

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Queenstown Resort College

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 19 June 2013

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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:	Queenstown Resort College (QRC)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Head office, QRC House, 7 Coronation Drive, Queenstown
Delivery sites:	Main delivery site Coronation Drive as above Training Restaurant and Halls of Residence, 1 Sainsbury Rd, Fernhill, Queenstown
First registered:	18 May 2005
Programmes currently delivered:	Diploma in Hospitality Management (Level 5) Diploma in Adventure Tourism Management (Level 5)
Code of Practice signatory	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 305 full-time students, 5.2 per cent Māori, 2.1 per cent Pasifika International: 99 full-time students
Number of staff:	33 full-time equivalents (some part-time)
Scope of active accreditation:	No Consent to Assess within the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)
Distinctive characteristics:	QRC is primarily focussed on hospitality and adventure tourism management. The hospitality programme is delivered under agreement with The International College of Management Sydney (ICMS) and Hotelconsult Colleges Switzerland

César Ritz.

Recent significant changes:	Nil
Previous quality assurance history:	The most recent quality review of QRC was an audit in 2009, when all requirements were met, except one regarding late submission of attestations for 2009. Subsequent attestations have been received by NZQA within the required times.
Other:	<p>QRC received the New Zealand Tertiary Provider of the Year 2012 from NZAPEP (New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers).</p> <p>QRC was also awarded the Supreme Business Award 2012 (Queenstown Business Excellence Awards).</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

This external evaluation and review included the Diploma in Hospitality Management (Level 5), one of two diplomas offered at QRC. Governance, management and strategy, and international student support were also included as mandatory focus areas.

QRC also offers a Diploma in Adventure Tourism Management and a range of other short courses from time to time to meet demand from local Queenstown businesses and organisations. The hospitality diploma was chosen as the focus area because it attracts the majority of student enrolments.

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.*

A team of two evaluators visited QRC for two full days, visiting the main site as well as the halls of residence and training restaurant. Meetings were held with the chief executive and members of the senior management team, the chair and members of the board, a group of teachers and two groups of students. Members of the industry advisory group and other employers were interviewed by phone. The

evaluators were also provided with access to a range of the organisation's documents, records and electronic database.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Queenstown Resort College**.

QRC has comprehensive and convincing evidence that it is delivering programmes of high value to its students and industry. Students are completing individual courses and qualifications and securing employment in the industry associated with their study at consistently high rates. For the years 2010 and 2011, overall course completion rates were 94 and 95 per cent respectively; Diploma in Hospitality Management qualification completion rates were 88 and 87 per cent. Graduate employment rates for 2011 and 2012 were 83 and 90 per cent respectively. Between 6 and 14 per cent of graduates enrol in further education, such as at ICMS or the University of Otago. These achievement rates are significantly above the sector medians.¹ There is greater demand from employers specifically for graduates from QRC than are available.

Students are closely monitored for their presentation and professionalism, including attendance and communication with the college through a 'Professional Excellence' points system. This is seen by students and employers as an effective process for developing the key attitudes and skills that enable them to secure employment. Hospitality students spend 1,000 hours during their course on paid internships and many students receive offers of employment after graduation as a result. The high employment rate is one indicator of the success of the Professional Excellence system. Students also receive close attention to their individual needs, for example in their first year at the halls of residence, and in terms of academic needs through small class sizes.

QRC has ensured that its programmes remain current with industry best practice through its regular contact with industry via student placements on internships, as well as active industry advisory boards and management engagement with key industry associations. The Diploma in Hospitality Management is internationally recognised and delivered under agreement with ICMS and Hotelconsult Colleges Switzerland, César Ritz. The international standing of the qualification is a key factor in graduates gaining employment in hotels worldwide.

QRC is well resourced for the two programmes currently offered, with a purpose-built head office and delivery site, well-experienced staff and appropriate learning resources. The design and moderation of academic assessment is well planned

¹ Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) published educational performance data (EPI) www.tec.govt.nz. Qualification figures noted above are QRC figures, because their level 5 diplomas are completed over two years (rather than one as reported in TEC EPI data), and QRC has increasing enrolments; both factors lead to the TEC published qualification rates to be below the sector medians for 2010 and 2011.

and monitored, and evidence sighted at this evaluation provided assurance that student achievements are valid and reliable.

