



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

New Zealand Sports Turf Institute
Limited

Date of report: 9 May 2023

About New Zealand Sports Turf Institute Limited

New Zealand Sports Turf Institute (NZSTI) was formed in 1949 and is owned by Labosport Group. In addition to delivering training throughout New Zealand, the organisation is involved in research, consultancy and testing services for the sports turf industry.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	163 Old West Road, Palmerston North
Eligible to enrol intl students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 221 learners in 2022 Māori 56, Pasifika 38; no learners self-identified as having a disability. International: nil
Number of staff:	Five full-time and nine part-time
TEO profile:	New Zealand Sports Turf Institute Limited NZSTI training provision is predominantly the delivery of components of programmes through partnerships. Partners select and enrol learners into the programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NZSTI provides the off-job training delivery for Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, trading as Primary ITO (PITO) apprentices: New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Sports Turf) (Level 3 and 4)• Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust (Tupu) programme includes the New Zealand Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 2) delivered by NZSTI• Ahumāra Kai, partnered with New Zealand Plant and Food Research Limited and Akongoue Horticulture (trades academy); school and community-based programmes are

partnered with the Ministry of Primary Industries. The programmes include experiential learning and introduction to horticulture, with selected horticulture unit standards determined by schools to support achievement toward NCEA.

Last EER outcome:	NZSTI's previous EER outcome in 2019 was Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Production Horticulture (Level 2) (ID:126575) Te Hiku Group Employment Programme (Tupu) leading to the New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2).
MoE number:	7999
NZQA reference:	C52239
Dates of EER visit:	28 February and 1 March on site, and virtually 2 March 2023

Summary of results

NZSTI effectively uses the expertise and research of the consultancy business to develop and deliver leading edge sports turf and horticulture programmes. These are matched specifically to the needs of learners and partners. Industry, educational and community outcomes, determined by the partners, are valued and well met.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- NZSTI has a comprehensive understanding of learner achievement. Monitoring and reporting progress and achievement to partners is systematic. Partners confirm that performance measures of achievement exceed their expectations.
- NZSTI advances knowledge of sports turf and agronomy within industry and in tertiary education. Equally, NZSTI meets well the most important needs of NZSTI partners and their learners through authentic and collaborative engagement.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Academic standards are robust. Coherent programme design and effective delivery meets NZSTI partners' needs and supports learner achievement.
- Within the context of training delivery, NZSTI focuses on practical learning, proactive identification of learning needs, and collaboration with partners to effectively support the learners.
- NZSTI engages exceptionally well within the unique and very small turf industry in New Zealand and overseas. The PTE is highly valued by partners and industry for the contribution it makes. Effective leadership and processes, including academic standards, support educational achievement.
- NZSTI has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these proactively and effectively to ensure obligations are met.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI training provision is predominantly through partnerships, each having specific educational performance requirements and measures of achievement. NZSTI partners confirm that their students achieve very well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PITO reports that apprenticeship credit achievement associated with the off-job component delivered by NZSTI, continues the pattern noted at the previous EER as consistently high.• Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust (Tupu) programme. The first year of delivery was in 2022, and 93 per cent of the first cohort successfully gained the level 2 qualification. At the time of the EER, indications are that at least 80 per cent of Tupu learners from the second cohort, still to complete, will achieve the qualification.• NZSTI commenced delivery of the Akongoue programme in 2019 and the Ahumāra Kai programme in 2021. Learners gain unit standard credit achievement, and in 2022 three of nine learners in the Ahumāra Kai programme gained employment in horticulture. <p>Within the context and parameters of these partnerships, NZSTI has effective systems and processes that monitor and enable useful analysis of learner progress and performance across the range of training delivery.</p> <p>Reporting timeframes and measures differ for partners. NZSTI consistently and comprehensively provides accurate data and information to partners who, alongside NZSTI, work to influence and support learner 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.

Conclusion:	NZSTI has a comprehensive understanding of learner achievement. The PTE consistently monitors and reports on progress and achievement to partners. Partners confirm that performance measures of achievement exceed their expectations.
-------------	---

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI contributes its expertise in sports turf and agronomy to support initiatives and programmes with high-level and long-term economic and social outcomes, which are valued by partners.</p> <p>The most important outcomes are determined by NZSTI partners, who focus on their learners' immediate acquisition of skills and knowledge, employment and exposure to career pathway options. These outcomes are considered vital to meet and support the longer-term goals of the sector, Crown entities and Te Hiku iwi. These outcomes (sustaining community/iwi businesses in agriculture and generating livelihoods in horticulture beyond packing and pruning) will not be realised for several years. Partners emphasise that NZSTI's ongoing, authentic collaboration and engagement focuses on their priorities and supports progress towards the realisation of wider community outcomes.</p> <p>NZSTI uses its extensive industry networks and longstanding relationships in the specialist sector to proactively introduce learners to employers in horticulture. Learners in Tupu, Akongoue and the Ahumāra Kai programmes are guided into employment, which is an activity beyond what is contracted. PITO reports that graduates of the apprenticeship are sought-after in New Zealand and overseas.</p> <p>Through research activities, consultancy and participation in national and international forums, NZSTI provides bodies of knowledge to advance the domestic industry and the tertiary education sector where capability and currency are scarce.</p>
Conclusion:	NZSTI advances knowledge of sports turf and agronomy within industry and in tertiary education. Equally, the most important needs of NZSTI partners and their learners are well met through

