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External Evaluation and Review Report



Vet Nurse Plus Limited

Date of report: 5 September 2019

About Vet Nurse Plus Limited

Vet Nurse Plus is a boutique-style tertiary education organisation offering the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) and the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6).

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Unit 8, 2 Bishop Dunn Place, Botany South, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	68 (2016); 89 (2017); 88 (2018) (all domestic)
Number of staff:	Nine full-time, two part-time
TEO profile:	Vet Nurse Plus details on NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident in educational performance Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5)• New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6)
MoE number:	7841
NZQA reference:	C35392
Dates of EER visit:	23 and 24 July 2019

Summary of Results

Vet Nurse Plus (VNP) has a vision of educating animal healthcare professionals with relevant, high quality programmes. This is well-understood and reflected at all levels of the organisation. The embedded self-assessment culture results in well-supported learners, relevant practical programmes and strong achievement.

Highly Confident in educational performance

VNP's post-TRoQ¹ programmes were developed with a clear goal of producing work-ready graduates. The programmes, characterised by a combination of theoretical and practical learning and clinical placements, are effective in engaging learners and supporting high achievement rates.

The organisation is continuously working towards providing relevant education and training that meets industry needs. Various mechanisms are used to review the programmes to ensure relevancy and consistency.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Student support for learning and wellbeing is a big focus of the organisation, with a comprehensive learning support policy ensuring a proactive, personal approach to ensuring students' mental, emotional and learning needs are addressed.

The recent change of ownership of VNP's parent company provides new and bigger opportunities for both staff and learners in terms of networks for employment and further training in New Zealand and Australia. VNP has a strong governance and management team which is committed and supportive in its vision. Improvements made and future plans of the organisation are the results of thorough self-assessment undertaken at all levels of the organisation.

¹ Targeted Review of Qualifications

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>VNP's course completion and qualification completion rates are high overall and well above the sector median, with increased enrolments over time. Course completion and qualification completion for both programmes average 85 per cent for 2016-2018. Māori and Pasifika participation is very low but achievement for both groups is relatively strong.³ Through its effective monitoring and continuous analysis of achievement, the organisation understands its underlying factors – including that of Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic groups – and has strategies in place to maintain and/or improve performance (see 1.4). This has also resulted in effective improvements to teaching and learning (see 1.3).</p> <p>VNP reflects on the reasons behind low participation by Māori and Pasifika, and has a strategy to improve enrolments, which includes active recruitment in secondary schools.</p> <p>Robust internal and external moderation validates assessment and underpins achievement (see 1.3).</p> <p>Aside from the technical and clinical competencies, learners said they gained communication, customer service, interrelationship, teamwork and key employment skills, including CV writing. These skills are deliberately included in the programmes to support employment-readiness for learners.</p>
Conclusion:	VNP's strong achievement is underpinned by the organisation's effective monitoring and analysis, and strategies to maintain and/or improve performance.

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 Appendix 1.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>VNP contributes to the growth of a trained industry of animal healthcare professionals. Graduates of the VNP programmes gain not only NZQA-recognised qualifications but also practical and clinical skills that make them ready for employment. The clinical placement component prepares the learners to be employment-ready.</p> <p>Aiming to achieve a 70 per cent employment rate within six months of graduating, VNP has an impressive employment rate for its level 6 graduates, while the majority of the level 5 graduates progress to the level 6 programme.⁴ Ninety-one per cent of the level 6 graduates gain employment within six months following graduation, while some are employed prior to finishing the programme. This shows that the industry perceives VNP graduates as work-ready and technically and clinically competent. Feedback gathered from graduates also confirms that they feel confident in performing the tasks assigned to them at work.</p> <p>VNP gathers feedback from its partner clinics on a regular basis, and through this has confirmed the usefulness of the clinic placements, which benefit both the learner and the clinic they are assigned to. While there is a big commitment involved in accepting learners for placement, partner clinics see the arrangement as an opportunity to have extra help in their facilities, as a form of recruitment, and as a way of giving back to the industry by participating in training new animal healthcare professionals.</p>
Conclusion:	VNP has had a high graduate employment rate through the years. The programmes are structured to train learners to be work-ready when they graduate.

⁴ See Appendix 1.

