

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Holistic Health Training Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 September 2015

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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.*

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of TEO:                 | Holistic Health Training Limited  |
| Type:                        | Private training establishment (PTE)  |
| First registered:            | 19 April 2004   |
| Location:                    | 33 School Road, Mahana, Upper Moutere, Nelson   |
| Delivery sites:              | As above and also:<br>Level 6, 75 Guhzyne Street, Wellington Central<br>1 Taylors Road, Morningside, Auckland<br>35 Mountfort Street, Spreydon, Christchurch<br>7c, Sixth Avenue, Tauranga  |
| Courses currently delivered: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holistic Massage Therapy (Level 3)</li><li>• Interpersonal, Communication and Practitioner Skills (Level 5)</li><li>• Applied Human Anatomy for Holistic Bodyworkers (Level 5)</li></ul> <p>In addition to the above NZQA-approved courses, Holistic Health Training delivers the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remedial (Deep Tissue) Massage Therapy</li><li>• Nutrition</li></ul> |
| Code of Practice signatory:  | No  |

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| Number of students:                 | <p>Domestic: At the time of the external evaluation and review (EER), 55 students were enrolled in the Applied Human Anatomy for Holistic Bodyworkers.</p> <p>In addition, each year approximately 12 students enrol for Holistic Massage Therapy, up to 40 students enrol for Remedial (Deep Tissue) Massage Therapy, and 37 students enrol for the Nutrition course.</p> <p>Over the period 2010 to 2015, 7.9 per cent of the students (48 out of 608) were Māori.</p> |
| Number of staff:                    | One full-time owner/director and seven part-time contracted tutors who are engaged depending on student enrolments   |
| Scope of active accreditation:      | In addition to the courses above, Holistic Health Training is accredited to deliver the Certificate in Holistic Pulsing (Level 5).   |
| Distinctive characteristics:        | The courses in Applied Human Anatomy for Holistic Bodyworkers, Nutrition, and Interpersonal, Communication and Practitioner Skills are self-paced distance education courses and have no set entry or completion dates. The massage courses are delivered nationwide via practice-based individual tutorials or small group workshops and self-directed study and assignments.   |
| Recent significant changes:         | Over recent years, Holistic Health Training has adopted a shared management model as part of a considered succession plan. Two additional tutors have been appointed since the previous EER.   |
| Previous quality assurance history: | At the previous EER (2012), NZQA was Confident in Holistic Health Training's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.  |
| Other:                              | Holistic Health Training is a small PTE founded in 2004 to deliver training to the complementary and alternative health sector. The therapeutic massage sector is unregulated, although the director is a member of the New Zealand Holistic Pulsing Guild which is the standard-setting body for that modality. Holistic Health Training is not required to submit achievement data for any funding purposes.   |

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER of Holistic Health Training included governance, management and strategy, which is a mandatory focus area. The Applied Human Anatomy for Holistic Bodyworkers course was selected because at the time of the EER visit it had the largest number of enrolments and is delivered completely by distance. The evaluators also referred to other courses, particularly Holistic Massage Therapy.

