



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Wellpark College of Natural Therapies

Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 5 October 2010

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	7
Findings	8
Recommendations	15
Further Actions.....	15
Appendix	16

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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

Location:	Wellpark College of Natural Therapies (Wellpark College) 6 Francis Street Grey Lynn Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1 July 1996
Number of students:	Domestic: 2009 – 188 equivalent full-time students (278 full and part-time students) At the time of the EER there were 235 students of whom approximately 100 were studying part-time. International: 2009 – 17 equivalent full-time students (21 students) At the time of the EER there were 17 international students.
Number of staff:	Wellpark College employs 50 staff comprising: 29 academic staff – seven full-time and 22 part-time 21 administration staff – ten full-time and 11 part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	Wellpark College delivers nine qualifications in natural therapies across naturopathy, nutrition, herbal medicine, ayurveda, yoga, massage, and aromatherapy. The majority of qualifications are diplomas at levels 5 and 6 with one certificate at level 5. Wellpark also now offers the recently accredited Bachelor of Naturopathy (Level 7), which is being delivered for the first time in 2010.

Sites:	Albany
Distinctive characteristics:	Wellpark College is the only tertiary provider in New Zealand to offer a Diploma of Yoga that is NZQA-accredited and approved for government funding. The Diploma of Nutrition is unique as it is the only qualification in New Zealand offering a large, practical component of clinical practice experience.
Recent significant changes:	As a result of low enrolments in 2008, Wellpark College had a reduction in government funding in 2010. Consequently there have been some changes to the working hours of the administration staff.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2008, Wellpark College of Natural therapies met all but two requirements of QA Standard One, the standard then in force. The requirements not met related to the elements of physical and learning resources, and assessment and moderation. The finding relating to physical learning resources was administrative only. However, assessment and moderation was reviewed as part of this EER (see section 1.4).
Other:	Wellpark College has run as a limited liability company under the Prema Trust since 2007. The trust has its own board. Wellpark College is governed by a board of directors consisting of the original founder and current principal of the college and two others. In 2010 the principal intends to add to the board another member with an education background.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review of Wellpark College of Natural Therapies included the following focus areas:

- Diploma of Nutrition (Level 6); two-year programme

This qualification has the most enrolments.

- Diploma of Yoga (Level 5); one-year programme.

This focus area will complement the other as the qualification is at a different level and duration and has a good representation of international students enrolled.

The mandatory focus areas are:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International students.

The Diploma of Naturopathy has historically been the most popular course but was not selected for this EER as it has now ceased and been replaced by the recently NZQA-accredited Bachelor of Naturopathy. This qualification was not chosen as a focus area as it was delivered for the first time in 2010. Although there has been considerable stakeholder consultation in developing the new degree programme, it was felt that the two focus areas chosen would reflect the quality and nature of ongoing self-assessment at Wellpark College.

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 document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/docs/eer-policy-conduct.pdf>

The evaluation team for the Wellpark College EER comprised one lead evaluator and one external evaluator. They visited one site in Grey Lynn for two and a half days.

The staff, students, and external stakeholders interviewed as part of the EER included the following.

Wellpark College staff

Principal, faculty manager, academic quality advisor, accounts manager, head of faculty (nutrition), head of faculty (yoga), faculty support, education specialist, two yoga tutors, two nutrition tutors, two student-support and administration staff.

Wellpark College students

- Group of seven students from year one of the Diploma of Nutrition (Level 6) – February 2010 intake.
- Group of 17 students from year two of the Diploma of Nutrition (Level 6) – February 2009 intake.
- Group of 15 students including three international students from Diploma of Yoga (Level 5) – February 2010 intake.
- Group of nine students including one international student from Diploma of Yoga (Level 5) – July 2009 intake.

Other external stakeholders

- Five employees from the nutrition industry – graduates from the Diploma of Nutrition between 2007 and 2009.

- Two instructors and teachers of yoga – graduates from the Diploma in Yoga Therapy in the last three years. Both graduates had initially completed the Diploma of Yoga.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Wellpark College of Natural Therapies**.

