

Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Zealand Graduate School of
Education

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 22 December 2016

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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:	New Zealand Graduate School of Education
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 May 1996
Location:	95 Papanui Road, Merivale, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	Knox Centre, 28 Bealey Avenue, Christchurch
Courses currently delivered:	Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) (Level 7), Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) (Level 7)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes, since May 2003
Number of students:	Domestic: 2016 – 35 primary, 34 secondary; 2013-2016 – 17 identified as Māori and/or Pakeha; four identified as Māori only International: nil
Number of staff:	Eight full-time; three part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	As above
Distinctive characteristics:	New Zealand Graduate School of Education (NZGSE) is a private teachers college based in Christchurch; operating since 1996. It is a limited liability company. NZGSE is accredited by NZQA, in conjunction with the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (formerly the New Zealand

Teachers Council), to provide initial teacher education for degree holders wishing to be either primary or secondary teachers. Two graduate diplomas are offered: Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) and Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary), both level 7. NZGSE delivers the two graduate diplomas through a competency-based, practice method of learning conducted through extended teaching practice in schools, mostly in the Christchurch area. Partnership with schools is a key feature of the programmes. The pattern is three weeks in class, followed by six to seven weeks teaching practice in host schools; followed by an assessment week, followed by a one or two-week break.

In addition to the initial teacher education programmes, NZGSE provides services for experienced teachers and school managers under the banner of School Improvement Services. These include professional development courses, mentoring schemes, teacher appraisals and school reviews.

The initial teacher education programmes are competency-based. This means that interns can progress at their own rate. However, most Graduate Diplomas in Teaching (Primary) take five terms and most Graduate Diplomas in Teaching (Secondary) take four terms. There are four terms in a year. There are typically around 70-90 teacher interns on the programmes at any time. There are two intakes – January/February or July of each year. (Intakes for the last three years are 115 secondary and 104 primary; a total of 219 interns.)

NZGSE's mission is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools through improved teacher education.

Recent significant changes: The original site was destroyed in the Christchurch earthquakes, and the PTE was temporarily located at Selwyn House School in Papanui Road. This temporary arrangement has been extended into the foreseeable future as it meets the

requirements of both organisations well.

Previous quality assurance history: The last NZQA quality assurance visit was an external evaluation and review (EER) in 2013. NZGSE was found to be Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment. The graduate diplomas are monitored regularly by NZQA and the Education Council. The 2015 NZQA monitoring report resulted in one recommendation that has been addressed by NZGSE.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the EER included governance, management and strategy, and the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary), in which most interns are enrolled. Where there was overlap or important points of difference between the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) and the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary), these were also discussed.

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.

Two evaluators spent two days on site at NZGSE's training site in Christchurch. During the visit, the evaluators met with the two directors and the programme leaders of the two diplomas, and interviewed a group of current interns. Conversations by telephone were held with external stakeholders, including school principals and past graduates. All the documentation provided by NZGSE was reviewed by the evaluators, including their self-assessment, the degree monitoring report, teacher education standards, the teacher intern programme handbook and the external moderator's report.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **New Zealand Graduate School of Education** for the following reasons:

- NZGSE's points of difference from other teacher training organisations are its emphasis on classroom time for interns and the finely detailed competencies that an intern needs to be able to consistently demonstrate before graduation. These factors produce highly competent teachers. Interns spend about two-thirds of their time working in schools under the guidance of NZGSE tutors, who give frequent professional feedback. They do this through a shared practice and mentoring model which encourages critical reflection by interns, with tutor support and challenge. The goal is for interns to meet competency criteria across a range of theory and practical aspects of teaching and learning. The time this takes varies from intern to intern.
- Principals and teachers commented that the interns were mature, took the initiative, demonstrated professionalism, had excellent communication skills, efficient planning, knowledge of curriculum documents and involved themselves in all aspects of the school, including extra-curricular activities. These attributes lead to offers of employment, with some principals preferring to only employ NZGSE graduates because of the value they add to a school.
- NZGSE has strict entry and enrolment criteria and processes to ensure that only people who are likely to succeed and who understand the teacher training model and pressures of the training are accepted as interns. This has contributed to consistently high graduate achievement data since the PTE started tracking this data in 2009. Since then, around 98 per cent of graduates have gained employment in teaching jobs, mainly in New Zealand but also overseas. The average completion rate for NZGSE programmes between 2013 and 2016 was 84 per cent. The reasons interns withdraw are known, with exit interviews undertaken by a senior manager, and any actions and changes required are addressed.
- Programme planning is informed by ongoing analysis of the needs of interns and other stakeholders. This information is gathered both formally and informally through conversations with interns, teachers and principals. There is good use of data for self-assessment, and it informs programme delivery and ongoing improvements to ensure training continues to meet industry needs, while maintaining alignment with the NZGSE model of teacher training.

