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External Evaluation and Review Report

Avatar Education Limited (trading as
Avatar Institute of Learning)

Date of report: 20 June 2022

About Avatar Education Limited (trading as Avatar Institute of Learning)

Avatar Institute of Learning (Avatar) provides work-integrated learning specialising in residential aged care and clinical practice. It is accredited by the Nursing Council of New Zealand to deliver the Competency Assessment Programmes (CAP) to overseas-trained nurses.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	20 Pohutukawa Place, Bell Block, New Plymouth
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic (2022): eight (two Māori) International (2022): 31
Number of staff:	One full-time; three part-time
TEO profile:	See: Avatar profile on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In 2018, NZQA was highly confident in Avatar's educational performance and its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All currently delivered programmes – Healthcare Level 2 (ID 119586-1), leading to the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2) [Ref: 2469-1]; Healthcare Level 3 (ID 121158-1), leading to the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 3) [Ref: 2470-1]; Competency Assessment Programme• International Student Support and Wellbeing
MoE number:	7687
NZQA reference:	C48738
Dates of EER visit (virtual):	26 and 27 April 2022

Summary of results

Avatar's high achievement and effective programme delivery and management are underpinned by a robust and meaningful self-assessment. There is strong evidence of an organisation committed to continuous improvement and to supporting students' achievement and wellbeing.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Avatar has strong completion rates overall, particularly in CAP, with evidence of parity in achievement between student groups. The PTE delivers programmes that address skills shortages in the New Zealand health care sector – the value it provides to the country, community and its students is undisputable. Employers confirmed that graduates enter the workforce work-ready, with a solid foundation and understanding of the New Zealand health care environment.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Avatar's delivery of its programme within an aged care facility is beneficial to students in that they are exposed to a real-life setting and facilities from day one. The programme design and delivery are effective in meeting the needs of students and stakeholders.

Avatar provides a high level of support to the students, from pre-enrolment to employment. Students interviewed confirmed that the PTE goes above and beyond in supporting them both academically and pastorally.

Through its open, inclusive leadership, efficient operation and robust self-assessment and decision making, the governance and management team significantly supports educational achievement. Staff are valued and provided with opportunities to develop professionally.

Key compliance accountabilities are managed well.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Avatar students have been achieving well over the past four years. For CAP, the completion rate was 100 per cent for 2018-20, and 99 per cent in 2021. The sole student who did not complete withdrew from the programme early on due to personal and health issues. Avatar supported the student during their short stay at the PTE.</p> <p>For Healthcare Levels 2 and 3, achievement is likewise strong, with 25 of 31 students gaining the level 2 qualification in the last four years, and nine of 12 students completing level 3 in 2018-19.² Enrolment numbers for Māori and Pasifika, as well as under-25s, are too small to draw valid conclusions through percentages, but raw data indicates that they achieve as well as the rest of the student population.</p> <p>Students gain a solid theory and practical foundation, and confidence to work in a health care environment. Overseas-trained nurses (i.e. CAP students) learn about the New Zealand culture and health care system, making them work-ready as soon as they leave the programme.</p> <p>Avatar has a good understanding of its achievement and non-achievement and the factors affecting this, and supports the learners to progress as much as possible within the programmes. It has a methodical system in place to consistently monitor and analyse achievement, and the data that the PTE gains assists in their decisions regarding student support and programme improvement.</p>

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

² See Appendix 1. Note that there were no new enrolments for Healthcare Level 3 in 2020 due to the pandemic lockdown and alert levels. In 2021, students were enrolled fees free with Careerforce.

