

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Dairy Training Limited

Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 17 July 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:	Dairy Training Limited (DTL)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Corner Ruakura and Morrinsville Roads, Hamilton
Delivery sites:	DTL delivers training in a variety of community facilities in localities that are within close proximity of learners. Presently this includes Edgecumbe, Feilding, Hamilton, Morrinsville, Opunake, Otorohanga, Putaruru, Stratford, Te Awamutu, Whangarei
First registered:	5 August 2005
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Farming Skills (General Skills) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Agriculture (Feeding and Pastures) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Dairy Farming (Animal Health and Husbandry) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Agriculture (Dairy Cattle Breeding) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Agriculture (Dairy Farming) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Production Management (Level 5)• National Certificate in Agribusiness Management (Business Planning and

	Financial Management) (Level 5)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Certificate in Agribusiness Management (Physical Resource Management) (Level 5) • National Diploma in Agribusiness (Level 5)
Code of Practice signatory?:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 650 part-time trainees per year (programmes are typically one day of education every four weeks)
Number of staff:	Two full-time equivalents management/administration Four full-time equivalent tutors (comprising more than 20 individuals)
Scope of active accreditation:	Accreditation to deliver Agriculture to level 6
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>DTL delivers 'off-farm' learning components for trainees registered with the Primary Industry Training Organisation (Primary ITO). This means DTL is delivering only a portion of the training required for learners to attain national qualifications, which are awarded by the ITO (the other portion being workplace learning).</p> <p>Off-farm learning can generally be considered the theoretical aspect of qualifications. However, learning is also highly integrated with the practical learning experiences, and requires the application of practical learning towards the successful completion of modules.</p> <p>DTL provides this service on contract to Primary ITO. The ITO maintains overall responsibility for (a) enrolling and accepting trainees; (b) provision of overall support to trainees via training advisors; (c) the development of key learning resources and assessment tools, including assessment moderation; (d) facilitating on-farm learning opportunities for trainees with employers; and (e) the awarding of qualifications to trainees.</p>
Recent significant changes:	DTL, in partnership with Primary ITO, and Waikato Institute of Technology (WINTEREC), is trialling a

new means of delivering the National Diploma in Agriculture (Level 5). Under this proposal, some level 5 learners will be enrolled with WINTEC, while DTL will deliver modular off-farm training programmes and the ITO will provide student support via training advisors.

The enrolment with WINTEC would enable a greater level of support resourcing to be provided, and allow learners access to facilities at that institution. This approach was still being trialled at the time of the external evaluation and review, and could result in significant ongoing changes to delivery by DTL. (Under this approach, learners will be funded via the Student Achievement Component equivalent full-time student fund rather than via Standard Training Measure funding sourced by the ITO.)

Previous quality assurance history:	NZQA last quality assured DTL by audit in 2009. At that time DTL met all requirements of the then quality standard. DTL received an industry-based quality mark called AgExcel in 2011, and this was confirmed again in 2012.
Other:	DTL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dairy NZ and is co-located at the head office. This relationship allows DTL to access resources designed for dairy farmers – for example dairy farm financial forecasting tools – and draw on these in learning settings.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review was:

- Governance, management and strategy
- Level 4 and level 5 programmes of delivery

At the time of this report, governance, management and strategy was a mandatory focus area. Level 4 and 5 programmes were selected because these programmes represent DTL's higher-level and more extensive programmes.

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.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators. The team visited DTL on 16 and 17 April 2013. During the visit the evaluation team met with:

- The two directors (non-executive)
- Chief executive and administration manager
- Tutors (eight part-time staff of the level 4 programme and one tutor of the level 5 programme)
- Learners (one level 5 class of 12, one level 4 class of 17)
- Two representatives from Primary ITO.

The evaluation team also contacted via telephone other key ITO staff, an independent sector consultant and staff at Dairy NZ involved in education. The evaluation team is confident that these people interviewed (in person or by telephone) represent a comprehensive range of DTL stakeholders.

During the course of the evaluation, the team also received, and undertook a succinct overview analysis of, key documentation provided by DTL. This included quality management documents, Board minutes, strategic planning documentation, management reports to the Board, staff meeting minutes, course delivery information (including 2013 planning), moderation reports, an internal audit summary, student records, student evaluations, graduate outcome information, student assessments and other learning materials. These materials were in addition to the summary of self-assessment (and related documents) provided prior to the site visit. All of these documents contribute to the findings of this evaluation and review.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Dairy Training Limited (DTL)**.

