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External Evaluation and Review Report



Horizons Unlimited Limited

Date of report: 13 June 2019

About Horizons Unlimited Limited

Horizons Unlimited delivers programmes in outdoor emergency care and first aid, and adventure-based learning programmes. The latter are mainly delivered to secondary school students.¹

Type of organisation	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	215 Marine Parade, New Brighton, and 211a Rockinghorse Road, Southshore, Christchurch
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 240 students – 15.8 equivalent full-time students. ‘No students have specifically identified as Māori or Pasifika.’ 958 school students – LEOTC ² programmes under contract with the Ministry of Education International students: 13 in 2018, none currently
Number of staff:	One full-time, five part-time
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – Horizons Unlimited Limited
Last EER outcome:	In 2017, NZQA was Not Yet Confident in both Horizons Unlimited’s educational performance and in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Improvements since the 2017 EER; Training Scheme Outdoor Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Certificate; and adventure-based learning programmes for secondary school students
MoE number:	7626
NZQA reference:	C35112
Dates of EER visit:	4 and 5 April 2019

¹ Ninety-three per cent of students were secondary school students at the previous EER. No figures were available at the time of writing for this EER.

² LEOTC – Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom

Summary of Results

LEOTC programmes for Canterbury schools are providing students with a wide range of experiences, developing their 'values and key competencies'.³ Horizons is delivering first aid training in an outdoors context, providing learners with added value, for example the confidence to be first responders in remote locations.

Confident in educational performance

- Outdoor first aid students achieve well and gain contextualised knowledge and skills to apply first aid in the outdoors. Stakeholder needs are well catered for.
- Students are highly engaged in their learning and well supported to succeed in gaining both confidence and interpersonal skills as well as achieving formal assessments where appropriate.
- Teaching resources are appropriate and well maintained.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The areas of concern identified at the previous evaluation have been effectively addressed.
- Horizons has a clear purpose and direction and is building a strengthened and coordinated approach to monitoring its compliance requirements.
- An open communication style and reflective culture is evident in the management and staff, effectively supporting genuine improvements.
- Self-assessment practices are being formalised and show a good level of analysis of feedback and a planned process leading to ongoing improvements.
- There is a good level of documentation supporting the organisation's operations, but there is some room to further improve planning and records.

³ Values and key competencies - <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum>

Key evaluation question findings⁴

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>LEOTC students achieve a wide range of core values and key competencies; contributing, for example, to teambuilding, interpersonal skills, personal confidence and empathy for others. Feedback from participating schools provides consistently positive comments and commendations stating that students' experiences contribute to significant personal growth.</p> <p>The outdoors pre-hospital emergency care short courses enable students to achieve on a par with other first aid providers. Commonly, achievement rates are above 97 per cent consistently over time. Māori and Pasifika students engage and achieve at equivalent rates.</p> <p>The value of these programmes is the contextualised learning, both for school programmes and outdoor first aid programmes. These are delivered and assessed in context, for example on ropes courses, school camps or tramping situations. This is providing students with added confidence in the outdoors and in dealing with emergency situations in remote locations to provide first responder support.</p> <p>Achievement rates are validated through external moderation of assessment by the two standard-setting bodies, The Skills Organisation and Skills Active, with both noting that assessments are mostly fit for purpose (only minor changes were required) and marked at the national standard.</p> <p>Student achievement and the value of outcomes are monitored and reflected on with staff asking, 'what could we do better'. While review processes are more informal than documented,</p>

⁴ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

	the process is fit for the organisation's size and context.
Conclusion:	Students are achieving well where there is formal assessment, and are achieving significant personal growth in the LEOTC activities where there is no formal assessment. In both scenarios, students gain significant value. Self-assessment practices are effective and explore areas for improvement, but benefit may be gained from further documentation and analysis.