- Active engagement in schools and the educational community keeps staff informed on developments in teaching and learning, as do School Improvement Services programmes undertaken in schools by an NZGSE director. These interactions mutually support schools and NZGSE by identifying topical practice issues that interns may encounter, and by providing evidence-based professional development that contributes to capability-building in schools.
- Research initiatives and planning have been strengthened considerably since the last EER, with the appointment of research-capable staff and a clear, well-understood research plan. The prime research focus is on innovative learning environments and collaboration between teachers. The continuing development and refinement of the *8People*¹ professional learning model is also a focus for research.
- Regular self-assessment of the effectiveness of the NZGSE model of teacher training provides an evidential background that supports NZGSE's credibility and unique approach as a teacher training organisation.
- Ongoing governance, management and strategy – including succession planning – have been identified as important to the future viability of NZGSE. These issues have been investigated through the use of external expertise and will continue to be a focus for the organisation as NZGSE positions itself in the teacher training market.

¹ www.8people.org

Findings²

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**.

There is a high student achievement rate at NZGSE, demonstrated by excellent employment outcomes. NZGSE has kept data on the achievement of its graduates since 2009. This has shown that about 98 per cent of graduates have gained employment in teaching jobs, mainly in New Zealand but also overseas. The average course completion rate for NZGSE programmes between 2013 and 2016 was 84 per cent.

Table 1. Tertiary Education Commission data for course and qualification completions

	2013	2014	2015
Course completion	81%	90%	83%
Qualification completion	77%	82%	78%
Retention	83%	81%	85%

Self-assessment is undertaken through the collection of detailed data on the performance and employment of graduates, through exit interviews of those who withdraw from the programme, employer (principal) surveys, retention and completion data, and intern evaluations. Analysis of this information indicates that the teacher training model at NZGSE supports interns to attain mastery of the core academic, behavioural and personal competencies required to be an effective teacher.

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

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 **Excellent**.

The key stakeholders of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) are the tutors, interns, principals and supervising teachers of host schools, and the principals of schools that employ graduates. Partnership with schools is a key feature of the programmes. The evaluators interviewed representatives of these groups who consistently reported that the interns 'added value' to the school community. They did this by being ready and able to step up to teach and through their highly professional approach to the school community, including their willingness to contribute to positive staff dynamics.

Detailed destination data was provided to the evaluators, with comments from principals relating to the qualities and strengths of each graduate. This data included a commendation from the Education Review Office recognising the excellent work that NZGSE does in preparing people for teaching. Principals commented that NZGSE graduates were always their first option for staff. Qualities noted were: 'they are student-centred, they understand the curriculum, they are enthusiastic and keen to learn and they appreciate that the school is a community and are willing to involve themselves in extra-curricular activities'. These qualities are also valued highly by NZGSE and are fostered within the programme.

NZGSE's point of difference from other teacher training organisations is its emphasis on a 'practice and mentoring' model that produces highly competent teachers. Interns spend about two-thirds of their time working in schools under the guidance of NZGSE tutors, who give frequent professional feedback. Interns work in schools with children from a range of socio-economic levels and ethnic backgrounds. Programmes are highly structured around a core set of competencies (theoretical and practical) which can be acquired and assessed in a range of assessment situations at a time largely determined by the intern.