	authentic and collaborative engagement.
--	---

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>Partners recognise and value the credibility NZSTI has in the industry. NZSTI research outputs, national and international networking, and longevity in this niche industry informs programme design, ensuring learners are receiving the latest in sports turf and agronomy practice.</p> <p>NZSTI designs its programmes in consultation with partners to match both the partner and their learner needs. There is evidence the needs of dyslexic learners and those with literacy and numeracy challenges are well considered. NZSTI reviews and improves its programmes, and seeks and incorporates feedback from partners and learners.</p> <p>Tutors have extensive industry experience and have a dual role teaching and as agronomists, scientists and technicians within the industry. All have an adult education and training qualification, and the lead tutor is a recognised dyslexia assessor. Tutors share knowledge, experiences and resources and often team-teach, enhancing their teaching practice and delivery.</p> <p>Delivery is flexible to meet partner needs as well as accommodating the changing environment of weather and horticultural activities. Milestones within programmes are identified and monitored to effectively track and respond to learner progress across longer sports turf and Tupu programmes.</p> <p>Learning outcomes and unit standards are clearly mapped to assessment and programme content. Internal moderation processes are comprehensive and occur systematically. All external moderation confirms that assessment and assessor judgements meet the standard. Independent review and evaluations undertaken by partners confirm the quality of the programme design and delivery.</p>

Conclusion:	Academic standards are robust, and coherent programme design and effective delivery meets NZSTI partners' needs and supports learner achievement.
-------------	---

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSTI effectively supports learners in their training. Learners benefit from hands-on practice in the classroom and exposure to laboratories, innovative practice and the latest technology, enhancing the learning experience and introducing learners to a range of career possibilities.</p> <p>Every learner has an individual learning plan, and potential barriers to learning and achievement are identified by NZSTI through the assessment of literacy, numeracy and dyslexia. Teaching and learning strategies are implemented to effectively support the learners, many of whom have not had a positive experience or success in education.</p> <p>Processes are effective and minimise barriers to learning. Quick turnaround times for marking assessments provide timely feedback to learners on their progress, and extensions are provided where needed alongside increased tutor support. NZSTI commonly has two experienced and qualified tutors team-teaching, and uses this capacity to focus on specific learner needs.</p> <p>NZSTI delivers training to learners who are selected and enrolled by programme partners. The pastoral care needs of these learners sit predominantly with these partners who often provide wrap-around services. Akongoue and the Ahumāra Kai programmes also have a Māori and Tongan Youth Trust mentor working alongside NZSTI in the learning environment, as part of a collaborative approach to support the learners and ensure cultural needs are identified and supported.</p> <p>Overall, NZSTI supports learning and wellbeing needs within the broader programmes by effectively communicating and collaborating with partners, training advisors, navigators and mentors to support student success.</p>

Conclusion:	Within the context of training delivery, NZSTI focuses on practical learning, proactive identification of learning needs, and collaboration with partners to effectively support learners.
-------------	--

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There are strong connections between NZSTI and its owner Labosport Group. A shallow management structure, active engagement in the PTE, clear decision-making and supporting resources for consultancy, research, testing and training enables the PTE to be well positioned and nimble to respond to change.</p> <p>NZSTI is well attuned to the niche sector and education needs within New Zealand. Educational achievement and performance benefits are enriched through the relationship with the international parent company, and exposure to broader and more extensive research as well as current practice in sports turf.</p> <p>Sophisticated software and technology help to manage the PTE and support teaching and learning. Effective systems collect data which is accessible and shared for use and analysis.</p> <p>NZSTI is active in tertiary education spaces, promoting and advocating for sports turf-related skills and knowledge to remain current and evident within the New Zealand qualifications framework.</p> <p>This small PTE is actively scanning the changing tertiary education environment, which has presented several significant challenges. NZSTI is strategic and looking to mitigate risks and plan for change. An example of this is the move into development and delivery of horticulture programmes, particularly within the youth sector, and the extension of sports turf training internationally within NZQA rules.</p>
Conclusion:	NZSTI engages exceptionally well within the unique and very small industry in New Zealand and overseas, and is highly valued by partners and industry for the contribution it makes. Effective leadership and processes, which include academic standards, support educational achievement.

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. A 'compliance calendar' which includes a checklist of compliance obligations, due dates and responsibilities, is monitored at governance and management level.</p> <p>Other indications of strong compliance management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal agreements with partnerships which include licensing of NZSTI-developed materials, training delivery expectations and reporting requirements. • Detailed risk management planning monitored regularly. • NZQA attestations and returns submitted within required timeframes. • Courses delivered consistent with NZQA approvals. • Meeting compliance obligations associated with external moderation; having a comprehensive internal moderation system. • A thorough review of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021. NZSTI is well aware of its obligations within the context of education provision and recognises that a review of the current learner survey tool would be timely and useful.
Conclusion:	NZSTI has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these proactively and effectively to ensure obligations are met.

Focus area

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

2.1 Production Horticulture (Level 2) Te Hiku Group Employment Programme (Tupu)

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

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 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 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

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 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

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 2021. 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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz