

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Pathways College of Bible and Mission

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 11 February 2016

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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:	Pathways College of Bible and Mission
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1999
Location:	7 Oak Lane, Judea, Tauranga
Delivery sites:	Work placement learning supplemented by block courses at Totara Springs Christian Camp, a residential venue near Matamata.
Courses currently delivered and 2015 enrolments:	Certificate in Christian Ministry (Level 4) – five part-time students Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5) – 31 students Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5) – 17 students Diploma in Ministry Leadership (Internship) (Level 6) – four students
Code of Practice signatory:	Signatory, but without any current international students.
Number of students:	Currently 57 enrolments (an average of 12 per cent Māori student enrolments, and 13 per cent Pasifika student enrolments 2011-2014)
Number of staff:	Four full-time, two part-time and 12 contract lecturers.
Scope of active accreditation:	Refer to http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=828516001&delSiteInd=0

Distinctive characteristics:	Pathways College of Bible and Mission (Pathways College) is a charitable trust. It is also the educational arm of the Christian Brethren Churches in New Zealand. The Christian Brethren Churches provide governance at board level. The College provides education and training to students from a variety of denominations.
Significant changes since the previous EER:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of headquarters from Auckland to Tauranga. • Combining all block courses to occur at the same time and on one site (Totara Springs). • Appointment of a new academic dean.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>NZQA last externally evaluated Pathways College in March 2011. NZQA was Confident in the organisation’s educational performance, and Confident in its capability in self-assessment. The report made no recommendations, but noted that the college had been ‘purposefully and strategically working towards improving educational outcomes for learners who in recent years have had poor achievement rates. As a result there has been a dramatic increase in the completion and qualification rates of learners.’</p> <p>Pathways College is affiliated with Christian Theological and Ministries Education Society; Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand; and South Pacific Association of Evangelical Colleges.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The two focus areas selected for this external evaluation and review (EER) cover the mandatory focus area, the largest programme being offered, and all sites and modes of delivery (see the table below). Given the smaller size of the provider, Māori and Pasifika student achievement is reported under the key evaluation questions.

Focus areas and the reason for selection		
1.	Governance, management and strategy	Mandatory in all EERs
2.	Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5)	<p>This 120-credit qualification is delivered in an internship model. There is a high proportion of mentoring and self-directed study within workplaces, with more formal lectures at six scheduled one-week block courses.</p> <p>This focus area covers all of the Student Achievement Component-funded students enrolled at the PTE, as well as other unfunded students. It is the core of the College's delivery.</p>

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-eeer/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.

There was a pre-scoping meeting at the College's Tauranga office six weeks before the on-site visit. Two evaluators conducted the on-site enquiry over one-and-a-half days. The evaluators met with or interviewed by phone:

- the principal/chief executive, the academic dean, and the chair of the Pathways Board
- the College's internship coordinator and the education services manager and three contract lecturers

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- a group of 12 students attending a block course (these interviews were supplemented by extensive course survey and exit interview records, and graduate survey data gathered by the College)
- external stakeholders (representatives of employers of graduates and/or those currently hosting interns) and the academic director of a college which receives graduates for higher-level study.

The evaluators considered the following documentation as part of the evaluation:

- Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) workspace information
- components of the quality management system and planning documents
- meeting minutes
- a self-assessment summary
- internal and external moderation reports, including samples of marked student work
- course outlines and timetables, and documents about arranging and monitoring internships
- web-based guidance material
- samples of emails and correspondence about improvement processes and actions.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance, and **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Pathways College of Bible and Mission**.

- Pathways College continues the pattern of strongly improving performance reported at their previous EER. Course completions average 93 per cent over 2011-2014 (TEC Educational Performance Indicator data). Most students who enrol complete their qualification. Student outcomes such as related employment, higher-level study or voluntary service-work are very high, and are now being more closely tracked.
- The qualifications on offer are appropriate to the needs of students and the diverse network of church and para-church organisations that accept and support interns during the course of their study. Effective external partnerships, well supported by close and timely monitoring and mentoring, contribute to the success outlined above.
- Programmes contain relevant content relating to serving others, particularly but not exclusively within Christian ministry settings. The College conducts ongoing revision and review of course outlines, with changes and updates made within the approval and accreditation guidelines. The College has also actively participated in the Targeted Review of Qualifications process and is well positioned to move to the new qualifications from 2017.
- The College's leadership have a clear vision for the future of the College, albeit somewhat hampered by the constraints of available funding in the Christian Ministry field. Nevertheless, the College has sourced funds from charitable bodies, and negotiated unfunded delivery with the TEC. The College has suitable resources available (across all aspects of management, staffing and physical resources), and has made significant cost savings through planned change.
- Academic quality and improvement processes are also suitable and have been strengthened since the previous EER. The full-time academic dean oversees the curriculum and has focused on: harmonising aspects of the course guides; better planning and documentation of moderation of assessment; and developing the potential of the on-line learning components. The evaluators saw evidence of refinements, improvements and some new initiatives resulting from self-assessment.
- There were some areas where the evaluators were able to suggest enhancements or variations in the College's approach to their current activities. However, the gaps evaluators identified were not critical. Some aspects of the