Conclusion:	Achievement is strong, with evidence of parity between various student demographics. Avatar has a comprehensive system in place to understand and support achievement.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There is strong evidence of the value that Avatar provides to its students and stakeholders. As a provider training overseas-trained nurses, Avatar contributes to addressing the critical need for a skilled workforce in the health care sector. Graduates become registered nurses and health care workers and gain relevant employment.</p> <p>CAP graduates are given tools to understand the New Zealand culture and health care system, and gain the confidence to work as registered nurses in this country. This provides a pathway for the nurses to gain New Zealand residency.</p> <p>The Healthcare graduates gain a solid foundation to become caregivers (level 2) or healthcare assistants (level 3). The health care and aged care sector benefit from the skilled, work-ready graduates produced by Avatar.</p> <p>Self-assessment in this area is well-thought through and meaningful. Avatar conducts graduate and employer surveys, although the process and response rate can be challenging at times given the huge workload in the sector. Feedback from the participants prompted Avatar to think of other means of gathering information about valued outcomes. Graduate case studies, which Avatar now gathers and analyses, is evidence of how the PTE addresses challenges in self-assessment. This has allowed Avatar to obtain more valuable information about the value of the programmes and the graduates meeting the graduate profile outcomes. Avatar continuously considers alternative approaches to engage both graduates and stakeholders to obtain their input on valued outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	Avatar plays an important role in providing a skilled workforce to the health care sector. Monitoring and analysis of valued outcomes is meaningful.

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>Programme structure and delivery – blended, but with more emphasis on hands-on learning – is effective in engaging students and meeting the stakeholders’ need for confident, skilled health care workers. A solid foundation is provided through both the theory and practical components of the programme. Avatar’s proximity to a retirement village (its sister company), both physically and in operations, is highly beneficial. It provides students with exposure to a real-life setting, which makes for an effective learning environment. The Skills Lab, a training/simulation facility inside the retirement village, ensures students get to train in a safe environment before their exposure to real patients.</p> <p>The tutors are registered nurses and well-connected in the industry. Their currency in practice³ feeds into the programme, ensuring its relevance. The use of external subject matter experts on a regular basis, for example in areas such as manual handling and cultural awareness, contributes to the robustness of the programmes.</p> <p>Assessment methods are appropriate, with timely and constructive feedback from assessors. Avatar’s internal moderation system is sound, with a clear feedback system providing information guiding continued review. External moderation results from the relevant WDC⁴ show no concerns. For CAP, Avatar partners with another organisation to conduct moderation activities, the results of which have been positive.</p> <p>Programme review occurs regularly – informally through daily team interaction, and formally through the comprehensive annual reports submitted to the director and the Nursing Council (for CAP).</p>

³ All CAP tutorial staff hold a Nursing Council annual practicing certificate (APC).

⁴ Workforce Development Council

Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery provides an effective environment for learning for the students, ensuring they come out of the programme with competencies required in the industry. Avatar consistently and comprehensively reviews its programmes for relevance.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support – both academic and pastoral – at Avatar is strong and authentic, as confirmed by graduates and students interviewed for this EER. A number of examples were provided to the evaluation team showing that Avatar is highly responsive to the needs of students, and goes above and beyond in supporting them. Prompt and clear guidance is given even prior to enrolment, and continues throughout the programme. Information provided to students is accurate and wide-ranging, i.e. covering all key areas regarding living as well as studying in New Zealand. A dedicated student support staff provides day-to-day assistance.</p> <p>The provision of private accommodation to students immediately addresses student needs and removes any stress of looking for accommodation, which means students can focus on academic matters. Accommodation is part of the package for international students, and as such a stronger care of duty is provided by Avatar given this arrangement.</p> <p>Tutors are always available should students need extra support in their learning. Students with learning differences are given one-on-one tutorials when needed, and also given the option to sit assessments orally while the tutor handwrites their answers. During the students’ practical learning at the aged care facilities, the tutor visits weekly to check on their progress and understand any concerns they have. In addition, mental wellbeing is a focus for Avatar.</p> <p>As in other areas of its operation, Avatar has a thoughtful, reflective practice when it comes to student support, ensuring that they reflect on the effectiveness of the support they provide to the students. Aside from the Code of Practice self-review, which Avatar has fully embraced, the PTE also conducts risk</p>

