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External Evaluation and Review Report

Vertical Horizonz New Zealand
Limited

Date of report: 6 October 2021

About Vertical Horizonz New Zealand Limited

Vertical Horizonz (VHNZ) provides bespoke construction, related industry and safety training to organisations, communities and iwi throughout New Zealand.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	246 Matakokiri Drive, Tauriko, Tauranga
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 2018 – 21,497; 2019 – 23,221; 2020 – 26,152; to 31.3.2021 – 5432 Māori: 2018 – 4053, 2019 – 4998, 2020 – 5020; to 31.3.2021 – 1138 Pasifika: 2018 – 1270; 2019 – 1580; 2020 – 1582; to 31.3.21 – 338 International: nil
Number of staff:	65 full-time staff, 25 full-time equivalent part-time staff, 106 contract trainers
TEO profile:	Vertical Horizonz NZ Ltd (provider page on NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident for educational performance and capability in self-assessment
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 124467: Certificate in Construction Pre-Trade (Level 3) Training Scheme• Online and face-to-face short courses• Training for Work course
MoE number:	8199
NZQA reference:	C47184
Dates of EER visit:	26-30 July 2021

Summary of Results

Collaboration with stakeholders informs VHNZ training and ensures valued outcomes that meet current and emerging needs. Data and feedback are used regularly to inform actions and improvements.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Student-centred training and support results in very high achievement of unit standards and programmes across all delivery. Partial and non-achievement instances are used effectively by VHNZ for programme review.

There is parity of achievement for Māori and Pasifika across all programmes.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Strong relationships with all stakeholders ensures that the training delivery and the programmes offered maintain relevance and currency. Collaboration and partnerships within industry and communities ensure VHNZ delivers tailored training that uses real-world resources and produces trainees confident to apply the skills and knowledge within their respective workplaces.

Where feedback indicates improvements can be made, it is captured and analysed to determine the appropriate action required.

Moderation is comprehensive and ensures the consistency and validity of assessment while providing further information for review purposes.

Trainee needs and goals are understood through either a comprehensive needs assessment or a whakawhanaungatanga¹ introduction session. Delivery is customised to meet emerging needs, and trainee progress is monitored and discussed regularly.

The organisation's vision, purpose and direction is clear and well-articulated throughout the organisation. Data is used very effectively to support continued growth and repeat business.

¹ Whakawhanaungatanga is the process of establishing links or making connections; the identification, through culturally appropriate means, of how one relates to the people one meets.

Staff are passionate experts in their fields and have a real want to make a difference in their trainees' lives. Staff attest to feeling supported by their colleagues and their management through the multiple channels of interaction and professional development available to them.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There is a very high achievement rate³ across all programmes of study delivered. Māori and Pasifika trainees achieve at the same, if not at a higher rate. VHNZ uses management tools, such as PowerBI, to analyse achievement, and survey data to develop an understanding of non-conformities⁴ and to inform future action.</p> <p>Additional to gaining real-world employment-related skills, trainees gain confidence and teamwork skills. Trainees in the Construction Pre-Trade and the Training for Work programmes gain first aid certificates, driving licences, connection with their cultural identity, and a feeling of success. The success of this is attested through employer and trainee feedback.</p> <p>The reasons for the few non-completions and more frequent incompletions and partial completions⁵ – seen across all delivery in the online short courses, Construction Pre-Trade and the Training for Work course – are documented and analysed for self-assessment purposes. VHNZ is commended for using all aspects of achievement to provide information for self-assessment and subsequent activity that better meets the trainees' needs.</p>

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ See Appendix 1 for completion data tables.

⁴ VHNZ has set internal benchmarks against which to measure its activity. Any drop below these benchmarks (95 per cent for achievement, and a rating of three surveys) is investigated by the management and training teams.

⁵ See Appendix 1 within the completion data tables. Incompletions are related to unit standards that have been started but not completed (primarily in the online course space) – these trainees are being contacted with a specified completion date now being given. Partial completions are where trainees gain the unit standards and get employment but do not finish all activity related to non-unit standards and work-readiness, such as punctual attendance, completion of the work logs attached to work experience, or completion of the driver's licence.

Conclusion:	<p>Trainees undertaking study at VHNZ achieve at a very high rate. They gain work-related, transferable and life skills that are directly related to becoming successful in employment. Information and survey responses are collected and analysed, allowing for a comprehensive understanding that is disseminated throughout the organisation.</p>
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>VHNZ's mission to deliver 'real training that saves lives' is embedded throughout the organisation's daily and training operations. VHNZ recognises that the outcomes delivered have value beyond the trainees to the whānau, iwi, communities, companies and industries that surround them. This drives the collaborative partnerships VHNZ forms with its stakeholders to ensure relevant knowledge and skills are gained.</p> <p>Most trainees undertaking the short courses have employment. VHNZ collaborates with the trainees' employers to ensure the resources and delivery mirror work practices so that the updated or new skills can be applied immediately on return to the workplace. Training for Work trainees gain the skills requested by their future employers while the Construction Pre-Trade trainees also complete work experience within their communities, positioning them to be able to progress to apprenticeships or employment. Overall wellbeing is enhanced.</p> <p>Some courses are delivered on marae within the North Island. For the trainees involved, this provides connections with their classmates, whānau and communities that will continue beyond the training. For some, this also allows for the trainee to be separated from influences in their daily lives, enabling them to start making new choices. Received feedback attests to this being a successful method of providing individuals, families and communities with life-changing opportunities.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Partnerships with industry and communities are fostered and maintained to ensure the training VHNZ delivers is suitable. Regular collaboration and seeking of feedback ensures trainees</p>

	attain the work and life skills needed to continue or start new employment or further training with confidence.
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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>Regular meetings with advisory boards and industry peak bodies, alongside collaborative arrangements with employers, companies and iwi mean the often-bespoke training provided by VHNZ is relevant and current. Use of a company's own machinery, policies and procedures and/or marae enables the emerging needs of stakeholders to be met promptly. With each training event considered a separate project, all related information and feedback is collected and reviewed by staff and management to guide future stakeholder interactions.</p> <p>Recognition of the learners' backgrounds and requirements for training means VHNZ delivers flexible training where different course lengths and theory and practical aspects can occur in a way that suits the learning styles and needs within the learning group. The presence of subject matter experts, coupled with a variable pace of delivery and use of relevant resources, means trainees are engaged and feel supported throughout their learning.</p> <p>Trainee progress is monitored throughout all interactions between tutor and trainee, with assessments being completed when the tutor believes the trainee is ready. Trainees are informed of their results promptly and, where resits are required, one-to-one feedback is given first. For some trainees, their exit capability is reported to the employer with recommendations for supervision to be required and monitored before competency is acknowledged.</p> <p>Extensive moderation is completed internally and externally with mostly positive results. This validates trainee achievement and supports that the assessments are fair, valid and consistent and aligned with the courses' learning outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	Regular stakeholder contact and use of work-related resources ensures the training delivered and designed is relevant and

	engaging. Robust moderation processes support fair assessment processes and provide input to a comprehensive, in-depth review process.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Because of the close working relationships that VHNZ has with its stakeholders, the learning goals of each trainee are understood. To understand more about the capability and the support needs of each trainee, VHNZ engages closely and collaboratively with enrolling organisations, has a whakawhanaungatanga introduction session at the start of each class, and completes comprehensive needs assessments and trainee profiles for the longer duration courses.</p> <p>From the information gained, activities and delivery are altered to best fit the needs of each trainee. Peer teaching and group work are also used to support the trainees. Additional external support such as reader-writers and interpreters are used to assist during the course if needed, and referrals for external support are made where necessary. Trainees (current and past) attest to feeling supported, able to ask questions when they need to, and value the whānau atmosphere within their course groups.</p> <p>The high number of Māori and Pasifika staff ensures Māori and Pasifika trainee needs are understood and met. The Māori and Pasifika support unit further supports trainees. Staff and management are supported to actively seek to better understand how to accommodate trainee needs within their delivery and use of tikanga and te reo Māori.</p> <p>In completing their self-review for the interim domestic Code, VHNZ found that they had comprehensive support policies and procedures in place already. However, staff were asked to identify how to react to support needs if they arose. This resulted in standard operating procedures being formulated for each course delivered. Other notable support measures resulting from self-assessment are:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employment of a Poutuara (social worker) to further meet the needs of Māori and Pasifika trainees • The development of an online application so trainees can access their learning records, receive reminders for refreshers, and have regular access to reference or resource material. Trainees value this as it provides a source of information for their parent companies when updating practice.
Conclusion:	VHNZ employs multiple avenues to understand trainees' goals and adjusts course delivery and resources to meet these. Appropriate support is provided using internal and external expertise. Self-assessment has resulted in some effective measures expanding the support VHNZ provides to its stakeholders.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The organisational purpose and direction is embedded and embodied in all activity undertaken by VHNZ. The vision of delivering 'real training that saves lives' is regularly spoken to by staff members as they arrange for and deliver bespoke training in niche markets – the quality of which is readily recognised by industry and community stakeholders.</p> <p>Academic and organisational leadership is effective. Comprehensive processes allow for quantitative and qualitative information to be collected. Regular reporting throughout the whole organisation allows VHNZ to understand their activity at both macro and micro levels. This allows for prompt actions resulting in visible improvements such as the new training centres, updated resources and the increased regionalisation of the organisation.</p> <p>All tutorial staff recruited are subject matter experts, have the qualifications outlined in the relevant CMRs⁶, and have the unit standard 4098 for assessing candidate performance (or gain it soon after induction). Further tutor and industry training and</p>