While interns are 'in control' of their own learning, this also creates challenges as each intern must constantly monitor their own progress and access the information, staff support and practical experience required to meet these competencies. The NZGSE programme allows the intern to plan a pathway through the assessment tasks so that one complex activity can be assessed simultaneously against several teacher education standards. They are encouraged, with the assistance of the tutors, to undertake more complex activities involving many concurrent tasks.

Tutors support this process by asking interns questions, providing highly structured feedback (particularly when observing lessons) and modelling an 'inquiry approach' that mimics good classroom practice. This individual approach is checked by

internal benchmarking that occurs regularly. NZGSE compares cohort completion times from year to year to look for inconsistencies. These are compared to average completion rates to indicate any anomalies that might require investigation, such as an individual intern not progressing at a reasonable pace or a group of interns taking longer than average to complete. If a trend is identified, this will be investigated. In one such case, a matter was resolved by staff changes.

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**.

Programmes are designed to be personally challenging to interns; interns provide a written self-assessment each term. NZGSE places particular emphasis on producing competent teachers who are also well prepared for teaching students with special needs or abilities. This is particularly important as more challenged students are 'mainstreamed' and must be accommodated and taught with other students. To meet these requirements each intern has at least two fieldwork placements: one placement relating to literacy, and another placement in a school with cognitively challenged students. In addition, interns on the primary programme have a fieldwork placement working in numeracy.

The focus on classroom management in the teacher competencies is essential to equip interns to manage a range of behaviours in the classroom and to consequently encourage learning to occur. The expertise developed by NZGSE interns in this regard, as an outcome of the 'practice and mentor' focus, was a notable point of difference for principals interviewed by the evaluators.

A style of formative assessment, referred to as 'the feedback model', has been developed as a way of reflecting on a lesson. Positive and advice statements relating to the observed lesson are collated in a face-to-face meeting between the tutor and intern which follows strict rules of practice. The relationship between the intern and the supervising teacher in the school is also strongly fostered, with three-way discussions between intern, tutor and supervising teacher also occurring regularly.

The PTE has a finely detailed definition of the competencies that a teacher needs to be able to demonstrate before graduation. It has developed its own standards, each with a related set of competencies that have been aligned with the requirements for teacher registration to ensure they meet these standards. The graduate diplomas are monitored regularly by NZQA and the Education Council. The 2015 NZQA monitoring report resulted in one recommendation which has been reviewed and addressed by NZGSE. The required competencies are woven

throughout the whole programme, rather than being taught in discrete courses. Demonstrating that 'learning is happening' while managing a class requires careful planning and the ability to 'think on your feet' and adapt an approach if it is not useful.

Although Māori and Pasifika intern numbers are low, NZGSE graduates may teach in schools where there are large numbers of Māori and Pasifika students. Initiatives in this area include an ongoing dialogue with Ngati Whakaeue to establish a joint venture new programme in Rotorua focused on training teachers for Māori learners. NZGSE also includes materials and discussions about cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners.

Interns welcome feedback from all stakeholders as they work towards competency requirements and observe their development as a teacher. This helps them to be enthusiastic, creative, proactive and open to new experiences and challenges. These skills and attributes lead to offers of employment and early promotion and longevity in the profession, as evidenced by NZGSE's annual alumni survey.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

NZGSE tutors are experienced teachers, with most holding postgraduate qualifications and some having research capability. They are highly committed to the teaching model and values held by NZGSE and motivated to contribute towards raising the competency of teachers in both primary and secondary sectors and thereby enhancing the learning journey of the students. One of the directors undertakes staff performance appraisal. This occurs regularly (with a particular focus on new staff), and professional development opportunities may flow from it. However, most staff are operating at a very high level and self-manage their professional development, with support from NZGSE.

NZGSE maintains close contacts with its host schools. Each intern is visited by a tutor on average two to three times a week during teaching practice and may be seen up to 70 times through the course of their training, considerably more than any other comparable teacher training programme. NZGSE tutors regularly discuss interns' progress with supervising teachers and principals. Tutors also speak frequently with the school children while checking the quality of the teaching and learning during observations. This provides a valuable feedback loop during teaching practice. Tutors can plan their visiting of interns to coincide with specific lessons being taught. Teaching observations are 'unannounced' visits where interns are not expecting a tutor observation. Interns appreciated these

observations as it encouraged them to keep performance standards high at all times and was universally viewed as supportive rather than judgmental.