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College's practice, although rigorous and useful, were still quite new (e.g. graduate phone surveys and external moderation with an appropriately qualified academic). The impacts noted were therefore relatively limited. In a few areas, part-time teaching staff need to be more intentionally involved in self-assessment processes and findings.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

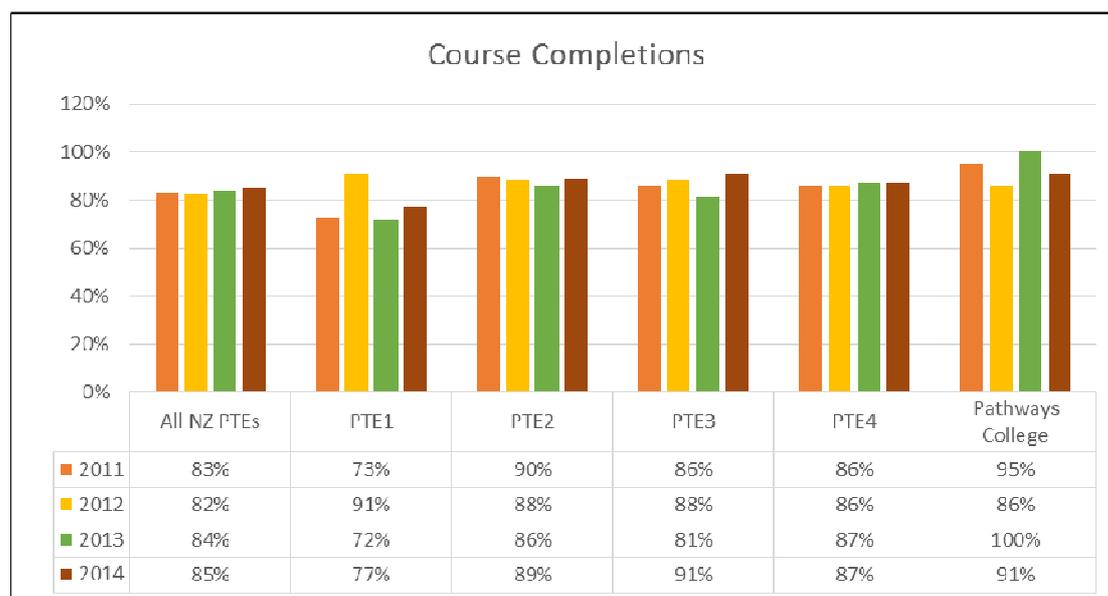
The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

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

A very high proportion of Pathway College's students complete the courses and qualifications they enrol in. The average for course completions is 93 per cent from 2011-2014.

The College has recorded and analysed the achievement rates using publicly available Educational Performance Indicator data from TEC. The College's achievement rates compare very favourably with the four Christian Ministry-related tertiary education organisations the College benchmarks its performance against (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Pathways College – course completions (%) 2011-2014, with comparable organisations



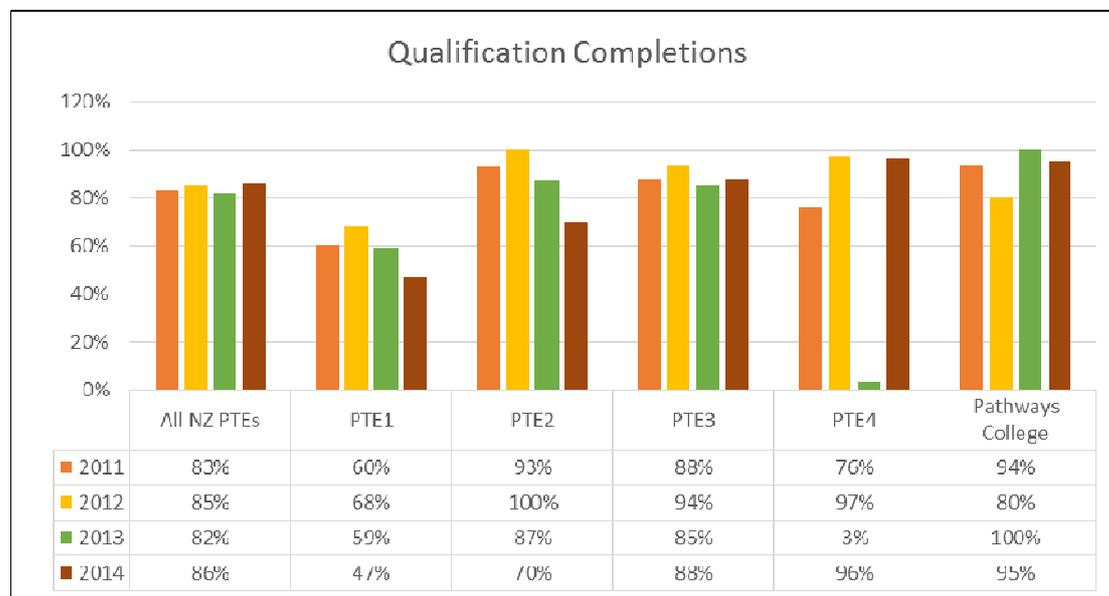
Source: Pathways College, using TEC-published performance data.

Academic quality processes at the College are rigorous: there are appropriate plagiarism controls; and there are suitably critical and effective internal and external moderation practices to confirm that students are assessed and graded fairly and reliably. The validity of achievement appears sound, and the organisations

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

employing graduates or with a good knowledge of their performance at higher levels of study also indicated that students are correctly assessed at the College. Assessment is holistic and covers knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as reflecting character development.

Table 2. Pathways College – qualification completions (%) 2011-2014, with comparable organisations



Source: Pathways College, using TEC published performance data.

Graduates currently obtain provider qualifications which have broad recognition within the industry sector (e.g. social service and caring ministries, church settings, and organisations working directly with children and youth). Both credit transfer arrangements and positive comment from other Christian Ministry educational providers confirm this recognition, which is reflected in strong employment outcomes. The content of the programmes is relevant and appropriate to the kinds of personal development and vocational outcomes students are seeking. The College reviews and updates the courses are subject to review and updating and is appropriate to the kinds of personal development and vocational outcomes being sought by students.

All students achieve well, and in the case of students identifying as Māori and/or Pasifika enrolled between 2012 and 2014 (in funded and non-funded programmes) only 4 per cent did not complete their qualification. This is stronger performance than that of Pathway’s ‘all other ethnic groups’ comparator. The College’s course and qualification completion rates for Māori, Pasifika and under-25s all significantly exceed sector medians consistently and annually.

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 **Excellent**.

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

This evaluation found reliable evidence that graduates gain relevant employment, proceed to higher-level study and/or otherwise contribute to their communities as an outcome of their study at Pathways College. Current interns are already adding significant value through activities such as outreach to youth at risk (e.g. providing recreational activities such as camps, concerts and sports events) and running useful activities for children and young people at venues across New Zealand. Graduates are also employed in leadership roles at churches and para-church organisations in good numbers. This reflects the intent of the elective and leadership streams of Pathways College qualifications. Less clear were the outcomes into overseas mission, which is a legacy goal of the College and is reflected in its name.

Detailed and reliable data on graduate outcomes shows that numerous students' progress to an undergraduate university degree. Pathways College also has a formal arrangement with Carey College to allow Pathway's graduates to enter the Bachelor of Applied Theology. On average, three students take that pathway every year and most complete the qualification there.

Graduates who had been interns find that this adds value when they start a degree. Graduates also report that they continue their involvement with community service after being an intern. A graduate survey showed that 85 per cent of graduates surveyed are employed or doing further study. Out of the 85 per cent, 44 per cent are either working in an area directly related to their study at Pathways, or are volunteering in an area related to their course while working or studying elsewhere.

The phone survey of graduates is a new initiative and looks promising for building a stronger profile on graduate destinations and achievements. At the time of the on-site visit, 59 per cent of 2013-14 graduates had been interviewed, which is a reasonable sample. The breadth and quality of data this phone survey gathers is of higher value than numerous other graduate surveys sampled at other providers. The use of this information to guide improvements in performance and/or compare patterns and trends in outcomes over time has yet to be realised.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

Pathways College completes an in-depth interview and internship document with each new applicant. This is a fundamental way the College identifies, matches, and ensures it can meet each student's needs. As well as identifying goals, potential activities and mentoring arrangements, the interview and internship document allow the college to monitor and review student progress. The College actively uses these interactions with this intent.

There is an extensive range of sites available for internships. Most of these sites are very familiar with the College's internship model. According to stakeholders the evaluators interviewed, these organisations are largely not-for-profit and find the internship arrangement beneficial for students as well as local communities. Pathway College's students may be 'taking a gap year', 'exploring options' or focusing on 'entering ministry' (including pastoral roles), so the internship model ('50% study, 50% ministry') suits a range of situations. Elective choices (such as youth work, preaching, and ministry among children or missions) add additional flexibility and help the College maintain the relevance of qualifications for stakeholders and the communities of interest.

Students who the evaluators interviewed spoke confidently and in some detail about the way in which the programme challenges them. Students said that the programme led to character growth and increased confidence, as well as promoting spiritual growth and leadership abilities. Students were able to supply some evidence of these claims: documented feedback from assigned mentors and a personal blog each student maintains which captures aspects of this growth. The College also gathers rich data in one-on-one exit interviews held on Graduation Day, which also confirms this finding.

Pathways staff regularly visit students at their various locations. This is crucial to meeting the needs of students and their host organisations, but also to ensuring an ongoing alignment with TEC and NZQA rules and expectations around how the programme is delivered.

A change to block courses has now brought all interns together at one location for each scheduled block. This was a considered change, driven by student feedback. The change has benefited students, as they can share their experiences with other students. This and other changes to the operations of the College (including further developing the on-line learning platform) reflect strong self-assessment and organisational planning. The ratings for this key evaluation question reflects that Pathways College maintains high performance and effective review processes.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

Teaching at Pathways College is effective. The pass rates and positive ratings in student surveys show this. However, the teaching lacks the effective self-assessment components identified in other areas of this evaluation report. The teaching is certainly good, but was not deemed exemplary by the evaluators.

Teaching at the College is almost entirely performed by appropriately qualified and experienced part-time staff. A few full-time staff also teach, which adds benefits to their knowledge of the programmes and students. Some, but not all, lecturers hold a qualification in secondary teaching or education.

This teaching model allows teachers to use their particular expertise to deliver specific course components, meeting the needs of students and the PTE. The College has a reasonably robust system to support and monitor teachers' performance - or 'adjunct lecturers', as the College calls part-time teachers. The College pays close attention to the accuracy and clarity of course outlines, as well as pre and post-moderation of assessment (which has been strengthened since the previous EER). An annual retreat brings together full-time staff and adjunct lecturers for operational discussions and professional development. Although this annual retreat appears useful, adding more deliberate reflection and review activities would connect this retreat with the other effective self-assessment practices occurring at the College.

A strong theme from feedback provided by students, graduates and internship mentors is the lecturers' emphasis on 'practical application' of theoretical knowledge. This confirms that the College is correctly delivering at a qualification level where graduates should be able to select and apply a range of solutions and processes, and demonstrate some responsibility for the management and performance of others. These attributes are very clearly developed in the integrated model of direct teaching at block courses, ongoing self-review and mentor supervision, and the projects and activities students undertake. These include organising events, camps and other activities, and working in teams to achieve specific goals at sites across New Zealand and in some cases on mission trips overseas. Course texts and regularly updated reading lists provide links to theory and wider scholarship. The College lecturers and moderators require students to meet a very high standard of academic writing and follow the relevant conventions.

Students have regular opportunities to offer feedback about courses, lecturers, resources and block-course arrangements. Student feedback is favourable, and the College uses it to monitor and plan. Lecturers provide students with clear and useful feedback on students' work, based on samples sighted by evaluators. Some students suggested turn-around time on marking could be improved by some lecturers, but timeframes sounded reasonable in comparison with other providers.

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Teachers and students relate effectively: there is ongoing two-way feedback that is well facilitated by management.

Moderation of assessments (as noted under 1.1) is suitably critical and effective in confirming that students are assessed and graded fairly and reliably. Moderation could be strengthened by ensuring that lecturers receive all moderator feedback. Currently lecturers only receive moderator feedback where changes are required. More active use of additional teaching staff in post-moderation is also both desirable and required to build capability and shared practice.

