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External Evaluation and Review Report

Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology

Date of report: 13 April 2022

About Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology

Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology (FIAT) delivers horticultural industry education at two commercial production sites – one in Franklin, one in Bay of Plenty. The majority of students are international.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	760 Glenbrook Road, RD4, Pukekohe, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: six equivalent full-time students International: 76 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Seven full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology
Last EER outcome:	The last external evaluation and review (EER) of FIAT, held in May 2018, resulted in summative judgements of Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Production (Nursery Production) (Level 4) (123362) (referred to in this report as NZCHP Level 4)• New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Nursery Production) (Level 5) (123364), one and two-year programmes (referred to in this report as NZDHP Level 5)• International students: support and wellbeing
MoE number:	8028
NZQA reference:	C47096
Dates of EER visit:	8-10 February 2022

Summary of Results

FIAT's fit-for-purpose programmes and extensive networks in a thriving sector of employment help support positive outcomes for students and graduates. Recent consolidation of quality management processes is contributing to improved self-assessment strategies and outcomes.

Confident in educational performance

- Student achievement rates are strong. There has been consistency in performance across the two sites since the last EER. Data is used effectively to track students' progress and reporting; discussions around achievement are robust.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Industry and sector engagement is ongoing and developing further. There is sound evidence that the programmes lead to positive employment and improved social outcomes for graduates. Recent changes to reporting should extend to more clear linking of outcomes to programme delivery and design.
- Since the last EER, FIAT has not met all external requirements relating to external moderation and a compliance expectation for approval and accreditation. Since these interventions, FIAT has strengthened processes to mitigate against future inconsistencies. These processes are still being embedded and will need continued focus for effectiveness.
- FIAT is committed to the health and wellbeing of its students. Student support is effective, both academically and pastorally.
- The PTE's management is well respected in the production horticulture industry. Leadership and staff are knowledgeable and experienced in the sector. The organisation has continued to achieve strong performance and positive horticulture-related employment outcomes during pandemic times.
- Self-assessment has improved since the last EER. The self-assessment framework is logical and produces quality information. FIAT needs to monitor some of the more recent initiatives for their impact on improving educational performance.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement at FIAT is strong. Qualification completions were 88 per cent for 2019 and 76 per cent for the 2020 cohorts. There is generally consistency of completion data by site and programme.</p> <p>Non-completions are generally due to student visas being either declined or expired during the course of study, and FIAT was not directly able to influence these matters. Further information on course completions is provided in Appendix 1, Table 1.</p> <p>FIAT is currently the only education organisation providing the two focus area programmes; hence FIAT has difficulty in accessing relevant external benchmarking data. Overall, however, course completion and qualification rates compare favourably with Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) data for course completion rates, which are slightly above the PTE sub-sector averages for level 4 and 5 qualifications.</p> <p>Most students studying at FIAT go on to full-time employment in the sector. The strong emphasis on practical application of skills is well supported by theoretical underpinning of knowledge.</p> <p>Management is well respected in the sector; there is a high regard for the training offered and the leadership of the programmes. This all contributes to more accessible outcomes for students.</p> <p>There have been limitations in NZCHP Level 4 assessment and moderation practices (dealt with more fully under 1.3). These lapses weaken the validity of the achievement data. FIAT is focusing on improving this area of quality assurance to ensure the validity of results.</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.

	Self-assessment practice shows improvement from the previous EER. Management analyses and reports trends of student achievement through a database. All students are tracked and supported to reach educational milestones. Some of these improved processes that contribute to a clear and comprehensive reporting framework are recent and need time to be fully embedded to show outcomes.
Conclusion:	Students at FIAT are achieving well. Students benefit from improved employment conditions and social outcomes. However, concerns regarding the reporting of student achievement in the NZCHP Level 4 programme reduces confidence in reported outcomes. At the time of the EER visit, there was clear evidence that this gap was being well managed.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FIAT management has extensive industry connections, liaises with relevant sector bodies, and makes use of industry reports to inform their strategic direction. A well-chosen group of industry experts representing the advisory committee offers extensive knowledge and input to programme delivery. These relationships ensure that FIAT is well placed to continue to deliver fit-for-purpose programmes that meet the needs of stakeholders.</p> <p>There was strong evidence that the focus area programmes are of high value to stakeholders. During 2019-21, 89 per cent of graduates were employed in relevant roles. Graduates are tracked, with strong numbers being retained in the industry and improving their employment outcomes. This compares favourably with overall industry benchmarks.² For further information on graduate outcomes, see Appendix 1, Table 2.</p> <p>Evidence of employer satisfaction was submitted during the 2021 NZQA Consistency Reviews of the focus area programmes. These detailed high rates of employer confidence in the graduates' ability to successfully apply the required skills. Graduates' confidence in their ability was similarly positive.</p>

² <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29270-Primary-industries-workforce-fact-sheets>

	<p>Improved outcomes included gaining full-time employment, confidence in managing systems and resources, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge that would benefit communities in the graduates' countries of origin.</p> <p>FIAT has recently improved management reporting processes to systematically capture and analyse data. This will support FIAT to better evidence the links between programme outcomes and programme delivery and design.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>There is strong evidence that graduates gain improved outcomes as a result of the qualifications gained. Graduates acquire skills that meet the current skills shortage in New Zealand. Employers benefit from acquiring work-ready staff with the necessary skills to work with some autonomy. Improvements in reporting structures will support continued programme delivery and design.</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:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FIAT programmes are designed and delivered through a blend of theory and practical input and self-directed learning that reflect industry expectations and standards.</p> <p>Timetabling and the use of blended delivery methods ensure that students are easily able to access part-time horticultural employment. Students benefit from on-site tuition components being delivered at the commercial site of FIAT's sister company. Structured visits by industry experts ensure students receive advice that reflects current industry trends and the range of workplaces of the production horticulture sector.</p> <p>FIAT has not consistently met external moderation requirements since the last EER. Programmes were previously moderated by the standard-setting body, Primary Industry Training Organisation, which resulted in positive reports on the teaching and assessment for National certificates. However, since the transition to delivering New Zealand certificates, programme monitoring by NZQA of the NZCHP Level 4 identified issues between the alignment of programme learning outcomes and student assessment. Overall, the internal moderation system</p>

	<p>failed to identify and address gaps in delivery. Primary reasons for this lapse in quality assurance management were incomplete document control processes and a mismatch in programme alignment and delivery in the transition from the National certificate to the New Zealand certificate. An action plan to address the identified gaps was submitted and approved by NZQA in late 2021.</p> <p>At the time of the EER, there was evidence of improvements stemming from this action plan. For example, FIAT undertook a complete review of the NZDHP Level 5 programme and introduced a more robust and better-defined internal moderation system. While the NZQA monitoring report raised concerns around educational performance, overall the student outcomes and the required graduate profile were and continue to be well met by FIAT's programmes. FIAT has also improved its quality assurance processes to ensure that suitable internal and external pre- and post-moderation practices are in place to support current programme delivery and external standard-setting body requirements.</p> <p>Quarterly programme review identifies and discusses student performance and management of assessments. The reviews are informed by clear and detailed data and include analysis of student cohorts, patterns of attendance and the results of student surveys. Resuming the previously adopted annual programme reviews would ensure that oversight of performance leads to improvements over time.</p> <p>Overall, the balance, design and delivery of the focus area programmes provides the industry with work-ready graduates, who are generally retained in the sector. Stakeholders, including students, graduates and employers spoke convincingly of their capability in the workplace on completion of the programmes.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>FIAT is delivering programmes that clearly meet the needs of primary stakeholders. FIAT's engagement with industry is continuing to strengthen with time, and discussions around improving and extending programmes are solid and authentic. Institutional performance around recent programme monitoring affects the rating for this key evaluation question. Recently adopted improvements in quality assurance self-assessment processes are being embedded and require continued monitoring.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FIAT management and staff are fully invested in supporting the students in their learning. There is a culture of working closely with students to ensure they progress through the programme. Students are well informed of their progression, and their skills and knowledge are developed through assessments and feedback from tutors.</p> <p>In addition to the face-to-face tutor support, self-directed learning is monitored every week based on the students' activities and participation in discussion forums. Staff also review work-based learning by checking weekly logs. This ensures that the students are undertaking a range of tasks and applying different skills.</p> <p>To ensure the authenticity of student assessments, all summative assessments are undertaken in class. Work-based, practical assessments are supported by photo and identification evidence. The recent improvements in assessment design and practice also assist in better recording of evidence of practical assessments.</p> <p>A detailed student handbook and orientation is provided to support students in their learning and New Zealand life. Tutors are highly regarded by the students, and student feedback is gathered and used in weekly meetings and in quarterly reviews for staff discussion. There was good evidence around intervention and extra support for students struggling with the programme and mental health issues.</p> <p>While the merging of the two Codes of Practice³ is at the initial stages, the process of self-review and self-assessment of support for the students was comprehensive and authentic. Encouraging the student voice is an area for development, and this complex issue is being well considered by management and staff. Setting achievable goals and timelines is required to ensure targets can be met.</p>

³ The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice and the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019

	<p>FIAT has provided international students residing in New Zealand during Covid-19 with programmes that lead to employment, and is supporting them pastorally while doing so. The number of domestic students is still small, but there was similarly good evidence that FIAT has worked proactively to support their journey through the programme.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>FIAT has strong support systems in place at both campuses, that enable students to progress well through their programmes. Self-assessment activities lead to improvements in the programme and student welfare.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>FIAT's organisational strategy is well documented and clearly aligns with their educational purpose. Management and staff plan and apply these strategies to deliver education that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of industry and stakeholders.</p> <p>The board of directors has recently been strengthened through the addition of an external director with significant governance and management experience. Strategically recruited advisory committee and academic board members provide a depth of input and knowledge of the sector as well as the New Zealand tertiary system. These improvements since the last EER help to strengthen oversight of academic processes.</p> <p>Improved reporting processes are also in place. Meetings have been formalised and increased in regularity, and minutes provide strong evidence of thorough and robust discussions backed up by reliable data. Outcomes and actions from these meetings are also evidenced. However, for some of the more recent strategic plans– there needs to be a clearly defined set of achievable steps to allow for the monitoring of impacts. One example is FIAT's commitment to developing engagement with Māori and Pasifika. Efforts to bolster engagement whilst well described, would benefit from a systematic approach to measure outcomes. Other systems to monitor student achievement and support staff to improve their performance are being embedded and need time to test for effectiveness. Processes are evolving.</p>

	Teaching staff have appropriate academic qualifications and strong practical experience. Staff are valued and undertake professional development. This commitment has helped to upskill tutors in the areas of adult teaching and learning qualifications, youth facilitation training, and assessment and moderation. Continued professional development, particularly in assessment and moderation practice, will support tutors further. FIAT is committed to increasing staff numbers, and this should be a priority if the intention to offer more programmes goes ahead.
Conclusion:	FIAT's leadership is sound and well informed through well-established industry networks and professional affiliations. Management and FIAT staff are highly valued by the industry they serve. Quality management systems have improved since the last EER. However, these require time to provide evidence of their effectiveness in supporting educational achievement and improved self-assessment.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Since the last EER report in 2018, there have been some educational compliance problems at FIAT. This includes the NZQA programme monitoring of the NZCHP Level 4, and a brief, but non-compliant mode of delivery for international students of both focus areas that did not meet with approval and accreditation compliance expectations.</p> <p>The NZQA Level 4 monitoring report detailed eight requirements and two recommendations, which indicated a lack of academic oversight in managing and ensuring that programmes met with approval and accreditation expectations. Human resourcing over a challenging and busy few years has looked stretched at times, and this may have contributed to some of the quality management processes being overlooked.</p> <p>FIAT responded to these interventions, and systems to review and prevent further breaches have been put in place. Governance and management have been kept well informed of this journey towards self-improvement and added staff to strengthen leadership and operations.</p>

	<p>In other areas of managing compliance, FIAT shows strong performance. FIAT is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice and has submitted the attestation to NZQA within the required timeframe. All other attestations, including the interim domestic Code of Practice, are also current and meet requirements. A random sample of international student files was reviewed during the EER, with no issues identified. FIAT has a reflective team and can evidence improvements made around ensuring the wellbeing of the students. This extends to thorough management of health and safety standards.</p> <p>Other compliance checks, including the recent Tertiary Education Commission audit (2020) and the NZQA Consistency Reviews of the two focus area programmes have had positive outcomes for FIAT.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Management of some compliance accountabilities since the last EER has been variable. Improvements to some systems have only recently been put in place and were the result of external review. This indicates some gaps in self-assessment that have had some impact on stakeholders. The FIAT team shows strong self-reflection strategies in other areas of managing compliance and is clearly meeting requirements in these areas.</p>

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 Horticulture Production (Nursery Production) (Level 4)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Nursery Production) (Level 5)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good

2.3 Focus area: International students: support and wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

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 Franklin Institute of Agri-Technology:

- Continue to invest in the professional development of staff, particularly in assessment and moderation.
- Continue to strengthen academic oversight of academic quality and compliance.
- Ensure there are sufficient staff to maintain and improve current programme delivery, particularly if there are plans to expand programme provision. Resourcing should extend to maintaining and guiding quality assurance processes.
- Set targets and milestones within an operational plan to implement FIAT's Māori (and domestic student) Strategy.