⁶ Consent and moderation requirements

	<p>memberships of industry groups and networks is encouraged and supported. Other full-time staff are also given appropriate professional development that better enables them to fulfil their roles. All staff (including part-time and contract) have the additional opportunity to develop and network at the annual and biennial conferences.</p> <p>VHNZ has a number of long-term contracts with large companies, TITOs⁷, government departments, iwi trust boards and community groups throughout New Zealand. VHNZ has entered into transitional agreements for apprentice off-job training and is planning to expand into the Pacific Islands. The organisation's Covid-19 response was measured and informed with procedures and processes developed to align business activities to each alert level.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>The purpose and direction of the organisation is understood by all staff and embedded in the training delivered. Data is effectively used by management to provide effective leadership, updated resources and responsive training. Recruited staff are experts in their fields but undertake regular professional development to fulfil their roles and progress within the organisation.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Because VHNZ provides safety-related training, the organisation undergoes annual national and international audits, ensuring the operation, policies and practices are legal and ethical.</p> <p>Additional to the short courses delivered, VHNZ has also gained funding from the Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Social Development and Te Puni Kōkiri for longer duration courses. To ensure accountabilities are met, VHNZ has diarised all compliance-related activity to ensure deadlines are met in a timely manner. Additional to this, VHNZ's regular meetings</p>

⁷ Transitional industry training organisations

	<p>require reporting on how compliance accountabilities are being managed so issues arising are promptly addressed.</p> <p>Annual reviews of policies and procedures occur, with all staff informed of any changes. All staff are police-vetted and this, as well as their industry re-certifications, is reviewed annually.</p> <p>Risk and complaints are managed comprehensively, with instances being used as self-assessment opportunities for the organisation, resulting in further professional development and changes to practices and policies, which act as future mitigation.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>VHNZ manages its compliance accountabilities effectively, ensuring the various conditions, legislation, rules and requirements are met in a timely manner. Regular reporting ensures that any issues are managed and provide opportunities for self-assessment.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Construction Pre-Trade (Level 3) Training Scheme

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>This training scheme was initially set up as a 10-week programme of study to enable trainees to get necessary certification and work experience to be employed in construction industries. Feedback to VHNZ has shown that a wider set of skills is desired by potential employers. Related unit standards are now offered as optional add-ons to meet this advice, and a proposal is being drawn up to add the more relevant skills, prior to seeking NZQA approval.</p> <p>The primary client for this training scheme is the Corrections Department, with additional programmes delivered outside this agreement to community groups or iwi. The reasons for collaborating with VHNZ to provide this training are the same – to provide greater employment opportunities to those who enrol. Progression data (for those who are not in the Corrections system) shows that trainees progress on to work and/or further training.</p> <p>Achievement of the unit standards to complete the training scheme is high and equivalent to the achievement rate of short courses. However, because trainees within the Corrections system sometimes get early release or are shifted to another site before completion, these trainees are noted as partial completions.⁸ To address this, VHNZ has negotiated with Corrections for new criteria for enrolment.</p>

