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External Evaluation and Review Report

The Learning Wave Limited

Date of report: 11 December 2018

About The Learning Wave Limited

The Learning Wave provides customised training for client companies. Courses are designed to meet business needs across skill and knowledge areas such as leadership, literacy and numeracy, health and safety and project management.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	Level 3, 9 Hargreaves Street, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	815 domestic students in 2017; 95 EFTS (equivalent full-time students); 20 per cent of students are Māori and 29 per cent are Pasifika
Number of staff:	20 full-time and 25 contracted associates
TEO profile:	See: NZQA-The Learning Wave The Learning Wave's (TLW's) workplace literacy and numeracy provision is funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). TLW delivers four NZQA-approved qualifications (levels 3 and 4) and a range of non-qualification learning solutions.
Last EER outcome:	At TLW's previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2014, NZQA was Highly Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The EER looked at the following focus areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace Literacy and Numeracy provision• New Zealand Certificate in Business (Introduction to Team Leadership) (Level 3)
MoE number:	7846
NZQA reference:	C31204
Dates of EER visit:	26 and 27 September 2018

Summary of Results

The Learning Wave is an innovative and responsive organisation, delivering value for client organisations and students through the close integration of learning with workplace practice.

Confident in educational performance

- TLW has maintained high-quality educational provision during a period of growth and organisational restructuring.
- TLW is highly effective in analysing and meeting stakeholder needs. Client companies are achieving measurable business outcomes, such as workplace efficiencies, increased employee participation and an improved health and safety culture.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Students are gaining skills and knowledge, which they apply in their workplace. Improvements in confidence and literacy are also enhancing their well-being.
- Overall qualification completion rates exceed 90 per cent; most students are achieving literacy and numeracy gains.
- TLW is strengthening academic processes, including assessment and moderation.
- Strong self-assessment and effective management and communication practices are evident in this high-performing and innovative organisation. Governance roles and responsibilities are being formalised.
- TLW's management of compliance accountabilities could be more systematic.
- There is strong evidence of TLW addressing areas requiring improvement and that educational performance will continue to be consistent and sound.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>TLW students have a wide range of educational and employment backgrounds; in this context, many are achieving meaningful outcomes which improve their skills, knowledge and well-being, at work and in their personal lives.</p> <p>Qualification completion rates have consistently exceeded 90 per cent for 2014-2017 (refer Table 1). Low rates of withdrawal and attrition generally arise from changed employment.</p> <p>More than 90 per cent of students are making gains in literacy and numeracy; the most significant gains are in writing skills. Pasifika students generally enter courses with lower skill levels but often make greater gains.</p> <p>A lapse in processes for validating assessor judgements and achievement during 2016 and 2017 has been effectively addressed.</p> <p>Strong learner achievement is based on effective programme design and re-assessment opportunities. This ensures learners are motivated and supported to participate and complete.</p> <p>TLW has a very good understanding of student achievement. In addition to results data, feedback from students and employers provides evidence of programme benefits for individuals, and related behavioural changes (refer also to 1.2).</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Overall student achievement is strong. Data is reviewed and analysed regularly for improvement (including trends across programmes, facilitators and clients). Gathering ethnicity data for students enrolled through the industry training organisation would deepen understanding of Māori and Pasifika achievement.</p>

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

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Annual client surveys confirm high levels of satisfaction with the value and relevance of TLW’s training. TLW reports growth in client organisation numbers, and a high level of repeat business.</p> <p>TLW works closely with clients to understand the overall impact of the training, which is measured by behavioural change in the workplace. Learner impact reports provide useful information on how well TLW has delivered the desired outcomes and key competencies. Key outcomes include improved workplace literacy and numeracy, practical leadership development, and a stronger health and safety culture.</p> <p>Learners are gaining qualifications and developing practical skills and attributes which are directly relevant to their employment and support their career progression.</p> <p>Participants in literacy and numeracy programmes gain confidence and improved ability to engage with tasks and the workplace in a much more meaningful way. Improved literacy and numeracy skills are also having a positive impact on students’ daily lives and families.</p> <p>Recently TLW developed digital literacy learning to better reflect the growing use of technology in the workplace, alongside traditional literacy skills.</p> <p>In 2017, TLW worked collaboratively with industry stakeholders to develop the Managing Safely programme for construction and infrastructure sectors, and is contributing to an evaluation of the impact of the programme on workplace safety.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>TLW has comprehensive evidence of the strong value and relevance of training outcomes for students and employers. Outcomes are evaluated in relation to the original learning needs and objectives identified with clients during programme design, and improvements are identified for any aspect of the design and delivery process.</p>

