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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology

Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 23 February 2017

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	14
Appendix	15

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Final Report

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:	Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology (FIAT)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	29 May 2015
Location:	760 Glenbrook Road, RD4, Pukekohe
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4) (General Horticulture and Nursery Production) (one-year programme) National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4) (Advanced) (two-year programme)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: nil International: six equivalent full-time students Student ethnicity: all Indian
Number of staff:	Two full-time and one part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/ngf-accreditations.do?providerId=802895001
Distinctive characteristics:	FIAT delivers horticultural training on a commercial production site. This enables the students to combine theory and practical on the same site.

Recent significant changes:	None
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>This is the organisation's first external evaluation and review by NZQA since gaining registration as a PTE.</p> <p>FIAT has attended one regional moderation cluster meeting with Primary Industry Training Organisation, the standard-setting body for horticulture. The ITO noted that all assessment examples viewed have been internally moderated, and the work was of a good standard, but lacked a summary sheet. The ITO suggested developing a matrix showing what evidence was collected for each element being assessed, and how it was assessed against the judgement statements.</p> <p>Primary ITO also noted that FIAT is using Primary ITO assessment tasks and guidelines, and is intending to outsource training for Growsafe and Approved Handler (for using agrichemicals), and vehicles and machinery (forklift licence), if the learners want these workplace-related certifications.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

This evaluation included international student support in the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4) (including the level 4 advanced certificate), as a single focus area. This is because this is the organisation's first external evaluation and review, with only six students, who were enrolled in the few weeks prior to the evaluation.

The methodology for this evaluation included the recently revised key evaluation questions which include a strong focus on governance and management. This enabled the evaluation team to review all this organisation's training activity since registration.

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.

The lead evaluator visited the organisation prior to the evaluation site visit, and met with the owner, office administrator and a contracted educational consultant to explore options for the scope, and to explain the process and timing of the evaluation.

The organisation submitted their:

- compliance declaration
- self-assessment summary
- three-month programme evaluation review
- organisational goals and performance indicators.

FIAT also shared a wide range of organisational documents and records with NZQA via Dropbox. These included:

- student files
- meeting minutes
- policies and procedures
- attendance records
- student achievement records
- staff curriculum vitae
- organisation chart.

The evaluation team of two visited the delivery site for one day, and interviewed the owner, office administrator, educational consultant, two members of the advisory group, and all students enrolled.

Further evaluation of the documents submitted in Dropbox, and interviews with the sole tutor and Immigration New Zealand, were carried out after the site visit.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance and **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology**.

The key reasons for this level of confidence are:

Educational performance

- At the time of this evaluation, FIAT had been registered for 18 months but had only enrolled students a few weeks prior to the site visit. This evaluation is largely based on the organisation's preparedness to deliver education programmes and meet its compliance requirements, because very little actual student achievement had occurred, and no outcomes had yet been achieved. However, the achievement that has occurred is appropriate and validated by moderation.
- The programmes offered are unit standard-based, and four of the six enrolled students had already achieved some unit standards following a few weeks of attendance. All assessment is competency-based, and all assessments attempted have been achieved at this stage. While this is very early in the programme, students are making good progress in proportion to the length of time enrolled. There was evidence of students gaining good value from the training, at this early stage.
- The organisation has a strong connection with the local horticulture and business community with appropriate business and horticulture representation on their advisory group. This group is providing FIAT with good information on future employment demands in horticulture. This bodes well for their ongoing performance in supporting and enabling graduates to gain employment in horticulture.
- The training site is well appointed and situated within a commercial horticulture operation and is providing students with a variety of valuable commercial and horticultural contexts to apply their theory in practical situations.
- Students' assessments, and the internal moderation of assessment judgements, have been validated by the standard-setting body, Primary ITO, validating student achievements.
- The tutor and owner have very strong and relevant horticulture industry experience.