QRC is clearly meeting the most important needs of its learners and industry stakeholders, and has sound contributing processes supporting its learning and teaching functions.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Queenstown Resort College**.

QRC has effective self-assessment practices which provide the organisation with a good range of quantitative and qualitative data on the performance of the two diplomas currently offered, and how well it is meeting the needs of its stakeholders and learners. The organisation is using this data to analyse its overall educational performance and to make meaningful improvements to its learning and teaching programmes, for example by introducing tutorials for students who were struggling with an accounting paper, resulting in improved grades and pass rates.

The organisation has recently invested in a new student management system which has significantly improved reporting functionality. While the previous student management system provided QRC with the ability to track and analyse student achievement and progress, the new system has the potential for QRC to review and analyse its performance in greater detail than previously, for example to internally benchmark performance between the two diplomas, or to produce reports against a range of measures such as reviewing student achievements over time and by gender, or reviewing relative achievements for domestic and international students. The advantage of this is the potential to improve the monitoring of equity of outcomes across all enrolments and to better target those students requiring extra support.

There are well-established processes for tracking individual student's achievements, and because of the relatively high course and graduation achievement rates, QRC has focused on the few students who are not graduating or gaining employment. This approach has been largely appropriate for the organisation's current size and complexity. However, as noted above, utilising the reporting functionality of the new student management system is likely to improve overall organisational self-assessment practices in the future.

QRC has regular, ongoing contact with industry, providing it with the ability to arrange student internships in the hospitality industry both within New Zealand and in overseas establishments, in many cases leading to students gaining employment on graduation. The level and nature of industry contact is to some extent a function of the small population base and close commercial environment of the Queenstown area. QRC management and staff were able to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of industry needs and trends. The organisation's self-assessment processes in this area are based on personal relationships, regular industry contact with hospitality

operators within New Zealand and overseas, and with key national industry associations, and are fit for purpose. QRC recognises that there is potential for these processes to be strengthened, for example with more complete documentation for future detailed analysis of patterns or trends.

QRC currently has a good level of knowledge of how well it is meeting the needs of stakeholders, including learners overall. The organisation is actively developing processes to inform its self-assessment with richer, more nuanced data for further analysis, to more closely address needs and make further improvements to its programmes and processes.

Findings²

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**.

Student achievement rates are at a consistently high level, and overall graduation rates have been consistently increasing since 2007. Overall course completion rates from 2009 to 2011 (2012 data not yet confirmed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)), are 85 per cent, 95 per cent and 94 per cent respectively, significantly above the sector median rates. The TEC published median achievement rates for the same years are 74 per cent, 81 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. These course achievement rates indicate that students are highly motivated and well supported to succeed. Qualification achievement rates are similarly high. QRC figures show that in 2010 and 2011, 89 per cent and 85 per cent respectively of students graduated.³ These achievement rates are significantly above the sector medians, and are consistently high achievements and high-value academic and employment results. Graduate employment rates for 2011 and 2012 are 83 per cent and 90 per cent respectively. Further, between 6 per cent and 14 per cent of graduates enrol in further or higher education, such as at ICMS or the University of Otago.

Throughout this evaluation, there was evidence that students are gaining highly relevant key skills, knowledge and attributes critical to gaining and keeping employment in their chosen industry. To build and support these achievements, QRC operates a Professional Excellence programme which places clear expectations on students, for example for attendance, timeliness, presentation and professional attitudes. The organisation's self-assessment of the success of the Professional Excellence programme indicates that it is a key factor in students gaining employment within New Zealand and overseas. This was confirmed to the evaluators in interviews with students, staff and stakeholders, including employers.

The organisation's self-assessment focuses on individual student's needs and their progress through their programmes, and includes analysis of overall performance within each diploma. In general terms, QRC has a clear picture of students' achievements and progress through their qualifications. As noted in the summary above, the recently implemented new student management system is facilitating further analysis of achievement data to build a more detailed picture of

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ See footnote 1.

achievement, for example benchmarking across courses, tutors or achievement by gender or ethnicity, may provide for more robust and nuanced evaluation and review.

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**.

Students and employers gain significant value from QRC. The key indicator of this is the high number of graduates gaining employment in the industry related to their study. As noted in section 1.1 above, over the last two years between 83 and 90 per cent of graduates gained employment, and the hospitality industry within New Zealand and some premier overseas hotel chains seek QRC graduates specifically because they have the right skills and attitudes and perform well. This is confirmation that programmes are meeting student and industry needs. QRC collects employer feedback from students' internships, and this, together with on-going day-to-day contact with local Queenstown businesses, is used to make adjustments to programmes and update course content, ensuring that students are well prepared for employment and have knowledge and skills that are in line with current best practice. Recent improvements to meet industry current practice have included, for example, industry guest speakers, visits to industry and case studies. The organisation is in the process of developing an alumni website to connect with graduates and build a longer-term profile of graduate outcomes.

Students develop professional attitudes and skills through QRC's Professional Excellence programme. Insufficient improvement can lead to suspension from the college. Professional Excellence is seen by students and employers as an effective process for facilitating students to gain employment.

QRC is closely involved with its local Queenstown community. The chief executive is currently the head of the Queenstown Chamber of Commerce and students are involved in the local community, such as through providing hospitality support for fundraising events. The evaluators noted through interviews with all parties, including employers, that QRC is held in high respect by its community.

The organisation has detailed information, for example on the number of students gaining employment following graduation, and similarly has close links with and regular feedback from employers following internships. The organisation is also developing its capability to review and analyse this information for patterns and trends over time. This is likely to lead to further improvements in the programme and links with industry.

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 needs of both students and industry are matched to a high degree. This was evidenced throughout this evaluation, for example via the student enrolment interview processes, employer offers of internships and employer demand for QRC graduates exceeding supply.

QRC's enrolment processes include appropriate English language checks for international students, and interviews to determine applicants' passion for the industry. Student surveys and internship reports are reviewed by QRC, to determine how well students' and internship employers' needs are matched, and these show a high level of satisfaction in both cases.

In recognition of the tight accommodation market in Queenstown, the organisation offers accommodation in its halls of residence for students' first year of enrolment. This not only meets students' needs for accommodation but also provides a venue for new students to study, meet and socialise with other students. In their second year, students have been able to arrange their own accommodation within Queenstown.

Two industry advisory groups, with members from local businesses related to hospitality and adventure tourism, meet regularly and contribute to programme content with advice on current industry trends. Members of these groups were interviewed at this evaluation and noted that QRC takes account of their input and appropriate programme changes are made in response. While detailed records are kept of industry advisory group meetings and issues arising, it was less clear how well the organisation is monitoring the effectiveness of these groups within its self-assessment practices.

QRC offers programmes that are very well matched to industry needs, as evidenced by the offers for internships and offers of employment to graduates of the hospitality diploma. The Diploma in Hospitality Management is internationally recognised and delivered under agreement with ICMS and Hotelconsult Colleges Switzerland, César Ritz, which is one factor in graduates gaining employment in hotels worldwide. The Professional Excellence programme, with its focus on professionalism, also contributes to successfully preparing students to match industry expectations of skills, knowledge, attitudes and ability to work productively in the industry.

QRC is delivering its programmes as approved by NZQA, and is matching the Ministry of Education's requirements under the Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of International Students (Code of Practice).

The organisation has well-established self-assessment processes to monitor how well students and industry needs are matched, and improvements are made on an ongoing basis, such as introducing student focus groups to complement the online surveys, providing a more holistic process to capture student comment. Currently, industry input and feedback is based mainly on daily contact and personal relationships. This is fit for purpose and appropriate in Queenstown. However, a more structured approach to document industry anecdotes and input may add value to self-assessment in this area. QRC management has regular contact and engagement with key industry associations, such as the Tourism Industry Association, and has been invited to provide input, for example, to the current Adventure Tourism Review.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

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

QRC's self-assessment analysis shows that learning and teaching at QRC is effective as measured across all courses. This was evidenced by the high course achievement rates, high student satisfaction rates and the high employment rates in industry related positions. Teachers interviewed at this evaluation discussed using a variety of approaches to identify and address individual student's needs, and a high level of rapport and respect was evident between staff and students.

The new student management system is providing more fine-grained data for analysis and improved reporting functionality, and given QRC's past performance, this is likely to contribute to further enhancements in student achievement and teaching effectiveness.

The tutors have extensive industry experience and all have, or are in the process of gaining, qualifications in adult education. The organisation has appropriate, regular and planned in-house professional development sessions twice per term, and these regularly incorporate matters raised by student evaluations, such as improved feedback on assignments and reflections to reinforce past lessons. There is a range of formal and informal performance appraisal processes applied across the staff, but the organisation may be vulnerable if aspects of less effective teaching are not identified.

QRC has a robust and effective process to moderate its assessments, ensuring the validity of assessments and the consistency of markers' decisions. Staff and programme managers are conversant with, and aware of, the organisation's processes for the moderation of assessment.

The organisation monitors and reviews the effectiveness of learning and teaching by tracking student and industry satisfaction and feedback, student achievements and feedback from internships. Student feedback includes online student surveys,

student focus groups and day-to-day interactions with students. The addition of focus groups was a noted recent improvement which has provided QRC with more holistic or complete feedback from students. Staff interviewed at this evaluation noted that, 'students expect high quality at this institution; they expect good teaching; they talk to us'. The opportunities for improvement are, as noted above, related to performance appraisals and utilising the improved student management system to broadening the analysis of achievement performance beyond the organisational level, as already discussed.

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**.

QRC provides a high level of individual attention, care and support to its domestic and international students. Some aspects of this have already been noted in this report.

Comprehensive information is made available to enrolling students via the QRC website and printed material, such as a student handbook and accommodation information regarding the halls of residence. The accommodation provides a family atmosphere with on-site managers who arrange and coordinate social activities within the halls of residence and the wider central Otago district. Staff and students interviewed at this evaluation commented on the effectiveness of this in bonding the student group and building peer support.

The organisation has a robust internal review process to monitor its compliance and effectiveness in addressing the letter and spirit of the Code of Practice. No matters or concerns came to the attention of the evaluators at this evaluation.

Students are often involved in the local community through providing hospitality services on occasions such as at fundraising events. This was acknowledged by staff and students as contributing to both the students' and the community's well-being.

Students are particularly well supported and prepared for entering hospitality, the industry programme focus of this evaluation. As already noted, the focus on developing professional excellence provides effective support for students to gain employment. This is supplemented with other activities such as mock interviews and support to prepare a curriculum vitae.

There was good evidence available at this evaluation of staff being proactive in identifying student needs early in the programme and providing appropriate support, for example through the Professional Excellence monitoring or connecting students with external professional support when required.

The organisation's processes to evaluate how well it supports its students are strong and consistent, and no significant gaps were identified.

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**.

QRC has clear goals and objectives, a comprehensive quality management system, clear management structures and evidence of effective management and governance, clearly focused on developing and resourcing a high-performing educational institution. The high rate of student graduation and employment is evidence of this. Educational achievement is monitored by exception, in part because of the high achievement rates being achieved; there are few students who do not succeed. There was clear evidence at this evaluation that this approach is effective for the organisation's current size and complexity. However, with any growth in the number of programmes or students, wider monitoring processes may need to be developed to ensure emerging issues are identified early on.

One opportunity for improvement identified at this evaluation is related to the organisation's capability in self-assessment. As noted in this report, the organisation has self-assessment practices that are well embedded in the culture and practices of the organisation and are fit for purpose for its size and context. The opportunities for improvement, as already noted, are related to increasing the documentation or formality of some self-assessment practices, for example documenting industry feedback from the day-to-day interactions with local industry, improving the consistency of staff performance appraisals, and review and analysis of student achievements across courses, cohorts or ethnicity. The benefit of the documentation would be to improve the objectivity of the self-assessment and help establish patterns and trends across courses.

The organisation is very well resourced in terms of buildings as well as educational, physical and learning resources. The new student management system is providing the potential for QRC to review and analyse its performance in greater detail than previously, with reporting functions to better inform management on matters such as student achievement and organisational performance.

All parties interviewed at this evaluation, including students, staff, management, members of the board and external stakeholders, including employers, provided a consistent picture of a highly respected organisation, not only in its local region of Queenstown but also beyond New Zealand. This was further evidenced by graduates being sought by leading international hotel chains in numbers greater than QRC can provide.

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: International student support

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Diploma in Hospitality Management (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

NZQA recommends that Queenstown Resort College:

- Continue to strengthen processes to collect and document industry feedback for self-assessment
- Continue to build staff capability to review and analyse educational performance across a range of factors to identify patterns and trends
- Continue to develop a reflective culture within the organisation to support self-assessment as 'business as usual'.

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).

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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