This evaluation found good evidence that DTL is meeting many of the most important needs of learners and other key stakeholders. Evidence found in the stakeholder and learner interview data consistently indicates that the learning experiences offered are highly relevant to the needs of the learners and the industry. The knowledge, skills and attributes gained are useful and being applied effectively within real workplace settings. Ultimately, the training consistently improves the quality of farming activities, and learners are confident in recommending DTL courses to others. There is, however, much scope for DTL to further improve course completion rates and success rates – which ultimately contribute to qualification attainment rates – as discussed within this report.

This evaluation also found good evidence of effective processes that contribute to learning. These include engaged and personable staff with appropriate dairy sector knowledge and experience, and a manager, administrator and directors who are seeking to further extend and improve the services of DTL. Resources and delivery approaches are also fit for purpose, and DTL learners benefit from materials made available through the DTL parent organisation, Dairy NZ. The positive working and learning culture of the organisation, facilitated by the manager, is observable at many levels, and this ultimately benefits the learners.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Dairy Training Limited**.

There is some evidence of effective self-assessment at DTL, such as the level 5 programme review. However, self-assessment is not yet sufficiently comprehensive to address all priority areas. In particular, DTL needs to develop self-assessment processes and mechanisms that report more fully and more meaningfully on formal learner outcomes. Presently, DTL is not able to monitor effectively its performance in this key area.

It would also benefit DTL to undertake further self-assessment relating to graduate outcomes, barriers to learning and learner support and guidance information. Each of these matters is further detailed within this report, and some specific recommendations are also made. In addition, more self-reflection is required to inform key strategic planning and to identify and address key issues that are arising for DTL, such as financial challenges and managerial capacity limitations. This process should include establishing and monitoring relevant key performance

indicators that can assure the Board that the evolving needs of stakeholders are being met and in particular that the best outcomes for learners are being achieved.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

DTL data on learner achievement shows inconsistencies in formal learner outcomes. This includes wide variations in course attainment rates across various levels. For example, data presented appears to suggest course completion rates ranging from 8 per cent to 64 per cent in 2010/2011. In the area of focus (level 4 and level 5 programmes), data presented indicates that 25 per cent of level 4 learners completed courses in 2012 (said to be increasing from past years), while at level 5, 2010/2011 data shows a completion rate of 46 per cent. (Level 5 data for 2012 was not yet available, and relates to a new qualification offer.) DTL staff did not consider these achievement outcomes to be strong, but that results were 'now tracking in the right direction'.

The evaluation team agrees that as far as can be determined, overall data presented indicates improvements in outcomes. However, a significant proportion of learners engaged in DTL programmes may not be achieving formal outcomes. Paradoxically, the evaluation team also notes the consistent positive feedback of learners – indicating that the courses are useful, applicable and relevant – and further, that not all learners desire formal qualifications (just skills and knowledge). This is consistent with other stakeholder feedback and DTL student surveys. In this context, the evaluation team concludes that DTL's educational performance in relation to learner achievement meets minimum requirements, but that there are inconsistencies in performance across programmes and that some gaps and weakness exist in relation to learner achievements.

The evaluation also finds that self-assessment of learner achievement is poor. Data collection on meaningful outcomes is not undertaken in a clear, systematic and routine manner, and nor is it reported, in written form, clearly to the tutors or directors. This means DTL lacks awareness of its true educational performance, i.e. overall the organisation does not know how many learners complete their courses successfully, although the management team does have useful anecdotal data. This situation requires remedial attention to better track the progress of individual learners, and then to ensure educational outcome targets appropriate to DTL can be set and monitored by management and the Board.

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

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 **Good**.

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

DTL defines its key stakeholders as the dairy industry, including farmers, Dairy NZ and Primary ITO. The ITO indicated satisfaction with the delivery approach of DTL, and that there was a positive working relationship between the organisations.² This view was supported by the ITO's award of the industry quality mark, AgExcel, to DTL.

Dairy NZ staff who are engaged in sector education (but not directly connected with DTL) indicated high satisfaction with the programmes offered. Programmes were described as complementing Dairy NZ's drive to promote formal qualifications within the dairy sector (to improve quality), and that DTL was a sound provider of 'on-farm knowledge'.³

DTL learners are already employed in the dairy sector (either directly or in allied areas such as rural real estate). Learners indicated high levels of satisfaction with the DTL programmes – including that learning was directly relevant to their current work needs. DTL was able to demonstrate the practical application of learner assignments to farm operations, which was highly valued by learner/farmers. For example, in learning modules on financial management and forecasting, learners presented the real models of forecasting for their own farms, and these were assessed for validity and accuracy. This type of integration with 'real work' was the premise for learners/employers considering DTL approaches to be highly useful and engaging.