The current changes to moderation show how Pathways College is implementing reinvigorated academic quality:

- moderation planning, which integrates a number of review mechanisms²
- the external critique by a suitable external moderator
- refreshing and updating assessment tasks and course readings.

The gaps identified under this KEQ are managed and are not detrimental to student achievement. Nevertheless, the College needs to work on these areas (i.e. provide stronger evidence of highly effective performance³) before a higher rating is warranted.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

When the evaluators asked about what makes the College's programmes successful, senior staff at the College spoke immediately of the mentoring and pastoral support that underpins the internship model. The evaluators found comprehensive evidence to support this claim during this evaluation.

The College provides effective support through staff and assigned mentors at each intern's placement site. The College has processes and tools for selecting students and sites, setting up expectations and arrangements, and following up student progress. These processes are thorough and well documented and closely monitor each students' progress. Regular, scheduled and suitably resourced block courses provide additional opportunities to engage with and directly support the students.

² Course pre-moderation; course post-moderation; lecturer peer-review; student course feedback; lecturer self-evaluation.

³ To 'gain a comprehensive (full) understanding of educational performance and bring about wide-ranging, worthwhile improvements.'

These processes are all highly developed and highly effective in supporting student achievement.

The College provides personalised guidance and support that reflects the value base of both the college and the staff employed there. The College assigns sub-mentors and gender-specific College mentors: these mentors visit students at their placement at least twice a year. These support mechanisms are features of highly effective and well-resourced practice. Where issues or concerns arise, the College addresses these constructively and proactively. Support interventions, well beyond minimum requirements, were described (both from staff and from students' perspectives); this support covers physical, mental and spiritual needs, and in most cases these interventions have led to the student successfully completing the qualification.

Pathways College takes justifiable pride in the success of the Pasifika and Māori students who achieve well at the college (see 1.1). Actions that contribute to this achievement and reflect bi-cultural commitment include: on-going engagement with a Marae near Matamata; scholarships (which are being increased); collaboration with the South Auckland site of a larger PTE to further strengthen student support in that area; and recent enrolment in Te Reo development by the principal.

The students interviewed by the evaluators spoke confidently and positively of their experiences both at block courses and as interns.

The processes and impacts of learner support are subject to ongoing and effective monitoring and review. The mentor system reflects exemplary performance through planned training of mentors, very clearly documented and agreed allocation of responsibilities, and mentors' quarterly reports which detail student's activities and progress.

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

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

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

Pathways College has continued to show a pattern of strongly improving performance since their previous EER. This reflects that the leadership of the College have a clear and shared vision for the future of the College, and have sought efficiencies and implemented changes proactively. The College has suitable resources across all areas, (i.e. aspects of management, staffing and physical resources). The College has also made significant and credible cost savings through planned change.

The Board provides effective guidance to a competent principal/leader. There are established processes for strategic planning, communicating key information and performance appraisal. The Board has members appropriate to the college's

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activities. The Board and college also benefit from an international perspective on effective mentoring and leadership development within faith-based organisations. They have proven themselves adept at sourcing funds from charitable bodies, and negotiating un-funded delivery with the TEC, all to meet the needs of students and the diverse network of church and para-church organisations they support. The Board is also exploring new opportunities.

Student achievement and positive outcomes (as reported under 1.1 and 1.2) are very strong, well tracked and reflect the goals and values of the College. The qualifications on offer are appropriate, and meet student and stakeholder needs. Monitoring and review processes are effective in guiding and supporting students, and contribute to their success while aligning with TEC and NZQA requirements. Staff morale is high, with college leadership effectively communicating their expectations around what constitutes excellent educational performance.

At the strategic level (see 2.1), the evaluators rated the College Excellent in both educational performance and self-assessment. However, as noted under 1.4, the College needs to more actively engage the part-time adjunct lecturer group in the strengthening review and evaluation processes within the College.

At the time of the report, there was more evidence for the effectiveness of the placements and mentoring than for the role of the lecturers, which is equally (if not more) important to educational achievement.

The evaluators also encourage the further development of bi-cultural competencies and perspectives in course content across the College.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5)

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Pathways College:

- As new programmes are developed to meet the requirements of the New Zealand Qualifications, a comprehensive programme document be developed which integrates aspects of curriculum, timetabling, self-assessment and quality assurance. This may help ensure that all teaching staff have a common source of information and insight into all courses
- See comments under 1.4 and 1.6 about ensuring adjunct lecturers are more involved in college-wide self-assessment, planning and review processes.

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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