Self-assessment

- The organisation has developed a range of templates for monitoring performance, including reviewing their compliance with The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (the Code of Practice), tracking and reviewing student achievement and completions, and reviewing its programmes. These are not fully implemented due to the short time the organisation has been running and the short time of actual delivery of the programmes.
- There is a gap in the application of these review processes, with issues concerning medical and travel insurance not being picked up early enough through Franklin's internal Code of Practice review (see Findings 1.6).
- There was one area where the evaluators identified a breach of the Code of Practice, under the section Immigration Matters, that was not identified in the organisation's own self-assessment processes. (Insurance for four of the six students did not cover the same time period as the students' visas.) Because this is a breach of the Code of Practice, it is a significant concern and leaves the organisation somewhat vulnerable. This is principally because FIAT is currently enrolling only international students, and compliance with the Immigration Act and the Code of Practice should be a very high priority.
- The evaluators consider that there are gaps in the effectiveness of the organisation's self-assessment processes. For example, the Code of Practice review document notes the processes in place and where information can be found rather than how these processes result in compliance or effective student support. More effective self-assessment and review may have enabled the organisation to identify earlier the issues identified by the evaluators.
- Tracking and monitoring processes for student achievement and outcomes have not yet been tested or proven to be effective, due to the short operational time. But students' achievements to date are accurately recorded and tracked.
- The organisation's self-assessment processes for matching and meeting the needs of stakeholders, including students, and developing the programme to ensure the engagement of students in learning are appropriate, with few significant gaps identified at this evaluation.
- However, the evaluators consider that the gaps identified above have some impact on the level of confidence NZQA can have in FIAT at this stage of its operation. This is because they include compliance with the Code of Practice, and FIAT has only been delivering training for a few weeks, so there is limited data on which to reach confidence at this time. (see Findings section for further detail).

Findings¹

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 **Good**.

Student achievement and progress to date is appropriate for the short period of enrolment. Four students have achieved two unit standards in five weeks, for five credits each, and one student has achieved seven unit standards in the 11 weeks of their enrolment, for a total of 36 credits. One student has not yet completed any assessment. This is a good level of achievement and progress, with these five students completing 100 per cent of what they have been assessed against. But it is too early in the programme to determine whether this early success will translate to academic success through their one or two years of training.²

The organisation has a planned and effective process for ensuring its assessments are fit for purpose and that assessment judgements are fair, consistent, and reliable. The moderation of assessment was reviewed and seen as effective at this evaluation, and also approved by Primary ITO.

Students interviewed at this evaluation expressed satisfaction with their assessment processes and their own achievements.

The organisation's self-assessment of student achievement was well planned and conducted, as far as can be determined in this early stage of programme delivery.

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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

While this programme has resulted in no graduates at the time of this evaluation, and therefore there were no graduate outcomes, there was evidence that the current students gain value in this training context. There is also the potential value of the qualifications to be gained in meeting significant skill shortages in the local area. The advisory group noted there was predicted to be a shortage of 26,000 qualified horticulturalists in New Zealand by 2020.

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

² Some students are enrolled in a one-year programme and others in a two-year programme.

The organisation's self-assessment, confirmed by the advisory group and students interviewed, notes the added value of training which is situated within a commercial horticultural production facility owned by the same owners of FIAT. This provides extensive opportunities for the practical application of all aspects of horticulture.

FIAT has been set up with the express purpose of supplying local labour and contributing to local producers and the horticultural supply chain, and the local economy, through the supply of skilled horticultural workers.

Most of the current students have completed higher-level programmes in New Zealand, mainly business or IT diplomas. FIAT expects that, combined with the horticulture qualification, these programmes give graduates a greater chance of higher-level employment than entry-level roles.

The organisation has strong links with India and is actively monitoring the international student market and current issues associated with this. The owners and consultant show a good level of understanding of current international student market concerns, and said they aimed to ensure programme outcomes are of value and contribute positively to their community.

Self-assessment processes are appropriately planned and structured to monitor outcomes and develop action plans to address issues. As noted, these are largely future-focused due to there being no graduates yet.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other stakeholders?

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 **Good**.

Programme schedules are designed to meet the programme as approved by NZQA. Overall programme planning is for an appropriate number of hours as approved, and the timing of delivery allows for the approved content.

The programme has been developed with the support of Primary ITO. The tutor has access to an appropriate range of teaching and learning resources and processes to meet the needs of students and the practical nature of the programme offered.

The tutor discussed using a range of teaching strategies to ensure students are actively involved in the learning. These include students working individually and in groups, rotating leaders within groups to help develop mutual support and leadership skills, linking their learning to their part-time work, and reviewing what has been covered in previous sessions. The tutor also noted that he specifically focuses on 'personality development' to help students develop skills for employment. These include timing and punctuality, ethics, practical application,

cultural issues, and a focus on quality, areas considered to be of value in gaining employment.

It is too early to determine the success of the programme overall or the tutor's approach to delivery and learning. However, early indications, based on student comments, student achievements, programme planning and the tutor's focus is that there is a good likelihood of the programme meeting and matching students' and other stakeholders' needs well.

The organisation's self-assessment processes are not yet fully tested, but an initial programme review has been undertaken as a trial, and overall the organisation is strongly focused on matching students' needs and industry needs in the local region.