DTL takes some effort to gather self-assessment information for measuring stakeholder satisfaction. In particular, farm owners are contacted via telephone after programme delivery to determine usefulness and check for areas of improvement. This is good practice – as is the ongoing application of student feedback surveys and staff reflection meetings. The manager has strong links with industry which offers ongoing informal feedback on the value of DTL programmes and enables the organisation to respond to emerging industry needs. One area for self-assessment extension would be to gather data on graduate career progression following courses and present these results to the Board.

² One staff member of Primary ITO indicated there were no issues of concern, and that DTL was 'one of the better providers'. A letter from the chief executive of Primary ITO, dated 3 February 2013, indicated that DTL was 'meeting all performance expectations as contracted', although some issues of concern were also noted.

³ Dairy NZ also promotes learning at other tertiary education institutions such as universities.

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 **Good**.

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

Evidential information from stakeholders, including Primary ITO and Dairy NZ, indicate that there is a good match of programme and activities with the needs of industry. Learners also agreed that the content delivered was well suited to their needs. However, the DTL manager and learners also acknowledged that the amount of study required to successfully complete courses was not always apparent to learners, and that although careful effort is made to ensure courses fit with the regular dairy farming calendar, time constraints affect educational outcomes. There is scope for DTL to make the proportion of self-directed learning clearer to learners within its materials – although oral information on course expectations is provided by tutors when learners commence their studies.⁴

All DTL programmes come under the purview of Primary ITO (the ITO develops the main learning resources and assessment processes). DTL, however, drawing upon its relationship with Dairy NZ, is able to provide further supplementary information and resources to its learners. These Dairy NZ materials are highly regarded by learners and set out best practice dairy farming approaches. This process of matching ITO requirements with sector developments means DTL has in place, albeit somewhat informally, a process of continuous programme review which regularly incorporates changes in content and knowledge. (The exception is the level 4 qualification which the ITO has designed, and for which it maintains review responsibilities.) Level 5 provision, however, has been reviewed more formally by DTL over the last year, resulting in a new modular delivery approach. These changes are designed to improve completions as a result of self-reflective activity, and similar reviews could be extended to other programme areas, beginning with those with lower rates of completion.

DTL rents a range of community facilities for its delivery. The two sites visited by the evaluation team were satisfactory and fit for purpose. Learners are required to have their own computers and internet connections to access key learning resources. All learners are familiar with these resources and there are no issues arising in this regard.

⁴ The Primary Sector ITO recruiters also have a responsibility to inform potential learners of the full requirements for completing qualifications.

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 **Adequate**.

All tutors engaged by DTL have significant and current industry knowledge. Many are currently dairy farmers themselves or they are directly involved in some industry role. Learners report that the tutors have good interpersonal rapport and are keen and passionate about their industry, and keen to share their high level of relevant sector knowledge and experience. These traits offer significant credibility to learners and are essential elements of effective teaching. However, some learners also noted that the large class sizes were at times a constraint on the support needed for learning some elements of the curriculum, and that there was a limited number of classes and more tuition time was required. In addition, the ITO noted some delivery quality issues presenting with one tutor.⁵ These matters require further self-assessment at the management/director level. It is possible that greater investment in delivery processes is required, although it is accepted that DTL is fulfilling all contractual delivery requirements established by the ITO, and is not directly funded to provide further services.

Some tutors have been supported to gain formal adult education qualifications and a few have gained the full qualification. Other tutors have participated in some form of specialist training, such as in literacy and numeracy teaching. Those individuals with higher levels of teaching knowledge will in turn informally lead professional development sessions with their peers. Additionally, there is an annual tutors' conference to undertake shared planning, and routine tutor cluster meetings to share information. DTL also makes sector-specific professional development opportunities available to tutors, via industry experts. Examples of how tutors shared teaching and assessment dilemmas to identify positive solutions for learners were given. There is scope for the further development of tutor pedagogical knowledge, through formal adult education programmes, particularly for those delivering level 4 and 5 qualifications. Given staff awareness that some learners are regularly presenting with barriers to learning, such as low literacy, awareness of approaches to address such issues was not demonstrably clear across DTL staff and DTL documentation. The ability to build on improvements in formal learner achievements will be a sign of an effective teaching approach.