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>Programmes are designed and delivered with sufficient care to meet the requirements of all parties, with appropriate checks and balances for working with school students, delivering first aid, and maintaining safety in physical outdoors activities.</p> <p>Outdoor first aid is delivered in context, in the outdoors and in the bush, providing real-life situations for students to learn the limitations associated with providing first aid where immediate professional help is some distance and time away.</p> <p>The existing training scheme includes three expiring unit standards, but Horizons has gained consent to assess for the single replacement unit standard and is maintaining currency with industry good practice.</p> <p>The Horizons manager has been chair of the Outdoor Safety Auditors and maintains connections with industry bodies including NZOIA (New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Alliance) and TIA (Tourism Industry Aotearoa), providing effective connections to understand changes in the outdoors activities industry.</p> <p>Schools feedback is overall very positive. For example, 'they are always asking us what we want to achieve out of it, and how it went'.</p>
Conclusion:	Horizons has effective processes to ensure its programmes meet expectations and requirements. Formal and informal processes are used to reflect on how well the programmes meet student and client needs.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support is core to the programmes and their purpose. Student needs and school expectations are checked initially. The adventure-based learning programmes are then arranged so students are supported by a mix of Horizons' and school staff and parents, at recommended instructor-to-student ratios for the activities.</p> <p>Achievement rates for outdoor first aid short courses indicate appropriate support is provided for students to succeed.</p> <p>Time is provided on overnight camps for participants to network and provide mutual support and one-to-one feedback.</p> <p>Currently, Horizons has no international students and has put its leadership programme on hold because of insufficient student enrolments in the past.</p> <p>Documented surveys show a high level of satisfaction by participants, students and school staff. Survey comments indicate students and staff feel there is appropriate support provided.</p> <p>School staff and participants contacted by the evaluation team confirmed students are well engaged and supported.</p>
Conclusion:	Horizons provides effective and appropriate support which is ensuring students and participants can engage well and safely in their programme.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Horizons is a small organisation with a single owner-manager providing organisational oversight and management of day-to-day operations. The organisation has a clear purpose and direction, is Adventure Mark⁵ certified and listed on WorkSafe's register of adventure activity operators. The owner is actively involved in consulting within the sector, contributing to the depth of understanding of the risks and safety requirements for outdoors activities. Appropriate organisational risk management plans and specific safety management plans for outdoors activities are in place.</p> <p>Since the previous evaluation, Horizons has experienced some unexpected staff turnover, which for a small organisation has provided some challenges which have been managed effectively.</p> <p>A range of reasonably well-developed checklists, policies and processes are in place to guide operations. These have been enhanced since the previous evaluation and there is room for them to be further coordinated and developed as is common for small-to-medium enterprises. No significant gaps were in evidence at this evaluation.</p> <p>Review processes are mainly informal, reflective and intuitive, fitting the size and context of the organisation, and could gain value from further documentation for future analysis and reflection.</p>
Conclusion:	Horizons is well managed, has appropriate plans and safety registers, and its review processes are fit for purpose considering its small size and context. Further documented planning and reflection could add value.

⁵ AdventureMark™ is a JAS-ANZ accredited and WorkSafe NZ-approved certification body for its Blue AdventureMark™ Certification under the New Zealand Adventure Activities Certification Scheme.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance management items requiring improvement at the previous evaluation have been appropriately rectified by management. The one NZQA-approved Training Scheme (Outdoor Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Certificate) includes three expiring unit standards. However, Horizons has been proactive and gained consent to assess for the replacement unit standard 29321 and is delivering and assessing against this currently.</p> <p>Horizons has not supplied their Independent Assurance Practitioner's Review (IAPR) or an independent auditor's report as required by NZQA's Quality Assurance Rule 14B.1. This is in the process of being resolved.</p> <p>Trainers working with secondary schools delivering LEOTC courses have been police vetted, and appropriate risk and safety plans are in place.</p> <p>Outdoor adventure delivery sites are assessed for suitability and safety, and Horizons maintains its certification with Adventure Mark, assuring adherence to good practice guidelines.</p> <p>Horizons has engaged with The Skills Organisation and Skills Active in external moderation of assessment, most recently in 2017 when only minor adjustments were required.</p> <p>The manager acknowledged that there is room to build in further structured processes to strengthen the management of compliance and to ensure continuity of processes with staff changes.</p> <p>Formalised self-review processes could also be further strengthened to proactively identify any emerging gaps in compliance matters.</p>
Conclusion:	Horizons has addressed all areas of concern from the previous evaluation and maintained its close focus on safety and risk mitigation. There is room to further strengthen compliance management.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Improvements since the previous EER 2017

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 Focus area: Training Scheme – Outdoor Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Certificate and adventure-based learning programmes delivered to secondary school students

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

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 Horizons Unlimited Limited:

- Put into action plans to add further structure to existing compliance monitoring processes.
- Develop processes to ensure continuity in business processes when staff leave.

Appendix

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 fraud⁶*
- *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.*

⁶ 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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