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>All modules in the two VNP programmes have theoretical learning, practical laboratory, and clinic placements. This balance of theory and practice makes learners more engaged. The theories learnt are appropriately matched with practical skills in clinic placements, which are supervised. Self-directed learning is structured and monitored by the tutors.</p> <p>Tutors engage in regular self-reflection which they bring to their quarterly planning meeting, where they review the programmes and ensure consistency of delivery.</p> <p>There is an effective system for identifying learning needs from the selection stage and throughout the programme. Initial testing ensures student readiness and passion for working in the industry, as well as learning styles and academic ability, e.g. literacy and numeracy skills. Subject tutors and home tutors continue to identify learning needs during the programme and accommodate those needing support, e.g. a dyslexic learner needing to use a reader/writer. The programme's multimodal teaching fits a range of learning styles.</p> <p>Internal pre- and post-assessment moderation is robust, and external moderation engages the expertise of other TEOs offering similar programmes. There is evidence that VNP takes feedback on board and addresses it appropriately.</p> <p>Regular student and partner clinics' feedback informs programme improvements. An advisory board, comprising representatives from the veterinary industry, tertiary education sector and relevant cultural groups, ensures programmes are relevant and meet industry needs.</p>
Conclusion:	VNP has developed well-structured programmes and regularly reflects and obtains feedback from stakeholders to ensure the PTE continues to meet training needs.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>VNP's learning support policy was initiated in 2016 to provide proactive, intensive support to ensure learners are well-supported not only in their studies but in other aspects of their daily lives.</p> <p>Each learner is assigned a 'home tutor' who oversees the overall progress in their studies, regularly checks on them by way of a one-on-one catch-up meeting (once every six weeks or earlier as needed), and acts as their first point of contact at VNP.</p> <p>Other support includes the subject tutor for the relevant modules the learners are currently enrolled in, and the clinic coordinator, who looks after the learners' clinic placement. Among these support arms, an individual support plan for each learner is developed to ensure learners meet their goals. This plan is constantly revisited and monitored, and any necessary action followed up.</p> <p>VNP gives priority to students' mental health and wellbeing by providing a free counselling service through an independent mental health organisation.</p> <p>VNP involves whānau in the students' learning journey through a whānau/learning support evening, where they hear about the learning journey of their students.</p> <p>The organisation's self-assessment practices involve regular feedback gathered from learners to understand the effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to support their learning.</p>
Conclusion:	A well-structured learning support system is available to learners to ensure they are supported to meet their goals.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The recent acquisition of VNP's parent company by a larger ASX-listed animal healthcare corporation paves the way for new and bigger opportunities for both staff and learners in terms of a network for employment and further training in New Zealand and Australia.</p> <p>VNP's board of directors, as well as the parent company, is supportive and committed to the organisation's clear vision of educating animal healthcare professionals with relevant, high quality programmes. The strong management team is likewise focused on the VNP strategic plan, and ensures that VNP meets the needs of learners and produces work-ready graduates. The regular communication and reporting between the board and the management team ensures alignment of goals and clear direction for the organisation.</p> <p>Staff are well-qualified subject experts with good industry experience. All have or are working towards an adult teaching qualification. They are supported in their own professional development through internal training and mentoring and external workshops and courses. Support in other areas – such as management's flexibility in their employees' working situation (e.g. part-time work, parental leave) and free counselling through an independent mental health organisation – contributes to staff satisfaction and better performance at work.</p> <p>The quality assurance manual and supplementary information technology systems are comprehensive and designed to make work efficient.</p> <p>The continuous and systematic self-assessment practices of management and staff deliver improvements to the organisation to support achievement.</p>
Conclusion:	A strong governance and management with clear vision and goals, supplemented by continuous and systematic self-assessment practices, drives improvements in the organisation.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The board and management team are abreast of the organisation's compliance obligations through frequent meetings and reporting conducted between them.</p> <p>VNP's delegations and authority matrix clearly shows the delegation of responsibilities among management and staff. This includes the organisation's compliance responsibilities and commitments to external agencies and regulators (New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association (NZVNA), animal welfare, NZQA, Tertiary Education Commission). In addition, VNP regularly updates its business practices to reflect changes in rules and regulations and embeds them in the quality assurance manual as required. This practice ensures that VNP's compliance accountabilities are managed well.</p> <p>Effective self-assessment in this area is reflected in the use of 'achievement measurement' which gauges the organisation's performance against its compliance responsibilities. This includes maintaining the following: NZQA registration, Category 1 EER rating, Tertiary Education Commission funding, approval for use of animals in teaching, and NZVNA provider accreditation.</p> <p>VNP's membership in relevant organisations such as ITENZ (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand) and NZVNA – and actively engaging with external consultants by way of workshops and individual consultancy – helps to keep the organisation on top of its compliance accountabilities.</p>
Conclusion:	Effective systems ensure that at all levels of the organisation, compliance accountabilities are attended to and managed well.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6)

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. Enrolment and achievement data for the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5)

	2016	2017	2018
Total enrolment	55	56	59
Course completion (sector median)	88.5% (81%)	88.5% (84%)	77.9%
Qualification completion (sector median)	76.9% (69%)	84.6% (66%)	81.3%
Māori enrolment (percentage against total enrolment)	6 (11%)	2 (4%)	4 (7%)
Māori course completion (percentage against total Māori enrolment)	3 (50%)	2 (100%)	4 (100%)
Māori qualification completion (percentage against total Māori enrolment)	2 (33%)	2 (100%)	2 (50%)
Pasifika enrolment (percentage against total enrolment)	6 (11%)	5 (9%)	2 (3%)
Pasifika course completion (percentage against total Pasifika enrolment)	4 (67%)	3 (60%)	2 (100%)
Pasifika qualification completion (percentage against total Pasifika enrolment)	4 (67%)	2 (40%)	2 (100%)

Course: TEC, SDR Results; VNP internal data

Table 2. Enrolment and achievement data for the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6)

	2016	2017	2018
Total enrolment	7	33	35
Course completion (sector median)	95.6% (81%)	85.6% (84%)	81.2%
Qualification completion	86% (69%)	73% (66%)	74%
Māori enrolment (percentage against total enrolment)	2 (29%)	3 (9%)	2 (6%)
Māori course completion (percentage against total Māori enrolment)	2 (100%)	3 (100%)	2 (100%)
Māori qualification completion (percentage against total Māori enrolment)	2 (100%)	2 (67%)	1 (50%)
Pasifika enrolment (percentage against total enrolment)	0	3 (9%)	2 (6%)
Pasifika course completion (percentage against total Pasifika enrolment)	n/a	3 (100%)	1 (50%)
Pasifika qualification completion (percentage against total Pasifika enrolment)	n/a	2 (67%)	1 (50%)

Course: TEC, SDR Results; VNP internal data

Table 3. Graduate destination data

Year	Employed within six months of graduating with NZDVN (Level 6)
2016	100%
2017	92%
2018	81%
Average	91%

Note that the pathway for graduates of the level 5 programme is further training in the level 6 New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing programme.

Source: Vet Nurse Plus Self-Assessment Report 2019 (page 5)

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 fraud⁵*
- *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.*

⁵ 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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