⁸ See Appendix 1

2.2 Focus area: Short courses

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Online delivery of short courses has been available since 2019 for a limited number of unit standards. During 2020 and the first Covid-19 lockdown, VHNZ staff worked on developing more online programmes of study to enable companies access to necessary training. A dedicated developer has produced highly interactive course material to enable trainees to remain engaged. Ongoing reviews ensure that changes are made in response to feedback.</p> <p>Achievement for online short courses is lower than for face to face. Investigation into the possible reasons for this has pinpointed that trainees who are enrolled on courses by their employers have not completed as much of the course material as those who enrolled themselves. VHNZ has followed up these trainees and now gains trainee contact details (as well as employers), instituted a completion timeframe, and assigned a dedicated online support person as a result. An increase in achievement is being seen.</p>

2.3 Focus area: Training for Work course

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>These courses are funded by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK). The goal is to take young people who are not in employment or training and give them the basic construction, work and life skills to move into employment (also arranged by VHNZ). These courses are developed in collaboration with future employers, administered and supported by the Māori and Pasifika support team within VHNZ.</p> <p>Before enrolment can begin, an employer(s) is found and a local marae contacted and booked. Then VHNZ notifies MSD or TPK and other community groups, who identify potential trainees. These trainees are interviewed and informed about the course. A comprehensive needs assessment is completed, providing a trainee profile that follows the trainee through their course. A</p>

	<p>kaimahi⁹ is also nominated to be the on-site support person and co-ordinator for the entirety of the course.</p> <p>These courses are 10-day noho, marae-based events. For the first five days, trainees are totally immersed in Māori culture and gain work and life skills such as getting up and to work on time, preparing and eating regular meals, creating a CV, and practising interview skills. The rest of the time is spent training to meet industry requirements. Then the trainees are released to the employers around whom this course was formed. A further six to 12 months of pastoral support and monitoring is also provided to each trainee, with their progress reported quarterly to the funding agencies.</p> <p>Feedback from all stakeholders is positive, and there is increased demand from employers and the funding agencies. Many trainees speak about this being the first taste of success they have experienced and the first connection they have made with their culture. The employment of and the changes made to each trainee are acknowledged as transformative – for the individual, their family and their communities.</p>
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Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

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.

⁹ The allocated kaimahi is a VHNZ trainer who is able to be present for the whole noho marae as an academic and pastoral support person. They manage the noho marae experience.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Overall achievement data

Ethnicity	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (YTD May)	
	Enrolled	Completion rate	Enrolled	Completion rate						
Māori	4338	98.1%	6528	98.1%	8602	97.9%	7633	97.1%	3940	97.3%
Pasifika	1285	97.5%	1766	97.2%	2438	98.5%	2064	98.6%	1038	98.7%
Other	19375	98.2%	21679	98.6%	25116	98.9%	25592	98.9%	12347	99.0%
Grand total	24998	98.2%	29973	98.4%	36156	98.7%	35289	98.5%	17325	98.6%

Table 2. Construction Pre-Trade (Level 3) Training Scheme achievement data

	2019			2020			2021		
	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Māori	Pasifika	Other
Enrolled	65	4	33	75	3	21	69	1	24
Completed	43	3	27	47	2	14	43	-	18
Completion rate	66%	75%	82%	63%	67%	67%	62%	0%	75%
Partial attendance	22	1	6	28	1	7	23	1	5
Withdrawn	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1

Table 3. Short course achievement data

	2018				2019			
	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Total	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Total
Enrolled	5	8	38	51	11	4	80	95
Complete	5	7	31	43	7	3	53	63
Completion rate	100.0%	87.5%	81.6%	84.3%	63.6%	75.0%	66.3%	66.3%
Incomplete (including in progress)	0	1	7	8	4	1	27	32
Online	2020				2021			
	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Total	Māori	Pasifika	Other	Total
Enrolled	95	14	479	588	52	10	363	425
Complete	65	8	339	412	36	10	241	287
Completion rate	68.4%	57.1%	70.8%	70.1%	69.2%	100.0%	66.4%	67.5%
Incomplete (including in progress)	30	6	140	176	16	0	122	138

Table 4. Training for Work achievement data

	2018			2019			2020			2021		
	Māori	Pasifika	Other									
Enrolled	3	1	3	75	3	11	53	4	17	55	9	5
Completed	3	1	2	67	3	10	30	1	13	38	5	4
Completion rate	100%	100%	67%	89%	100%	91%	57%	25%	76%	69%	56%	80%
Partial attendance	-	-	1	8	-	1	23	3	4	17	4	1

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 fraud¹⁰*
- *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.*

¹⁰ 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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