## 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. 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.*

Two evaluators visited the PTE's head office and training site in the Nelson region over a day and a half. During the visit, the evaluation team met with the director and conducted telephone interviews with four contracted tutors, five current students and three external stakeholders. In addition, a range of management, academic and support documents and data was sighted, on paper and online.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Holistic Health Training Limited**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Holistic Health Training has strong evidence of outcomes which are highly valued by learners, whānau and the wider community, and the alternative and complementary health sector.
- Learners (many of whom are mature and seeking new life directions) are enhancing their well-being and achieving individual goals, including gaining skills and knowledge for employment or community service, and/or related study. Learner achievement is consistently strong when considered in the context of individual circumstances (particularly financial and time constraints) and goals, which may not include full qualifications.
- Holistic Health Training is highly effective in meeting the needs of its learners and stakeholders. Programmes are accessible and relevant for the wider communities of interest. Massage courses have a strong focus on the clinical basis to ensure safe practice in massage therapy. The Applied Human Anatomy for Holistic Bodyworkers (anatomy and physiology) course is contextualised for complementary therapies, augmenting knowledge for those progressing from entry-level massage therapy to more advanced programmes, and is also recommended by several providers of related training to their students.
- There is good evidence of highly effective teaching and the provision of excellent guidance for students, which fosters engagement with learning and supports students to achieve their goals. Holistic Health Training has well-established, effective processes for maintaining contact with distance students and monitoring their progress.
- Holistic Health Training has management and academic policies and practices which are fit-for-purpose for an organisation of this size. Planning and review processes are informed by valid and reliable data resulting in well-considered strategies for improvement and responding to change.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Holistic Health Training Limited**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Holistic Health Training has established highly effective self-assessment which reflects the size and nature of the organisation. Information from a wide range of sources, including comprehensive learner data, is used to understand how well the organisation is meeting the needs of learners and other key stakeholders and to identify improvements to course delivery and resources.
- Since the previous EER, Holistic Health Training has made a number of improvements which are a good fit for the organisation. These include establishing a stronger evidential basis for understanding learner achievement. Metrics, such as time from enrolment to submission of the first assignment, and time taken to complete the qualification, also provide useful information for monitoring learner progress and measuring the effectiveness of improvement initiatives.
- Technology is increasingly being adopted both for academic and organisational purposes. Teaching and learning resources for the anatomy and physiology course are now available in digital format, which is proving popular with learners as well as fostering prompter submission of assignments and marking. Teaching resources include regularly updated DVDs which help learners to engage with content and supports the acquisition of practical skills. Social media tools are also proving effective for facilitating organisational communication.
- Over the past year, Holistic Health Training has become more systematic in monitoring the engagement of distance learners on a fortnightly basis. Individual learners are contacted regularly depending on the evidence of their ongoing participation and engagement with the course. This reflects good practice and is enabling Holistic Health Training to target academic support and guidance to the needs of individual learners, the value of which is reflected in learner feedback.
- The evaluation team found very good evidence of purposeful and embedded self-assessment contributing to strong educational outcomes, including regular reflections on teaching effectiveness, ongoing improvements to resources, and support systems and feedback loops for learners, tutors and stakeholders.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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 **Excellent**.

Learner achievement at Holistic Health Training is consistently strong. The finding of excellent performance reflects the organisation's knowledge of a variety of indicators of learner achievement, and the context of individual learner circumstances (particularly financial and time constraints) and goals, which may involve periods when study is suspended and may not always include full qualifications. Holistic Health Training is a small organisation which builds strong connections with learners to foster participation and achievement. The evaluation team found good evidence that this approach is effective for supporting educational performance.

Holistic Health Training has systematic processes for monitoring individual learner progress and understanding learner achievement. In addition to gaining knowledge and/or mastery of practical skills, learners (many of whom are mature and seeking new life directions) are strengthening their interpersonal skills, enhancing their health and well-being, and achieving personal goals. Measurement of interpersonal skills is integrated into assessment criteria. Other clear evidence of learner achievement was found in anecdotes, notes on student files, and written and verbal feedback from learners and stakeholders.

Since the previous EER, Holistic Health Training has strengthened data analysis, gaining a better understanding of overall learner achievement and monitoring the impact of changes. Holistic Health Training reports high rates of success for final assessments (99 per cent for holistic massage therapy) and exams (96 per cent for anatomy and physiology). Holistic Health Training reports course completion rates for the period 2010-2015 of approximately 31 per cent for the anatomy and physiology course and approximately 71 per cent for holistic massage therapy (77 per cent of Māori students completed their course over the same period). These statistics reflect the significant portion of students who opt to complete part, rather than whole, qualifications or to suspend their study programme. For the anatomy and physiology course, Holistic Health Training is also monitoring the time taken to complete the first module (up to one month for the majority of students), and to complete the whole qualification (approximately 23 months). There are some indications that these timeframes are reducing following the introduction of digital

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

teaching and learning resources. Holistic Health Training also reports that retention rates have improved following changes to payment of fees.