Interns are responsible for their own rate of progress through the required competencies of the teacher education programmes, so some are able to complete the programme in a shorter time, but with very tight guidelines for doing so. A range of types of assessments provides opportunities to show competence. These include: portfolios, evidential records and reflections on practice. Methods of integrated assessment and the recording of the achievement of competencies for each intern are both effective and transparent.

All physical resources accessible to interns are catalogued and shelved. The catalogue is accessible online and contains 2,000 individual titles. The evaluators were impressed with its ease of use and graphics of book covers which made the resource visually appealing. Wireless broadband and a copying machine are available for student use; interns also make use of the internet for their study, and are provided with guidance in this.

External and internal moderation processes confirmed the reliability and robustness of assessment. The most recent external moderation report supplied by an associate professor at Massey University included lesson observations of five interns (two primary and three secondary) over a two-day period. The moderator commented that the moderation process was both rigorous and constructive. Internal moderation processes are also robust, with lively discussion between tutors to ensure the validity and consistency of assessment across individual tutors and classes.

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**.

NZGSE has strict entry and enrolment criteria and processes to ensure that only people who are likely to succeed and who understand the teacher training model and pressures of the training are accepted as interns. The Tertiary Education Commission sets strict limits on the number of teacher interns that NZGSE can train. Based on previous application rates, it is likely that NZGSE will only be able to accept around 75 per cent of applicants. The reasons interns withdraw are known, with exit interviews undertaken by a senior manager, and any actions and changes required are addressed. Files of interns who withdrew consistently commented that the directors at NZGSE had done all they could to assist an intern to stay in the programme, indicating that the support and guidance is as effective as possible. The support provided might include one-to-one professional counselling and intensive personal supervision.

Interns have ready access to tutors daily, both before and after school hours, and are actively encouraged to ask for assistance and advice regularly. NZGSE expects interns to address any interpersonal issues directly with the person involved. This approach is encouraged across all the training, including at host schools, where principals commented that they were impressed by interns' ability to interact openly and honestly with staff and students.

While NZGSE is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice, and there was one international student enrolled at the time of the previous EER, there were no international students on site at the time of this EER. However, NZGSE is aware of its obligations and responsibilities regarding the Code of Practice, including the requirement to undertake regular reviews of the code.

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 **Excellent**.

The two owner-directors are highly respected, experienced educators. They are both involved on a day-to-day basis. However, one director has greater responsibility for the internal day-to-day management, the other is more involved in external matters, such as provision of school improvement services and involvement in action research.

Research initiatives and planning have been strengthened considerably since the last EER, with the appointment of research-capable staff and a clear, well-understood research plan. After discussion across the staff and a literature review, research into learning in the twenty-first century has become a collaborative research project for NZGSE. The prime research focus is with innovative learning environments and collaboration between teachers.

The continuing development and refinement of the *8People* professional learning model is also a focus for research. This project has a group of interested practitioners, including an Australian member, and work has begun on the development of a tool to facilitate the gathering of data in the classroom. This project is in addition to *8People* concept, which provides measurable and specific standards to drive teacher appraisal or professional learning.

Regular self-assessment of the effectiveness of the NZGSE model of teacher training provides an evidential background that supports NZGSE's credibility and unique approach as a teacher training organisation.

The PTE considers its philosophy as an embodiment of research – expanding boundaries in teaching and educational practice. The PTE also believes its own practice and research informs practice within the host schools. There was considerable anecdotal evidence that this is the case, and some research outcomes support this contention.

Ongoing governance, management and strategy, including succession planning, have been identified as important to the future viability of NZGSE. Changes already accepted are the soon to be appointed independent board chair and a retirement plan initiated for one director. These issues have been investigated through partnership with an external contractor and will continue to be a focus for the organisation as NZGSE positions itself in the teacher training market.

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: Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) (Level 7)

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that the New Zealand Graduate School of Education (NZGSE):

- Continue to actively review governance, management and strategy issues to ensure the ongoing viability of NZGSE and effective succession planning
- Continue to support and mentor staff to be research-active

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz