

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Edvance Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 7 July 2016

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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:	Edvance Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered with NZQA:	November 2006
Location:	<u>Tauranga</u> Level 1, 610 Cameron Road <u>Auckland</u> 2L Edinburgh Street, Onehunga
Delivery sites:	Clients' premises (workplaces)
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace Literacy Training• Intensive Literacy and Numeracy, including pre-employment preparation night-time courses for entering into police or armed forces
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Around 600 domestic learners per annum on Workplace Literacy Training courses – in 2015, 14 per cent identified as Māori, 34 per cent as Pasifika, and 16 per cent as Asian. Around 75 domestic learners per annum on Intensive Literacy and Numeracy courses – in 2015, 22 per cent identified as Māori, 22 per cent as Pasifika, and 18 per cent as Asian.
Number of staff:	Six and four full-time staff for management, administrative support and marketing in Tauranga

and Auckland respectively. Forty-one contractors on call around the country to deliver training.

Scope of active accreditation:

- National Certificate in Business (First Line Management) (Level 3)
- A diverse range of domains and standards in business communication and numeracy skills, generally up to level 3, with some up to level 4:
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=781711001>

Distinctive characteristics:

Edvance specialises in literacy and numeracy training, tailoring its training primarily for delivery by contracted tutors at workplaces nationwide.

The Tertiary Education Commission funds qualified learners who are employees of Edvance clients, for 40 hours of workplace literacy training. Edvance also has clients/learners who are not sponsored by the Tertiary Education Commission.

Recent significant changes:

Workbase, an Auckland-based workplace literacy training provider, voluntarily closed its business in quarter 4, 2015. Edvance was approached by Workbase to take over some of its operations. A total of 179 learners and a selection of staff were transferred at the time, and Edvance opened an Auckland office as a result.

The Tertiary Education Commission increased workplace literacy training funding to Edvance from 186 learners in 2012 to 485 learners in 2016. (This includes an absorption of funding previously allocated to Workbase.)

Previous quality assurance history:

The previous external evaluation and review of Edvance was conducted in October 2012, with the final report published in February 2013. NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Edvance.

Other: Edvance receives funding from the Tertiary Education Commission for its workplace literacy¹ and intensive literacy and numeracy² training.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Governance, management and strategy is a mandatory focus area. The other focus area selected was:

- Workplace Literacy Training

The demand (and associated funding from the Tertiary Education Commission) for workplace literacy training has continued to increase over the years and remains the predominant focus of Edvance.

While Edvance continues to deliver its approved programme, the National Certificate in Business (First Line Management) (Level 3), enrolment numbers have been minimal in recent years. There were eight learners on the programme in 2015. Therefore, that programme was not selected as a focus area.

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.

An extensive range of self-assessment materials were delivered to NZQA to inform the scoping of this external evaluation and review, and allowed the evaluation team to prepare for the on-site visit. Prior to the scope being finalised, the lead evaluator reviewed training facilities at Edvance's Tauranga office and met with Edvance representatives to agree on the focus areas and logistics of the on-site visit.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators. The on-site visit lasted two days and was conducted at Edvance's Auckland office. The evaluation team interviewed the directors, the general manager, the operations manager, three programme consultants, as well as the strategic advisor and a moderator, both currently on fixed-term contracts. At Edvance's suggestion, the evaluation team also took the

¹ <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Funding/Fund-finder/Employer-led-Workplace-Literacy-and-Numeracy-Fund/>

² <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Funding/Fund-finder/Intensive-Literacy-and-Numeracy/>

opportunity to observe a workplace literacy training session at one of Edvance's client premises in Sylvia Park and had discussions with two client representatives (from an employer who contracted Edvance's training services), the tutor of the course, and four learners (employees of Edvance's client). A wide range of documents and records were reviewed.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Edvance Limited**.

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Edvance Limited**.