## 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 **Excellent**.

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

Holistic Health Training has strong evidence of outcomes which are highly valued by learners, whānau and the wider community. This evidence is gathered through personal networks, including individual learners, local communities of interest and the wider alternative and complementary health sector and providers of related training. Holistic Health Training reports that approximately 28 per cent of students enrol in more than one course, which it believes reflects the value of its training in contributing to employment or personal outcomes.

Outcomes for individual learners are recorded in Holistic Health Training's extensive database, including stories reflecting personal growth and new opportunities and lifestyle changes, including volunteer work and improved health outcomes. The anatomy and physiology course does not lead directly to employment but contributes to students achieving an essential knowledge base for other study. Two providers of related training recommend the course to their students and report excellent outcomes, including knowledge of anatomy and physiology which is contextualised for holistic complementary therapies. Holistic Health Training also reports that the programme is valued by individual learners for strengthening their knowledge base for other studies, such as advanced massage therapies, yoga or nursing. Graduate destination data is available for 78 per cent of massage therapy graduates. Of these, 67 per cent are employed part or full-time, and a further 16 per cent report whānau, community or volunteer service. The evaluation team confirmed the validity of Holistic Health Training's evidence on valued outcomes through a sampling of feedback material and stakeholder interviews.

Holistic Health Training has an established reputation within the alternative and complementary health sector for quality training. The owner and tutors maintain personal and professional networks which ensure they are alert to industry developments and well positioned to ensure the ongoing relevance and value of their educational offerings.

### 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 **Excellent**.

The evaluation team found very good evidence that Holistic Health Training is highly effective in meeting the needs of its learners and other key stakeholders. The distributed nature of the organisation and use of distance delivery methods for several courses ensure nationwide coverage and a high level of accessibility for learners. The courses are self-paced and have no set entry and completion dates. The practice-based massage courses provide opportunities for learners to build their confidence and gain mastery of practical skills through individual tuition or small group training.

The owner is well informed about sector developments, including the TRoQ (Targeted Review of Qualifications) process. She has a good understanding of the sectors' needs and is focused on ensuring the programmes offered by Holistic Health Training remain relevant to stakeholders and the wider community. Programmes reflect a commitment to strengthening the understanding of alternative healing pathways, and incorporate an emphasis on practitioners modelling healthy lifestyles (for example, in relation to smoking, alcohol and weight management). Massage courses have a focus on the clinical basis for therapeutic massage (rather than a sports or medical orientation) and foster safe practices (including cultural aspects of safety). The case study format supports learners to reflect on and track their own skills development through practice. The anatomy and physiology course is contextualised for complementary therapies, and input from content specialists is sought on a regular basis. The course also incorporates additional information relating to lifestyle and well-being (such as the management of stress). Recent improvements involving external consultation with a specialist in the field include a glossary of terms and biographical information on well-known anatomists. Stakeholders confirmed that the programme is well structured and that the assessments are thorough and comprehensive.

Teaching and learning resources for the anatomy and physiology course are now available in digital format (as well as paper), which is proving popular with learners who appreciate the variety of the material. Holistic Health Training has also noted that this change is resulting in prompter submission of assignments and marking. Holistic Health Training is a very responsive organisation regularly seeking feedback from learners and tutors, which is disseminated to all tutors for consideration. Recent improvements which have resulted from this process include revised DVDs for the massage therapy courses and the development of an improved health screening form. Holistic Health Training has recently begun to review one programme at its six-monthly workshops, which began in 2014. This systematic approach to programme review is likely to further strengthen self-assessment.

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#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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 **Excellent**.

Students at Holistic Health Training benefit from highly effective teaching by well-trained teachers who are also experienced alternative health practitioners. In addition to excellent learner achievement, evidence of teaching effectiveness includes feedback from learners who report feeling engaged and motivated, and assessment practices which are fair and robust and result in prompt and useful feedback on their progress.