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. Cohort enrolment and completion statistics

Year 2019	Enrolled	Completed					Did not complete	
	Enrolled 2019	2019	2020	2021	Total achieved	In progress	Not achieved	Dropped out
National Cert L4A	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
NZC4	35	15	16	1	32	0	0	3
NCD5 year 1 of 2	19	1	15	0	16	0	1	2
NZD5 Year 2 of 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZD5 1 year	18	3	10	2	15	0	0	3
TOTAL 2019	73	19	42	3	64	0	1	8

Year 2020	Enrolled	Completed					Did not complete	
	Enrolled 2020	2020	2021	2022	Total achieved	In progress	Not achieved	Dropped out
NZC4	19	3	12	0	15	1	0	3
NCD5 year 1 of 2	45	7	24	0	31	3	0	11
NZD5 Year 2 of 2	16	1	14	0	15	0	0	1
NZD5 1 year	18	3	10	0	13	2	0	4
Total 2020	98	14	60	0	74	6	0	19

Year 2021	Enrolled	Completed					Did not complete	
	Enrolled 2021	2021	2022	2023	Total achieved	In progress	Not achieved	Dropped out
NZC4	38	7	0	0	7	24	0	7
NCD5 year 1 of 2	22	0	0	0	0	17	0	5
NZD5 Year 2 of 2	31	6	0	0	6	25	0	0
NZD5 1 year	9	0	0	0	0	8	0	1
Total 2021	100	13	0	0	13	74	0	13

Table 2. Graduate employment/productivity 2017-21

Total students graduated (completed study at FIAT)	2017-18	2019	2020	2021	Total
National and New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Indoor Production) (Level 4)	35	32	20	19	106
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Nursery) (Level 5)	0	16	14	32	62
Total graduates	35	48	34	51	168

(Excluded: recent graduates of Term 4 of 2021, pending work visa approval - 10)

2017-21	
Total graduates	133
Employed in horticulture	123

Breakdown	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
Nursery	10	10	5	6	10	41
Vegeglass house	4	4	1	3	2	14
Landscaping/gardening	0	2	12	5	7	26
Outdoor orchard	2	0	7	14	17	40
Employed overseas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-employed/business plan	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total employed in industry	16	16	25	30	36	123
Returned/stuck overseas	0	1	1	0	0	2
Further study	0	0	1	1	1	3
Total (productive)	16	17	27	31	37	128
Temporarily not working (medical/family reason)	0	0	0	1	2	3
Visa declined	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	16	17	27	32	41	133

Breakdown by site						
Auckland	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
Nursery	10	10	5	6	7	38
Vegeglass house	4	4	1	2	2	13
Landscaping/gardening	0	2	12	5	7	26
Outdoor orchard	2	0	6	2	2	12
Employed overseas	-	-	-	-	-	0
Self-employed/business plan	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total employed in industry	16	16	24	16	18	90
Returned/stuck overseas	-	1	1	-	-	2

Further study	-	-	-	1	1	2
Total (productive)	16	17	25	17	19	94
Temporarily not working (medical/family reason)	-	-	-	1	2	3
Visa declined	-	-	-	-	2	2
Total	16	17	25	18	23	99

Bay of Plenty	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
Nursery	0	0	0	0	3	3
Vegeglass house	0	0	0	1	0	1
Landscaping/gardening	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outdoor orchard	0	0	1	12	15	28
Employed overseas	-	-	-	-	-	0
Self-employed/business plan	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total employed in industry	0	0	1	14	18	33
Returned/stuck overseas	-	0	0	-	-	0
Further study	-	-	1	0	0	1
Total (productive)	0	0	2	14	18	34
Temporarily not working (medical/family reason)	-	-	-	0	0	0
Visa declined	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total	0	0	2	14	18	34

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 fraud⁴
- 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.

⁴ 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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