- Most learners (94 per cent) recorded a statistically significant gain in literacy and/or numeracy level upon completion of Edvance courses (see Findings 1.1).
- Furthermore, learners acquire important soft skills, such as confidence, listening, communication and customer service skills, enhancing both the productivity of the workplace and the learners' personal well-being. The value of outcomes to learners and employers is clearly evidenced (see Findings 1.2).
- Edvance tailored and customised its course content based on the needs of employers and individual learners. Adjustments to content and delivery are ongoing, as are course reviews (see Findings 1.3).
- Governance and management is strong in supporting learner achievement. Edvance shows itself to be a reflective, flexible and adaptive organisation. The organisation is not complacent of its success and has managed growth responsibly and is well prepared for change. The integration of the workplace (WPL) stream enrolments from Workbase in late 2015 was well managed, with a seamless transition of selected learners and staff. Edvance is very open about some of its mistakes in past operations and action is well underway to address performance deficiencies and enhance its self-assessment system to mitigate the possibility of such failures repeating in the future (see Findings 1.6).

While Edvance had some performance gaps in the past, particularly in not meeting NZQA national external moderation requirements for two consecutive years, the validity of achievement is shown through results from the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool administered by the Tertiary Education Commission. Edvance has made significant improvements to its internal systems and processes since the last quarter of 2015, brought about by a newly employed senior staff member as well as a number of external consultants. The evaluation team examined the improved self-assessment system and, taking into account the credibility of the managers, is convinced that the organisation is now operating a coherent, comprehensive and robust system that will self-identify any performance issues, notwithstanding that there are further enhancement opportunities as referred to throughout this report. The Tertiary Education Commission has shown support through its approval for Edvance to absorb Workbase as well as through increases in funding in 2016. Balancing all of the above, notwithstanding some

issues up until late 2015, NZQA expresses the above statements of confidence on a forward-looking basis accordingly.

Findings³

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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 **Excellent**.

Achievement in literacy and numeracy courses funded by the Tertiary Education Commission is measured through the use of the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool.⁴ Learners attempt the assessment at the beginning and the end of the 40-hour course. The online assessment system determines a learner's literacy and numeracy levels on a six-step scale. Quantitative measurement of success is when a learner has made a 'statistically significant gain' (where the learner improved their literacy and numeracy level beyond the margin of error, as determined by the assessment system).

Learner achievement is positive in terms of course completion and when expressed as statistically significant gain through workplace literacy training courses (see Table 1). Edvance has consistently exceeded all statistically significant gain targets of 80 per cent set by the Tertiary Education Commission, except for Pasifika learners in 2014 (see Table 2).

Table 1. Overall learner achievement for Edvance workplace literacy training courses funded under the Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund, 2013-2015

	2013	2014	2015
Total funded enrolments	202	274	379
Total completions	180	232	338
Completion rate	89%	85%	89%
Number of learners achieving a statistically significant gain	169	206	319
Percentage of learners completing the course and achieving a statistically significant gain ⁵	94%	89%	94%

Data source: Edvance Limited

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁴ <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Resource-Centre/Software-tools/Literacy-and-Numeracy-for-Adults-Assessment-Tool/>

⁵ This calculation excludes learners who did not complete the 40 hours of training, as reasons for non-completion of workplace literacy training are often beyond a provider's control (for example, left employment). Such a calculation basis is accepted by the Tertiary Education Commission. The evaluation team agreed that this is a fair and accurate calculation.

Table 2. Learner achievement by ethnicity for Edvance workplace literacy training courses funded under the Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund, 2013-2015

	2013	2014	2015
Māori participation rate	32%	17%	14%
Percentage of Māori learners completing the course and achieving a statistically significant gain	93%	83%	91%
Pasifika participation rate	12%	6%	34%
Percentage of Pasifika learners completing the course and achieving a statistically significant gain	80%	73%	96%

Data source: Edvance Limited

Edvance collects comprehensive data and analyses it to understand learner progress and achievement. Information is shared within the organisation, including individual success stories.

The evaluation team noted a decline in 2015 in the number of learners on the intensive literacy and numeracy course who achieved a statistically significant gain (see Table 3). In particular, Pasifika achievement did not meet the 80 per cent expectation imposed by the Tertiary Education Commission (see Table 4). However, given that 90 per cent of learners enrol in workplace literacy training and only 10 per cent in intensive literacy and numeracy, this performance weakness is not considered a significant gap.