DTL has established a clear two-step internal moderation process to ensure consistency in its assessment practices. Samples are forwarded on a regular basis to the manager, who himself is a moderator appointed by the ITO. The ITO reports say that no external moderation issues are presenting. The evaluation finds suitable assessment processes are in place and are likely to be fair, valid and transparent. A major review of the level 5 qualifications, undertaken partly as a

⁵ Letter, Primary ITO to DTL, 3 February 2013. Further details withheld.

result of poor outcomes, has resulted in an innovative collaborative project with Primary ITO and WINTEC, where the qualification has been broken into smaller modules. A regular review cycle of all programmes should be put in place. This will help develop a growing self-assessment culture across the organisation which will support ongoing improvements in the quality of educational delivery.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

The key issues of learner guidance and support presenting through this evaluation relate to (a) the time required for successful completion of DTL courses and overall qualifications;⁶ (b) whether all learners are suitably supported through on-farm learning activities; (c) whether the right cohort of learners are enrolled in programmes (i.e. 'the right learners on the right seats').

Oral submissions were carefully considered which indicated that many of these types of issues are beyond the scope of the contracted role of DTL. The evaluators accept the validity of this point, and notes that DTL works with the field staff from the ITO to provide support.

However further self-assessment and on-going support for learners is required to supplement the services provided by the ITO. Examples are specifying exactly how much self-directed learning is required, and greater use of supplementary tutorials to assist learners more frequently (such tutorials are now commencing with the revised level 5 programme). DTL also needs to formally discuss these issues with the ITO, particularly any issues it considers are barriers to learners and are inhibiting learner educational achievement. DTL has, for example, an awareness of particular learning constraints in some delivery locations, and it needs to work more closely with the ITO to determine which organisation is best placed to resolve these.

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

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 **Adequate**.

DTL has a highly experienced manager, supported by a capable administrative team and skilled directors. They are familiar with the DTL business and its current

⁶ Note: qualifications are awarded by Primary ITO, not DTL.

operational changes. A key management issue is a contractual change which has seen DTL make a small operating loss in the last financial year. However, the directors attest that the PTE remains financially viable, and note the overarching financial backing of Dairy NZ. DTL has taken remedial action to address this matter in 2013.

The manager is highly regarded for both his breadth of professional knowledge and positive operational style by learners, staff and the sector groups interviewed. Staff report that they feel valued and supported and, along with learners, indicate that DTL is a positive place of work/learning. The manager reports that there are no legal or ethical matters arising.

DTL is seeking to develop new programmes and to rework its services in response to changing funding and knowledge needs within its sector, as outlined in interviews at this evaluation. This is good practice and shows innovative thinking. DTL has a strategic plan developed in 2011 to assist in guiding developments. However, this document does not capture some the key changes occurring at DTL. For example, key performance indicators have not been reported on and may not be highly relevant now. Further self-assessment work is needed to consider the current and future environment with key stakeholder input and develop a plan to move forward. This should include identifying key educational performance indicators that are relevant to learner achievement to guide and support governance and management. DTL also has a comprehensive quality management document which needs be reviewed periodically.

DTL's managerial capacity is stretched. Further human resourcing investment by Dairy NZ will likely be required if DTL is to meet the educational expectations of learners, stakeholders and agencies, and to achieve its broader strategic objectives.

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 **Good**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Level 4 and 5 provision

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that DTL, within its wider processes of improving its overall educational performance and self-assessment, undertake the following tasks.

1. Improve data collection and reporting on meaningful learner outcomes. This includes establishing outcome targets appropriate to DTL that can be set and monitored by management and the Board.
2. Improve data collection and reporting on meaningful post-study outcomes, such as graduate career progressions.
3. Revisit learner materials to ensure that self-directed learner requirements are clear to all learners.
4. Reassess tutor-to-learner ratios and/or the amount of tuition on offer within courses.
5. Reassess support and guidance required for learner success, and ensure DTL completes its educational responsibilities by informing relevant parties (including the ITO) of matters that may be impeding successful outcomes for learners.
6. Develop a revised strategic plan that covers current operations, has key performance indicators relevant to learner outcomes, is reported on, and addresses financial and capacity issues that are currently presenting.

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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