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>TLW has highly effective processes for ensuring programmes are relevant and meet the needs of stakeholders and students. Learning solutions are collaboratively developed to address the gap between the requirements of the business and staff skill sets. In the case of large projects, training programmes may be piloted, then reviewed and refined before further delivery.</p> <p>Teaching and learning resources are customised to reflect the client organisation, and programmes are timed and structured to meet the operational requirements of the workplace. Programme delivery is set out in detailed 'flight path' documents, and regular reviews highlight opportunities for improvements, drawing on feedback and information from a variety of sources.</p> <p>TLW ensures learning environments are structured to meet the needs of students from a variety of backgrounds. Facilitators use information gathered from pre-assessment using the TEC literacy assessment tool to ensure delivery is pitched at the correct level. TLW has effective systems to monitor and support student learning between classes.</p> <p>Facilitators are well qualified and experienced. TLW considers skills and style when matching facilitators to programmes and projects to ensure the best fit with client and student needs.</p> <p>TLW has processes and systems in place to ensure assessment is fair, valid and consistent. Assessor resources have been enhanced recently. A national assessment moderator has been appointed and internal moderation is now occurring more reliably.</p>
Conclusion:	TLW takes a collaborative and continuous improvement approach to programme design, delivery and review. This is effective in ensuring the needs of students and stakeholders are understood and matched.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>TLW is providing effective academic support for students in the context of short duration block courses. Students benefit from small classes and an inclusive and welcoming learning environment. Activities are effective in engaging and motivating students with varied educational backgrounds and learning needs. Students are supported to complete assessments and receive timely feedback.</p> <p>TLW actively encourages the involvement of supervisors and managers in supporting and mentoring students as they apply their new knowledge and skills in the workplace. This increases student engagement and success.</p> <p>Recent improvements include the TLW welcome process for students and managers, and a contract with workplace supervisors to clarify expectations.</p> <p>Feedback from end-of-programme surveys shows that students are very satisfied with their learning experience and rate their facilitators highly. Student feedback is valued and acted on.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>TLW works closely with client organisations to provide appropriate academic and pastoral support for students. Students receive support and encouragement to engage with the learning opportunity and to apply new knowledge and skills in the workplace.</p>

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>TLW is a forward-focussed and innovative organisation, with a clear vision and effective management and communication.</p> <p>Meaningful engagement with stakeholders is strongly evident in all aspects of TLW’s educational provision and organisation.</p> <p>TLW responded to growth and market circumstances with organisation reviews and restructures during 2016 and 2017. This led to some disruption of organisational culture and processes. TLW has effectively addressed the impacts of these activities. For example, a recent staff survey indicated high levels of engagement, and moderation processes have been reviewed and re-established.</p> <p>Governance and management are working on a 10-year strategic plan and systematically reviewing and clarifying leadership responsibilities. TLW recently appointed an independent chairperson to the board of directors to strengthen governance.</p> <p>TLW has effective processes for recruiting and monitoring the performance of a pool of facilitators contracted for programme delivery nationwide. Facilitator input into programme design and review processes is valued. Facilitators provide feedback to managers, share ideas on teaching practice, and participate in professional development.</p> <p>TLW has an effective and comprehensive framework for continuous improvement. TLW gathers and uses information and data from a wide variety of sources for monitoring business and educational performance. Recent examples of improvements include the review and strengthening of processes for programme design and review and enhancements to assessment.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>TLW has maintained strong educational achievement across its programmes. Self-assessment is comprehensive and effective, involving staff and associates at all levels of the organisation. Good progress is being made in formalising governance roles</p>

	and responsibilities.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>TLW has variable performance in conforming with NZQA rules and regulations. During the EER it was noted that TLW had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a strong record of programme development and successful approval and accreditation applications to NZQA • a range of ways of ensuring policies and procedures set out in the quality management system are followed, including effective processes for monitoring programme delivery to reflect NZQA approvals • not submitted assessment materials to NZQA for 2017 national external moderation, despite reporting credits and advising three standards on the moderation plan • no evidence of internal moderation activity for 2016 and 2017 (although retrospective internal post-assessment moderation has now been completed for all programmes for both years) • omitted to notify NZQA of a change of location for head office and temporary delivery sites for NZQA-approved qualifications (now remedied). <p>A 2018 TEC desktop audit of TLW's performance against funding conditions for the Workplace Literacy and Numeracy fund (2016 and 2017) identified areas for improvement, particularly in relation to the hours and intensity of delivery and delivery benchmarks (satisfactorily addressed in 2018). Discussions are ongoing regarding learner eligibility requirements. It is not clear who is responsible for monitoring information from funding and regulatory agencies.</p>
Conclusion:	No significant concerns with TLW's current management of compliance accountabilities emerged during this evaluation. However, several lapses and gaps indicate that a more systematic approach is required to managing compliance responsibilities.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Literacy and numeracy provision

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Literacy and numeracy skills and strategies are being developed to address the priorities of client organisations; for example, an improved health and safety culture.</p> <p>TLW uses data to compare gains in literacy and numeracy across cohorts and client organisations. Learner feedback confirms the value of the programmes for enhancing student confidence and well-being.</p>
Conclusion:	In addition to progression shifts, TLW has good evidence of the positive impact of this provision for individuals and organisations.

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Business (Introduction to Team Leadership) (Level 3)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>This programme, first delivered in 2017, is providing basic concepts and practical strategies for first line supervisors and managers. Learning and assessment resources are contextualised to meet specific client needs.</p> <p>Student learning and development between classes is closely monitored and supported by TLW. Workplace mentors or supervisors sign off on activities such as completion of unit standard assessments, and developing and implementing projects. Students report back at the next class on how they have applied their learning.</p>
Conclusion:	Student achievement is consistently high. Understanding the

	impact and value of the programme will be enhanced by stakeholder surveys three months after programme completion.
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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.

NZQA recommends that The Learning Wave:

- Establish a more systematic approach to monitoring compliance accountabilities.

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. Qualification completion data for NZQA-approved qualifications overall and the New Zealand Certificate in Business (Introduction to Team Leadership) (Level 3) (previously National Certificate First Line Management (Level 3)) 2015-2017

Qualifications	Qualification completion rate (# of enrolments)		
	2015	2016	2017
All NZQA-approved quals	93% (96)	94% (205)	92% (158)
NZCITL (Level 3)	93% (96)	95% (153)	93% (85)

Data source: TLW

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 fraud²*
- *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.*

² NZQA and the 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 according to 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 for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

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. The requirements are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 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 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 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). The Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/ga-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/>, 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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