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External Evaluation and Review Report

New Zealand Sports Turf Institute
Limited

Date of report: 9 May 2019

About New Zealand Sports Turf Institute Limited

New Zealand Sports Turf Institute (NZSTI) was formed in 1949. In addition to training delivery, the organisation is actively involved in research and consultancy for the sports turf industry. Students are drawn from the sports turf and amenity sectors via the brokerage of Primary ITO (industry training organisation).

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	163 Old West Road, Palmerston North
Code of Practice signatory:	Not a signatory
Number of students:	Domestic: 180 students (all part-time) 87 per cent New Zealand European, 8 per cent Māori, 2 per cent Pasifika
Number of staff:	Six full-time and two part-time
TEO profile:	See: NZQA - NZ Sports Turf Institute In March 2018, NZSTI was purchased by the Labosport Group, an international sports surfaces company with operations in 13 countries. The change has seen the appointment of a new managing director, but all other staff and the organisation's operations are unchanged.
Last EER outcome:	NZSTI's previous EER outcome in 2015 was Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Off-job training for sports turf apprentices (which includes all formal training delivered by the PTE)
MoE number:	7999
NZQA reference:	C33683
Dates of EER visit:	12 and 13 March 2019

Summary of Results

NZSTI is a high quality, specialty provider which produces graduates who are valued by employers and who contribute positively to the sports turf industry.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- NZSTI has high course completions along with solid student satisfaction with their training. Students are achieving their academic and personal goals. The PTE's long-term relationships with employers also signify that the outcomes for students are valued.
- NZSTI is using its industry and community connections and relationships effectively to develop and deliver programmes that meet individual and stakeholder needs.
- Courses are taught by experienced, qualified staff who use their industry experience and practical scenarios to ensure the education delivery is relevant and engaging.
- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and purpose which is reflected throughout the operation. The activities are well resourced and NZSTI uses its resources effectively. Important compliance accountabilities are being well managed.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The concept of self-assessment is not new at NZSTI. Records and discussions indicate that self-assessment is well embedded and has been practised for many years. Processes to critically analyse contributing factors to student outcomes and other quality improvements are well developed and effective.
- Self-assessment at NZSTI is ongoing, authentic and transparent, and findings are being used insightfully to bring about worthwhile improvements.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI students achieve excellent results. Course completion rates have consistently ranged between 95 and 100 per cent over several years. All students who remain in an apprenticeship eventually complete their qualification, including progression from level 3 to level 4. The few withdrawals occur when students leave the industry or cease their apprenticeship.</p> <p>Achievement at NZSTI is a combination of completing whole unit standards and elements of some unit standards, with the balance of the learning and assessment taking place on-job, as is the nature of ITO-managed training. The variable factor is the amount of time students take to complete qualifications. This is largely outside of NZSTI's control as the students are enrolled as apprentices with Primary ITO. NZSTI has however, monitored and initiated strategies for speeding up the progress of students, including Māori students who have been progressing at a slower rate than the overall cohort.</p> <p>Interviews with students and external stakeholders indicate that the students are acquiring useful skills and knowledge which they are able to apply immediately in their employment, including a strong emphasis on the teaching of 'soft skills'. Student evaluation feedback is positive regarding the integration of on-job and off-job learning.</p> <p>NZSTI has a student management system and performance dashboard which allows the progress of students to be monitored by staff. Staff meet regularly and discuss student progress.</p>
Conclusion:	Self-assessment material reviewed by the evaluators, and commentary from students, NZSTI and a selection of stakeholders confirm the success, extent and benefits of the educational performance of NZSTI.

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:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI is strongly industry focussed and committed to ensuring that students and the industry receive good value from the courses and services they deliver. Evidence from stakeholders indicates that NZSTI engages exceptionally well with its industry and is highly valued for the contribution it makes.</p> <p>Valued outcomes are being realised across both programmes through producing graduates who are valued by employers in New Zealand and internationally. Students are able to apply their skills in their employment. The bulk of feedback that NZSTI receives about its graduates is anecdotal since all graduates are apprentices with Primary ITO, whose role is to monitor graduate outcomes. Unfortunately, graduate outcomes data has not been shared with NZSTI in the last two years.</p> <p>Students at NZSTI are gaining good value from their study by achieving or exceeding their academic and personal goals.</p> <p>The value of the research and consultancy services that NZSTI provides is noteworthy. Staff produce research outputs available to the industry, and this research informs teaching delivery, ensuring that the students are receiving the latest in sports turf science and practice. Staff lead and participate in a wide range of industry conferences, workshops and fora throughout New Zealand and internationally. NZSTI produces a high quality quarterly magazine sharing applied research and consultancy outputs of the organisation. There are currently over 2,000 subscribers internationally.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Valued outcomes from the training include the positive contribution that the quality sports and recreation facilities make in building community, wellbeing and fitness and also enabling New Zealand sportspeople to prepare and participate at high levels internationally. This is a contribution that extends from sports fields in small towns to the major stadia.</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:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI's course design and delivery are meeting the needs of students and stakeholders by providing courses that are relevant to the students, employers and communities they serve. The organisation is well attuned to the needs of students through years of experience in the same market, and through constantly seeking feedback from students, employers and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The organisation undertook a substantial and robust internal review of the level 3 programme in 2018. This review identified some deficiencies and dissatisfaction with the delivery of the programme. NZSTI was open and transparent in sharing the findings of the review with stakeholders and set about, with urgency, to address the issues highlighted. In all, this was a very thorough piece of self-assessment and subsequent action to bring about improvement.</p> <p>Tutors identify the aspirations and interests of their students and, where possible, structure their teaching to align with those aspirations. This ensures that student learning needs are being well met. There was evidence of the tutors regularly engaging in meaningful discussion about teaching practice and student progress. Teaching staff spoke about how they share ideas, experiences and knowledge through their daily interactions and staff meetings.</p> <p>NZSTI has invested in human resources in instructional design and has in-house expertise in working to embed literacy and numeracy teaching strategies. Course resources (print and online) are high quality and useful to trainees during and after their courses.</p>
Conclusion:	NZSTI's regular and ongoing interaction with its stakeholders, ensuring that programmes and activities meet the existing and emerging needs of stakeholders, is a strong feature of the organisation.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI has no input into the selection of students as this is the responsibility of Primary ITO. Consequently, NZSTI staff have made a concerted effort to contact students prior to their first block courses so they can get a better idea of their needs and capability.</p> <p>Tutors provide timely, ongoing feedback to each student on their progress.</p> <p>Tutors teach small groups of students which enables them to have a good understanding of students' learning barriers and progress, and this is supported by a formal student survey at the end of each block course or online module. The information from the surveys is used effectively by the organisation to monitor student support needs and put in place improvements when needed.</p> <p>The facilities and teaching resources are of high quality and regularly updated. The use of technology to engage students, for instance the apps developed for pest and weed identification, has been well planned and deployed.</p> <p>As noted under 1.3, there were some weaknesses in the programme delivery in 2018², but these have been thoroughly reviewed. Learnings from that review are being applied in 2019.</p>
Conclusion:	Students experience a strongly supportive learning environment, and this is well reviewed within a reflective organisational culture, ensuring its ongoing effectiveness.

² The protracted sequence of events from NZQA's mandatory review of qualifications, the development and approval by NZQA of new qualifications (led by Primary ITO) and programme development and launch, led to pressures on NZSTI's delivery which were largely outside the PTE's control.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI's organisational strategy is formally documented, and management and staff members have a common understanding of the PTE's vision and direction. This ensures that the PTE's educational provision responds to the needs of the industry as well as the New Zealand tertiary education environment.</p> <p>Indications are that the new ownership structure will add to the reach and range of NZSTI's consultancy and educational offerings. The parent company, Labosport, monitors NZSTI's performance against strategic and business plans, and approves and monitors capital management.</p> <p>The organisation has developed, and is continually improving, effective systems for monitoring student achievement and supporting staff to improve educational performance. Quality management is well embedded in the organisation.</p> <p>NZSTI has employed highly qualified and experienced staff, whom it manages effectively and actively develops. The value that NZSTI management puts on the experience and know-how of the teaching team is clearly apparent and makes a positive difference to educational quality. The organisation is well equipped with physical and learning resources for the number of students that it currently has. There are systems in place to monitor resourcing so that there are always sufficient resources of industry standard to meet the learning needs of the students.</p> <p>The organisation encourages reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to how it meets the needs of students and other stakeholders. Self-assessment is being well led by management and is comprehensively understood and adopted throughout the organisation.</p>
Conclusion:	NZSTI has strong leadership and a clear vision and understanding of its business. Monitoring of performance within NZSTI is regular, transparent and robust.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI has a culture with an emphasis on being compliant. The evaluators were shown a 'compliance calendar' which is a useful checklist of compliance obligations, due dates, etc. This is monitored at senior management level and by an effective academic board, which oversees academic quality.</p> <p>Other indications of strong compliance management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed risk management planning which is also monitored regularly by senior management. • Training sites are evaluated before they are used. This gives information that determines whether the site is suitable to be used again. • NZQA attestations and returns have been submitted within required timeframes. • The courses at NZSTI are being delivered consistent with NZQA approvals. • The PTE has met compliance obligations associated with moderation, with both NZQA and Primary ITO.
Conclusion:	NZSTI has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these proactively and effectively to ensure obligations are met.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Off-job training for apprentices

Performance:	Good
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

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 fraud³*
- *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.*

³ 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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