Table 3. Overall learner achievement for Edvance intensive literacy and numeracy training courses, 2013-2015

	2013	2014	2015
Total funded enrolments	76	73	76
Completion rate	93%	81%	80%
Percentage of learners completing the course and achieving a statistically significant gain	90%	92%	79%

Data source: Edvance Limited

Table 4. Learner achievement by ethnicity for Edvance intensive literacy and numeracy training courses, 2013-2015

	2013	2014	2015
Māori participation rate	7%	10%	22%
Percentage of Māori learners completing the course and achieving a statistically significant gain	100%	86%	82%
Pasifika participation rate	18%	22%	22%
Percentage of Pasifika learners completing the course and achieving a statistically significant gain	83%	94%	73%

Data source: Edvance Limited

Overall, Edvance's self-assessment is a coherent system for supporting learner achievement, as evident from the above statistics for the vast majority of the learners. However, the organisation is yet to formulate a strategy to better support Pasifika learners, a priority group under the government's Tertiary Education Strategy.

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 **Good**.

Learners improve their literacy and numeracy (see Findings 1.1) and acquire valuable soft skills such as confidence, listening, communication and customer service skills, through Edvance's workplace literacy courses. The importance of such knowledge and skills should not be underestimated. Successful learners not only become more productive workers, but the enhanced literacy level also brings about life-changing experiences. The evaluation team heard touching stories about graduates being able to read to their children; gaining their first driver licence by able to sit through the theory test on their own; and simply having the confidence to speak up. The value to learners in terms of personal growth, as well as to their employers in terms of a boost in workplace productivity, is clear from Edvance's self-assessment. This includes feedback from employers to Edvance, as well as communication between Edvance and employers during and after the training, where employers relayed the positive impact of the training in the workplace and how productivity increases with a workforce that has better communication skills overall. However, at this stage, it does not appear that this feedback mechanism is part of a systematic approach.

Nevertheless, Edvance is able to successfully demonstrate the value of outcomes through self-assessment. Final reports are produced to employers at the end of each course to communicate the results and report on learner achievement, on both advancement of literacy and numeracy levels as well as attainment of soft skills. Edvance is also in the process of further enhancing its systems with the introduction of graduate surveys as another avenue to further assure itself of the value of outcomes.

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**.

Edvance performs exceptionally strongly in understanding and meeting the needs of learners and employers. Its courses are tailored and customised based on employers' and learners' needs, with equal emphasis on literacy and soft skills. Edvance's programme consultants first met with employers to establish company goals and agree on training requirements. Then the learners are individually assessed (using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool) as well as brought together as a group to increase motivation and buy-in. An appropriate tutor is then appointed based on best-fit, who will meet with learners on an individual basis to establish personal learning objectives as well as assessing their listening and speaking skills. Course development is 'on-the-fly' (evolving in real-time) and is constantly reviewed and adjusted throughout the course while progression towards individual and company goals is tracked.

Such strong performance is well supported by comprehensive self-assessment. In addition to the final reports mentioned above, Edvance produces initial reports to employers on individual learner literacy and numeracy assessment results and personal goals within two to three weeks of commencing a course. Mid-way reports are produced to determine progress and serve as ongoing course reviews.

Close relationships between Edvance and its employer clients are evident, and may be used to further understand the longer-term effects of the training.

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 **Good**.

Teaching is generally effective at Edvance. The nationwide pool of tutors are qualified and have relevant backgrounds in adult literacy and numeracy training. Many also have experience with foreign cultures through prior overseas experience. The induction process for new staff has been strengthened recently. Professional development is financially supported by the organisation. The evaluation team noted good rapport between the tutor and learners during class observation, as well as how a tutor adjusted course content and teaching 'on-the-fly' based on individual needs and interests.

Tutors compile a self-reflection at the end of each course. In Tauranga, tutors gathered quarterly to share such reflections, learnings and teaching practices, as well as results and analysis of end-of-course learner evaluations. The evaluation

team is advised that such gatherings will be extended to Auckland in due course (as Edvance has only recently expanded into the region).

