours per student, as specified by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment outcomes in the Employment Placement Service programmes – which are delivered under contract to the MSD – are consistently above funder expectations. Notably, Māori and Pasifika priority groups in these programmes have achieved employment outcomes that surpass those of the overall cohort.
Conclusion:	Students at FocusFutures are acquiring relevant skills and knowledge leading to substantial personal benefits and growth and, in the Employment Placement Service programme, employment. Students, families and communities gain significant value from their learning experience.

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:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FocusFutures strives to meet the personal and academic goals and needs of every student. This is a standout feature of the organisation. The mix of programmes and delivery styles is relevant to the students, stakeholders and the communities they serve. The organisation is well attuned to the needs of the students through constantly seeking feedback from students, schools and government agencies.</p> <p>Regular reviews and updates of programmes to address the emerging needs of stakeholders are guided by input</p>

⁵ A dip during 2023, across all measures, was highlighted by FocusFutures during the EER. The reasons for this dip are well understood, and came about when Chinese post-Covid border restrictions were removed and many students temporarily returned to China to reunite with families. FocusFutures has provided projections which indicate likely improvement for 2024, based on current data.

	<p>from strong, long-established relationships. Over the past four years, FocusFutures has refined its programmes, actively considering and reflecting on previous strengths when making decisions about the composition of its programme portfolio.</p> <p>Employment Placement Service outcomes are accomplished through a thorough initial needs assessment that identifies the specific requirements of job seekers. Contributing processes and practices play a crucial role in these achievements, and include individually tailored coaching, effective ways of identifying learning and career goals, and effective job search support. The focus on learner placement outcomes ensures that the programme positively impacts individual lives by supporting them to achieve employment.</p> <p>FocusFutures collects learner feedback as part of daily attendance monitoring processes for the Intensive English programme. The PTE maintains class groups on WeChat, an open and transparent communication channel where tutors and the support staff consistently engage and listen to learners' views and proactively respond to their needs. Students are empowered to share their thoughts and suggestions for ongoing improvement.</p> <p>None of FocusFutures' programmes include summative assessment, so moderation and reporting are not applicable. However, the Intensive English programme incorporates formative assessments, which are regularly reviewed by staff to ensure they meet students' needs. For example, role-play is extensively used to integrate assessment into the learning process and build the confidence of students in their English-speaking abilities.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>FocusFutures' regular and ongoing interaction with its students and stakeholders is a key strength of the organisation. This continuous engagement ensures that programmes and activities address the current and evolving needs of students, families, schools and workplaces, thereby maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of the programmes.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FocusFutures has a clear and widespread commitment to the success and wellbeing of all students. Staff demonstrate significant passion and dedication to student learning goals, creating an environment where many students have bespoke programmes based on their individual needs. Staff discuss student achievement and develop strategies to ensure a positive experience for every student.</p> <p>Students benefit from comprehensive and ongoing social and academic support provided by staff across the organisation. Intending students receive timely and thorough information to guide them into courses that align with their aspirations and abilities. Various activities and initiatives are in place to foster motivation, engagement and growth. Teachers provide excellent first-point-of-contact support for the students, and regular, constructive feedback helps students understand what is required for success in their programmes.</p> <p>Many courses are short, one-off events, which may limit the range of pastoral care support services that FocusFutures needs to or can reasonably provide. Additionally, during E2E events, students remain under the care of their respective schools.</p> <p>Attendance monitoring processes at FocusFutures are highly effective at promoting student engagement and success, with clear expectations communicated to students, families and referral agencies, along with timely follow-up support.</p> <p>FocusFutures has submitted attestations to NZQA that they have completed annual self-reviews of their implementation of the Code of Practice⁶, as required for all PTEs by 1 November each year. The self-reviews have been a team effort involving an appropriate range of staff. In the most recent self-review, all outcomes were assessed</p>

⁶ [The Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)

	as 'implemented'. FocusFutures has set itself a range of actions to be taken, including the introduction of compliance-related training for new staff, and the development of policies for potential learners who have disabilities.
Conclusion:	Students at FocusFutures are experiencing an inclusive and student-centred learning environment, supported by a reflective and student-centred organisational culture. This commitment ensures the PTE remains effective in meeting the diverse needs of its student body.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FocusFutures has well-documented organisational goals and objectives, with management and staff sharing a clear understanding of the PTE's vision and direction. As a family-owned and operated organisation, it does not have a formal governance structure but, when needed, the owner uses external business planning expertise through family connections. The business model has proven sustainable over two decades of successful operation, including effective management through the disruptions of Covid-19. Recommendations from the previous EER have been thoroughly documented and addressed.</p> <p>FocusFutures employs qualified and experienced staff, whom it manages effectively and actively develops. The value placed on staff experience and expertise is evident and positively impacts educational quality. Staff performance is formally reviewed quarterly, though regular and formative feedback is also provided. Developing a structured teaching observation process and linking performance reviews to individual professional development plans would further enhance staff development.</p> <p>Teaching, learning and facilitation are supported with appropriate resources, including teaching materials and fit-for-purpose facilities. The organisation has established robust administrative systems and procedures, with the</p>

	<p>owner responsible for compliance with legal and ethical policies and practices.</p> <p>FocusFutures promotes ongoing reflection on its role and strives for continuous improvement in meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders. Self-assessment processes are well integrated and effectively applied, both informally and formally.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>FocusFutures has a clear vision and understanding of its mission, backed by strong leadership that actively promotes educational success. The organisation maintains regular, transparent and effective performance monitoring processes to ensure accountability and drive continuous improvement. Further development of teaching observations and individual professional development plans would provide additional opportunities to understand and improve educational performance.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance is the owner's responsibility and is managed through a tracking system in her diary. However, minor issues were identified during the preparation for this EER, including a late notification/application for site approval to NZQA and the overlooking of the publication of the Code of Practice review document on the PTE's website. These issues have not materially impacted student wellbeing or performance, and were promptly rectified by the PTE when brought to their attention. However, such issues suggest that compliance management at FocusFutures could be more structured.</p> <p>Despite this, there are other indications of generally effective compliance management, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of NZQA attestations and returns within stipulated timeframes, with no recent history of NZQA-related risks. • Effective systems in place for meeting reporting obligations to various referral agencies and funding