	management reporting and situation reporting. This ensures they reflect on what happened, identify triggers and the lessons learned, and use these to ensure they have ready tools for when a similar untoward situation happens again. Feedback from students is gathered both formally (i.e. through surveys and interviews) and informally (i.e. regular chats), and this is included in the regular reporting to the director.
Conclusion:	The high level of academic and pastoral support to students is underpinned by robust self-assessment.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Avatar's location within and close links to an aged care facility under the same ownership means that students get the benefit of being exposed to real-life settings.</p> <p>It is evident that the director is passionate about the aged care/health care sector. With a background in caregiving, she has a clear vision for the PTE as well as the retirement village, and has ongoing, long-term plans for their development.</p> <p>The management team are well-experienced, have good synergy and are passionate about their work. The tutorial staff are highly qualified and experienced in their fields. The small size of the organisation means collaboration and cooperation are easy and natural at all levels. The inclusive leadership style of the governance and management team makes staff feel valued and heard, and professional development is well thought out and encouraged.</p> <p>Organisational self-assessment is robust, and data is used effectively in decision making, most particularly at the governance and management level.</p> <p>There is strong evidence of business viability. Avatar delivers programmes that are crucial to addressing a skills shortage in this country. The Nursing Council has provided Avatar with</p>

	<p>additional slots to accept more CAP students, who come into New Zealand under a critical purpose visa.⁵</p> <p>Avatar keeps a close eye on developments in the sector. Their updated operational plan and new programme development are just some of the examples of innovation and adaptability to change.</p>
Conclusion:	Avatar's governance and management team, through its open, inclusive leadership, efficient operation and robust self-assessment and decision making, significantly supports educational achievement.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Avatar has effective systems in place to manage its key compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>A comprehensive monitoring system is in place to ensure compliance requirements are met with regard to international students, such as passport and visa expiry, appropriate insurance coverage, English language proficiency requirements, and evidence of Covid vaccination (a more recent requirement as a result of the pandemic). All other requirements of the Code of Practice, such as the emergency contact and designated pastoral care support person, accurate information to students, and adequate accommodation, are fully met by Avatar.</p> <p>Most of the NZQA compliance requirements are submitted in a timely manner, including annual attestations and credit reporting. The Fit and Proper Person attestations for all governing members have been submitted, with some of them not as timely as the others.</p> <p>Avatar has participated in moderation as required by the relevant industry training organisation. The PTE's programmes</p>

⁵ A critical purpose visa is issued to those who have a critical purpose to travel to New Zealand. Holders of this visa can travel to New Zealand even though the border is closed (e.g. during Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns). <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/about-visa/critical-purpose-visitor-visa>

	<p>are delivered as approved by NZQA, for instance the approved learning hours, and delivery and assessment methods.</p> <p>Oversight of compliance accountabilities is shared among the management team, and there are checks to ensure no key responsibility is missed out.</p> <p>Self-review of the Code of Practice involves other staff members, making the activity more meaningful and robust. Compliance management is a regular agenda item in meetings with the director – the latter is mindful of ensuring the PTE is meeting all its key compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>As a key stakeholder of Avatar, the Nursing Council conducts regular accreditation monitoring, which confirms that Avatar’s CAP is strong and meets Council requirements. It is noted that NZQA and the Nursing Council are currently in discussion to ensure that CAP is compliant with the Education Act. Avatar has applied to NZQA to have their CAP approved as a micro-credential, and was recently granted approval.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Avatar manages its key compliance accountabilities well.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: All currently delivered programmes (Healthcare Level 2, Healthcare Level 3, and Competency Assessment Programme)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Focus area: International Student Support and Wellbeing

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.

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

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. Achievement and outcomes for Healthcare Level 2

Year	Enrolled	Completed	Did not complete	Progression	
				Employment	NZ Cert L3
2021	4	3	0	3	3
2020	9	8	1	8	5
2019	13	9	4	12	6
2018	5	5	0	5	Nil

Table 2. Achievement and outcomes for Healthcare (Level 3)

Year	Enrolled	Completed	Did not complete	Progression-related employment
2021	Not offered by Avatar*			
2020	No new enrolments**			
2019	7	5	2	5
2018	5	4	1	5

*Students were enrolled fees free with Careerforce.

**Due to lockdown and alert levels.

Source: Avatar Programme Evaluation Reports – Healthcare Level 2 and Level 3 (2017-2021)

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 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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