Edvance did not meet NZQA's national external moderation requirements for one numeracy standard in 2014 and 2015. An improvement plan had just been submitted and accepted by NZQA prior to this evaluation's on-site visit. Edvance acknowledged its performance gap in this aspect and has put in place a number of improvement initiatives in recent months. Notably, an external consultant with recognised expertise in moderation has been engaged to review and redesign the internal moderation system, as well as to oversee the operations of internal moderation of all standards assessed with samples from each tutor. The evaluation team examined the new processes and is convinced the system will address past deficiencies. However, this improvement is still at its early stages and its effectiveness will be assessed in the next round of NZQA's national external moderation and external evaluation and review. Edvance has voluntarily suspended the delivery of the standard concerned in the meantime. In this case, success was measured through the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool administered by the Tertiary Education Commission. As such, the evaluation team did not consider that the failure to meet the national external moderation requirement invalidated learner achievement results, especially when most Edvance courses are not using unit standards.

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 **Good**.

Learners are well guided and supported to achieve. Classes are very small (around six per class) and allow plenty of interactions and individual focus. The evaluation team observed how individual learners are mentored and motivated in class. Tutors supply their contact details for further support outside of class times. The overall positive level of achievement is a testament to the level and effectiveness of guidance and support provided to learners.

Edvance monitors learner attendance closely. Absences are promptly followed up with employers. The general manager randomly audits attendance records. The nature of workplace training means attendance is usually not an issue.

However, as discussed in Findings 1.1, Edvance needs to enhance aspects of self-assessment to ensure Pasifika learners are better supported with the appropriate strategy.

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 **Good**.

Governance and management performs strongly in supporting educational achievement. There are regular meetings at all levels to communicate and reflect on the operation and educational performance of the organisation. Executive members at Edvance have significant experience and appropriate qualifications for education management. External consultants are engaged on specific topics when a need arises. For example, in light of the recent growth in learner numbers, a sector consultant has been engaged to assist with the separation of governance from operational management; an expert in moderation was recently contracted, as mentioned in Findings 1.4; and a new senior staff member (who will eventually relocate from Tauranga to Auckland to manage that site) has been employed to review and improve internal systems and processes.

At senior level, managers reflect on and absorb learnings from failures. For example, the previous student management system did not fully meet the organisation's requirements, and a more rigid process was applied in 2015 for considering a new system. Likewise, as previously discussed, significant effort has been made recently to review and improve the internal moderation system.

Edvance demonstrates agility, flexibility and adaptability as an organisation. The integration of the workplace (WPL) stream enrolments from Workbase in late 2015 was well managed, with seamless transition of selected learners and staff. The organisation has a clear purpose (enhancing workplace productivity through upskilling the literacy and numeracy skills of labour) and is delivering to that objective well with a convincing, customised product. Such success is also recognised by the Tertiary Education Commission with increases in funding in 2016. Not being complacent, Edvance is currently exploring opportunities in e-learning as well as potential expansion to other delivery areas. Growth is managed responsibly within the organisation.

There were some deficiencies with Edvance's self-assessment system prior to 2015. For example, there were gaps in some of Edvance's records. The organisation could have responded in a more effective and timely fashion to the fluctuating achievement levels of its Pasifika learners in its intensive literacy and numeracy programmes (which accounted for about 2 per cent of the overall enrolment). The evaluation team noted significant improvements from late 2015 onwards, introduced by a newly recruited senior staff member. The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question reflects the overall system performance for the past four years, taking into account that some of the problems persisted for some time before action was taken.

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**.

While the evaluation team has been critical in Findings 1.6 in relation to Edvance's capability in self-assessment, overall the organisation demonstrates a much better foundation, a more reflective culture, and a significantly enhanced self-assessment system. Notwithstanding the opportunities for further enhancements as mentioned throughout this report, the evaluation team has confidence that Edvance now operates a coherent, comprehensive and robust self-assessment system to monitor its operational and educational performance, as well as to self-identify any deficiencies in an efficient manner and implement any necessary improvement actions.

2.2 Focus area: Workplace Literacy Training

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Edvance Limited:

- Use its excellent ongoing relationship with employer clients and systematically collect information, on an ongoing basis, on how graduates use their enhanced literacy skills in their jobs, and what impact literacy continues to have on workplace relations and client organisation's productivity, to further evidence and assure Edvance on the value of outcomes.
- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the enhanced internal moderation system.
- Formulate a strategy to further support Pasifika achievement.

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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