	<p>partners, including the Tertiary Education Commission, ensuring timely and accurate reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with Code of Practice obligations, demonstrated by the submission of an attestation to NZQA indicating completion of a self-review within required timeframes. The review document, including complaints processes, is publicly available on the PTE's website. • The police vetting of all staff, in compliance with the requirements of the Children's Act 2014.
Conclusion:	<p>While essential compliance responsibilities are being met, FocusFutures would benefit from adopting a more cohesive and proactive approach to understanding and managing its compliance accountabilities to ensure sustained compliance.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Intensive English (Level 3) (Training Scheme) Ref 121773/1

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The Intensive English programme at FocusFutures is funded through the TEC's Intensive Literacy and Numeracy-ESOL funding and supports up to 200 students. Under TEC requirements, students must complete between five and 20 hours of study per week, with a targeted minimum of 80 hours annually. FocusFutures aims for an average of 200 hours of study per student each year.</p> <p>The typical student profile is a New Zealand resident of Chinese nationality, over 50 years of age, often a parent or grandparent of new migrants. This group frequently faces significant language and transport barriers, isolation, and health and wellbeing challenges. Rather than pursuing qualifications or unit standards, these learners rely on FocusFutures to build their English language skills needed for daily life in New Zealand. Feedback from students and external stakeholders confirms that these objectives are being met.</p> <p>The programme offers classes at four levels: starter, beginner, elementary and pre-intermediate, providing tailored language instruction and practical activities focused on daily vocabulary and essential phrases. FocusFutures also offers cultural orientation, including an introduction to New Zealand culture and te ao and te reo Māori. Small class sizes allow teachers to give individualised attention to each student.</p> <p>There is no summative assessment in the programme; instead, formative assessment is used to place students and provide feedback on their progress. ESOL teachers are well connected to their learner communities and deliver culturally responsive instruction and support. They often partner with community organisations, such as churches and migrant support groups, to offer additional assistance.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are retained in study and show progress in using English language and meeting their personal goals. A

	strong sense of shared accountability among staff ensures comprehensive support for the students.
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2.2 Education to Employment Programme (E2E)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The E2E programme focusses on four initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career/industry exposure events funded by MSD/MoE • Pacific Career Mentoring programme funded by MoE • E2E-STEAMM⁷ funded by Wellington City Council • Pathways Ethnic Youth Hub (PEYH) funded by MoE. <p>FocusFutures is one of 25 E2E providers across New Zealand, and is contracted to deliver services to 18 secondary schools in Wellington and Porirua. The effectiveness of the programmes is evaluated using measures such as contract fulfilment rates and stakeholder satisfaction rates, which include feedback from schools, students and employers. FocusFutures is currently exceeding targets on all of these metrics (refer to Appendix 1).</p> <p>The E2E programme is built on an event-based model tailored to meet the unique needs and expectations of stakeholders. High levels of engagement are largely due to FocusFutures' flexible and student-centred approach. For example, a secondary school representative shared with the EER team that FocusFutures was responsive to her suggestion of finding a presenter who had a similar cultural background to her students, for a presentation on nursing. FocusFutures found a suitable individual, then guided and supported him in delivering a highly successful workshop. The Year 11 boys who attended connected with the presenter, seeing themselves reflected in his story.</p> <p>Another stakeholder, the operations manager of a busy aviation sector organisation, mentioned that he prioritises guest speaker requests from FocusFutures because they have worked with him and his team to develop and deliver engaging workshops. His staff enjoy delivering these</p>

⁷ Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics and Manufacturing.

	workshops, finding them highly rewarding as they see the students benefiting from them.
Conclusion:	FocusFutures designs and delivers tailored programmes that align with the unique interests and needs of the students, schools and industry. Strong stakeholder engagement has been the cornerstone of consistently high contract performance.

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 Making Futures Happen International Institute Limited:

- Establish and maintain stronger processes to monitor, review and proactively respond to important compliance requirements.

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 1⁸

Table1. ESOL learner numbers and retention

Year	Learner numbers	Funding consumption	Retention rate	Average hours	Average teaching ratio
2020	165	103%	79%	149	10.00
2021	213	105%	73%	219	10.30
2022	190	103%	81%	255	10.60
2023	193	65%	65%	161	9.40
2024 (estimated)	136 (July YTD)	105%		200	11.20

Table 2. Annual learning hours (used to monitor learner engagement)

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total learner numbers	165	213	190	193
#Learner - learning hours < 80 (TEC)	55/33%	55/26%	39/21%	79/41%
#Learner - learning hours 81-150	51/31%	51/24%	32/17%	34/18%
#Learner - learning hours 151-300	38/23%	41/19%	33/17%	41/21%
#Learner - learning hours > 300	21/13%	66/31%	86/45%	39/20%

Table 3. E2E success metrics

Measure		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Measure A	Contract completion rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Measure B	School satisfaction rate	79%	92%	90%	95%	92%
	Student satisfaction rate	80%	94%	95%	95%	95%
	Employer satisfaction rate	80%	87%	100%	100%	100%

⁸ Data supplied by FocusFutures.

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 fraud⁹*
- *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.*

⁹ 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 2022, 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 excluding universities, and*
- maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 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, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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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