Holistic Health Training has good processes which contribute to effective teaching. New tutors receive training in the course and delivery methods, including recorded sessions and co-teaching. The teaching team communicates regularly by phone and online, to share information and ideas as well as learner feedback. Teaching performance is reviewed through observations and performance appraisals. There is good evidence of reflective practice by individuals, as well as group reflections during the six-monthly workshops. At the November 2014 workshop, session moderation of the practical assessment for the holistic massage therapy course was conducted by an external specialist. The process was robust, involving both individual and group feedback and discussion, resulting in improvements such as revised performance criteria. All participants confirmed the value of the process for reinforcing consistent standards and practice across the team.

The anatomy and physiology course is solely delivered by the director. She accesses external content specialists, which is useful for ensuring the currency of content, as well as providing professional supervision. The quality of the learning materials, together with excellent guidance and support for distance enrolees, provides a very good basis for learning and ensures close attention is paid to student progress. Systematic sharing of knowledge on this programme is planned as part of the organisation's succession plan.

#### 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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 **Excellent**.

Holistic Health Training has an excellent understanding of the characteristics of the learners which underpins the provision of highly effective guidance and support. Because of the organisation's small size, tutors at Holistic Health Training know all their learners and communicate with them all regularly. The evaluation team noted that study advice and assessment feedback is often leavened with encouragement,

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personal stories and humour. This creates strong connections between learners and tutors, which motivates learners and fosters personal growth and enhanced well-being which are important outcomes for many learners.

Holistic Health Training's website provides clear information which ensures prospective students understand the nature and content of the courses, as well as the likely time commitments. A study guide for distance learners offers practical tips for success. The organisation's quality management system and information for students is regularly reviewed and updated. Holistic Health Training is responsive to the well-being needs of learners. Students with physical or learning challenges are supported through written assignments. Additional opportunities for case studies and practice are made available for learners as required. While there are no set entry or completion dates, support and encouragement is provided to students to complete courses within target timeframes (24 months for anatomy and physiology and six months for holistic massage therapy). However, Holistic Health Training is supportive and flexible in facilitating suspension and reactivation of study to accommodate students' personal circumstances, including fees remission.

The PTE is responsive to learners' stated preferences for ongoing support and contact. During 2014, Holistic Health Training strengthened its contact processes for the anatomy and physiology course which is proving effective in reducing isolation and fostering engagement. Holistic Health Training is also extending the use of social media to communicate with learners.

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

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 **Excellent**.

Holistic Health Training's effectiveness in supporting learner achievement is underpinned by a strong organisational culture and shared educational philosophy. Over recent years, Holistic Health Training has adopted a shared management model as part of a considered succession plan, which is leading to increased collegiality and contractors taking leadership on specific projects. There is frequent and open communication between the owner and contractors (by email and on social media). The six-monthly workshops provide valuable opportunities for in-depth consideration of all aspects of educational and organisational performance and to strengthen consistency of practice across the tutorial team. Topics for discussion and improvements emerge from feedback and engagement with stakeholders and the wider sector.

Holistic Health Training is a robust and future-focused organisation which is responding well to change including several new programme initiatives which are consistent with the organisation's other educational offerings and market demand.

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Holistic Health Training actively gathers and responds to feedback, and a weekly review of issues and feedback is circulated to all tutors. Data on learner progress and achievement is systematically reviewed every three months which enables issues to be identified and addressed promptly. Taken together, there is good evidence that Holistic Health Training is a reflective organisation focused on improving the educational achievement of its learners.

There is good evidence that Holistic Health Training has responded well to the previous EER report, leading to higher confidence in the organisation's self-assessment capability. Examples include improved collation and analysis of data as a basis for understanding learner achievement, enhanced monitoring of the engagement of distance learners, and increased use of technology for academic and organisational purposes. Holistic Health Training is actively using data to determine the effectiveness of changes and to identify further initiatives. Self-assessment activities are themselves reviewed for their usefulness. A monthly reporting process was discarded as adding little value for improvement. Overall, the evaluation team found very good evidence of purposeful and embedded self-assessment contributing to strong educational outcomes.

## 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 **Excellent**.

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

### 2.2 Focus area: Applied Anatomy and Physiology (Level 5)

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

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

# Recommendations

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

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are 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.*

*Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which 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.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 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 and/or 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.*

*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](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

*The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.*

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