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

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 **Good**.

Students are provided with appropriate information prior to enrolling, and are supplied with a student handbook which includes all relevant policies and procedures, such as advice regarding complaints and avoiding academic misconduct.

Students interviewed said they felt well supported, receiving one-to-one support and attention, and were involved in their learning in the short time that they had been there. They said they would recommend FIAT to others, and had no issues, concerns or complaints. Students also said the learning material was clear as were the few assessments completed at this stage. They were aware of the rules and processes for reassessment, there were no surprises, and marked assessments were returned the same day. They also liked the practical elements of the programme, which they found engaging, and their assessments included photographs of their practical work to support the written or theory aspects of their assessments, providing a good range of evidence of their experience and competence.

The programme review process and student surveys (two conducted as of the date of this visit) show that FIAT is responsive to student feedback, and students feel heard and see changes being planned.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

The organisation has been registered for 18 months, but had been delivering a programme for only a few weeks before the evaluation visit. NZQA conducted a validation visit in August 2016, and no issues were identified at that time regarding compliance with registration rules. The organisation has appropriately qualified and experienced staff to set up and operate a tertiary education organisation enrolling international students. FIAT is also in communication with the Tertiary Education Commission, which has invited the PTE to apply for Student Achievement Component funding for horticultural programmes for 2018. This is significant in that the Tertiary Education Commission is expressing confidence in the organisation in these early stages. Correspondence relating to planning for the funding to enrol domestic students was sighted at this evaluation.

The owner has extensive horticultural qualifications and experience including as an assessor for the Primary ITO. He has sought external input through a consultant where appropriate. He has hired a tutor with appropriate experience in horticulture, and started planning for the tutor to gain adult education qualifications.

The organisation has clear educationally focused goals and performance indicators, showing strong attention to student achievement, and gaining valued outcomes to meet the skill shortage needs in the horticulture industry.

The organisation's self-assessment of its support for achievement includes establishing benchmarks for achievement against the Tertiary Education Commission's published educational performance data, as well as setting internal targets as in their performance indicators:

- Programme delivered as approved – 100 per cent
- Student satisfaction – 85 per cent
- Students successfully complete their courses – 83 per cent
- Students complete their qualifications – 79 per cent

These performance indicators show a focus on high but realistic achievement rates.

The organisation is structured appropriately for its size and complexity, and all staff interviewed at this evaluation showed a good level of knowledge and understanding of their role and the requirements for operating a tertiary education organisation.

The compliance concerns identified at this evaluation have some impact on the ratings for governance and management performance and capability in self-assessment (see Findings 1.6).

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

The organisation has a proactive approach to monitoring and meeting its important compliance accountabilities. Appropriate systems and processes are established, as noted, to review the Code of Practice. The owner discussed processes to actively monitor changes in legislation, and changes in NZQA's published rules, to ensure FIAT is compliant with changing requirements.

The organisation has actively engaged with Primary ITO to ensure it stays compliant with external moderation standards associated with its accreditation and consent to assess unit standards.

The organisation has appropriate planning and a range of monitoring documents and processes to review its compliance. Some of these focus on what information is kept and where it is, rather than its effectiveness. This is referred to above in relation to the Code of Practice. FIAT's review document records where information is – for example, whether it is on the website or in the students' handbook – rather than how the organisation knows these processes are meeting compliance requirements.

There was one area where the evaluators identified a breach of the Code of Practice, under the section 'Immigration Matters', that was not identified in the organisation's self-assessment processes. (Insurance for four of the six students did not cover the same time period as the students' visas.) While this was identified by a Franklin internal audit prior to the evaluation visit and rectified, it is a breach of the code, because the organisation had not ensured that all students had appropriate insurance that covered the length of their visa. This is a significant gap and leaves the organisation somewhat vulnerable, principally because they are currently enrolling only international students. As such, compliance with the Immigration Act and the Code of Practice should be a very high priority.

The evaluators consider that FIAT has made a well-considered start to delivering training. While some issues can arise with newly registered tertiary training organisations as they become familiar with the Code of Practice and other compliance matters, FIAT has set up appropriate training facilities and resourced them well, and students are beginning to gain credits towards completing the programmes they have enrolled in.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: International student support in the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4) and the National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4) (Advanced)

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology:

- Ensure students have appropriate health and travel insurance which covers them for the full period of their visa. (Refer to the Code of Practice guidelines.)
- Review its self-assessment systems to check how well they identify the effectiveness of the organisation's processes to monitor important compliance accountabilities, and how effectively they contribute to students succeeding and gaining outcomes of value.

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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