Wellpark College has made significant changes over the past four years which have had a positive impact on increased educational performance. Historically, the college's large number of part-time students did not result in satisfactory qualification achievement rates. The college's current strong focus on improving qualification completions is enabling the students to graduate with recognised qualifications and gain sustainable and meaningful employment or go on to further study.

The full impact of these changes resulting in higher educational performance is yet to be realised as the achievement data is not complete. However, the current self-assessment shows that these positive changes are reflecting a higher course completion rate (courses are parts of a qualification) which should lead to higher qualification completion rates and could contribute to a highly confident rating in the future.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Wellpark College of Natural Therapies**.

A comprehensive and systematic self-assessment process is clearly embedded throughout the organisation and is supported by the positive approach to evaluation and review of all staff. The college's attitude to continuous improvement is very proactive and is continually being redeveloped to gather wider and deeper data. The recent substantial changes within the college are effectively supported by the self-assessment framework. The ongoing professional development of staff implemented as a result of the self-assessment has been integral to the rise in the quality of training and assessment.

TEO response

Wellpark College of Natural Therapies' response to the draft report included minor changes to wording. Amendments have been made and therefore factual accuracy has now been agreed.

Findings¹

Historically, Wellpark College has found that qualification completion has been difficult to achieve for its students, of whom the majority were studying part-time.

Wellpark College has implemented many changes over the past four years including:

- A complete review of the interview and entry process with appropriate changes made
- A move from delivering small modules to larger courses of at least 15 credits
- A move from unit standards based qualifications to local qualifications
- A complete review of all programmes
- Increasing availability of support staff for students
- Ongoing professional development for staff
- Improved financial management
- A systems upgrade
- Increase of personnel to manage and support the faculties.

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Over the past four years Wellpark College has successfully implemented substantial changes across the organisation (as stated above) with the focus on increasing educational performance. Historically, the college had a large number of part-time enrolments and a large portion of these learners did not complete the full qualification. There is now a stronger focus on qualification completion and further education and employment within the field in which the students have qualified.

Course completion rates (courses are parts of a qualification) of 70-80 per cent currently across the college have been on a steady increase, with qualification completions expected to show a significant increase over previous years. The full impact of these changes resulting in higher educational performance is yet to be realised as students have yet to complete the programmes.

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

The evaluators noted a strong focus on qualification achievement starting with the interview process which is now conducted by a faculty member of staff (in most cases the head of faculty). The process is now more thorough and establishes the commitment from both the college and the student to complete a qualification and enter into employment or further training.

Courses are now being made up of more credits than the previous small modules and have a greater focus on the full qualification completion as larger sections of the qualification are being achieved.

Over the last two years there have been very few withdrawals from programmes at Wellpark College. Attendance is tracked closely and all withdrawals are thoroughly investigated and carefully recorded. In the majority of cases, withdrawals are due to personal circumstances.

The achievement rate for international students is generally higher than for domestic students. Self-assessment shows that international students have a greater financial and time commitment because they are away from home. International students complete part or full qualifications at Wellpark College to suit their educational needs.

The evaluation team heard unanimously from all respondents at the evaluation visit that the programmes at Wellpark College have resulted in significant personal growth in self-confidence, health, and well-being. Many students relayed stories of life-changing experiences both for themselves their family and friends and expressed a desire to make a difference in their communities. These changes have resulted in them becoming “better people”, which has had a positive impact on their relationships with people around them. In addition, the yoga students have learnt the valuable skills of quietening the mind and reducing stress.

A systems upgrade and extra skilled staff resourcing reflects the college’s goal for accurate and timely reporting of achievements. This has enabled the college to place greater emphasis on effective self-assessment of achievements which is now a thorough, comprehensive, and robust process across all programmes.

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**.

On completion of the Wellpark College programmes and successful qualification achievement, the students are work-ready. Positive personal growth gives them the confidence to apply the knowledge and skills acquired and practised during the programme.

The graduates are clearly sought after by employers in the relevant fields. There was strong evidence through self-assessment that employers regularly approach Wellpark College faculties for its graduates. The skills and knowledge the students gain are valued by

external stakeholders as a result of the good reputation of the quality content within the college's programmes.

The college conducts a thorough ongoing survey of graduate destinations. Records show that currently around 87 per cent of Wellpark's yoga graduates are instructing or have gone on to further study and 76 per cent of the nutrition graduates are now working in the industry.

Completion of the Diploma of Yoga or equivalent enables students to gain entry into the Diploma in Yoga Therapy. Consistently, over 40 per cent of the yoga students have gone on to complete the yoga therapy qualification, although they often have a gap between the two programmes of study.

The depth and content of the Diploma of Yoga programme is highly valued by the students, the employers of yoga instructors, and the subsequent participants in yoga classes. The yoga programme is based on the classical philosophy of yoga and includes practicum and medical science to deepen and broaden the knowledge. There are no other yoga qualifications in New Zealand of this type that are NZQA-accredited and approved for government funding.

The clinical practice experience gained in the latter stages of the nutrition programme clearly adds value to the students' progress as the knowledge learnt is practised and consolidated and taken as an acquired and accomplished skill into the workplace.

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**.

Wellpark College faculties are well connected with external stakeholders. Feedback from these stakeholders is fed into an organisation-wide, systematic self-assessment process which gathers and collates data from a variety of sources. These sources also include the formal advisory committee meetings, academic board meetings, a number of internal forums, evaluation processes, and ongoing communication.

External stakeholders have been actively involved in the full review of all Wellpark College's programmes over the past few years. Examples of significant changes as a result of the review are the move from unit standards based qualifications to local qualifications and the development of the Bachelor of Naturopathy. The change to local qualifications has enabled the college to incorporate greater relevance and quality into the programme and therefore raise the academic quality overall.

Tutors at Wellpark College contribute positively to the relevance and currency of the programmes as they are all actively involved in their field of work outside of the college. Effective self-assessment enables the tutors to have valuable input into the programme review, and ongoing tutor evaluations of the programme have fed into changes for improvement.

The content within the yoga course does not change as it based on the traditional philosophy of classical yoga. However, self-assessment shows that the tutors are continually reviewing the way it is taught, improving delivery techniques, and including the knowledge of current trends in yoga. There was evidence to show that as the students grasp the deep-rooted philosophy of the yoga programme it evidently spreads into their own “personal journey”.

The quality and content of the nutrition programme is reflected in the number of tutors involved in the delivery. Wellpark College consciously engages many part-time tutors and guest speakers with specific expertise in their field of nutrition and it is proven that the students benefit from the tutors’ knowledge and experience. The experience of the clinical practice undertaken by students has been shown to be a fundamental component of the nutrition programme in consolidating all that has been learned during the previous 18 months.

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 **Excellent**.

At the beginning of the programme tutors are proactive in assuring they ascertain, deliver to, and engage with the variety of learning styles of the students and facilitate the fundamental bonding of the class. Practical and interactive activities are effectively integrated with theory components of the programme which has contributed to the students’ increased knowledge.

The two full-time tutors for the yoga programmes have been specifically selected for their wealth of knowledge and ingrained philosophy of classical yoga. The husband-and-wife team came from India and have built a worthy reputation for the yoga programmes at Wellpark College over the past seven years. Successful graduates of the yoga programmes who have gained authentic experience in the instruction of yoga have been chosen by the faculty to assist the tutors with the delivery. Purely by the nature of the subject matter and the holistic approach to learning, the yoga tutors develop and build a close and trusting relationship with the students which encourages and supports their learning.

Ongoing professional development for staff is embedded in the organisation’s positive approach to continuous improvement. The college is still developing skills in assessment-tool writing in some faculties where this has been identified as a weakness. There are areas of expertise in the writing of assessment tools but this has yet to be consolidated throughout the college.

Examples of recent changes made as a result of effective self-assessment are the speedier return of marked assessments and actions taken to ensure clarity of marking with marking criteria. As a result of their recent implementation, these changes have yet to be measured to ascertain the levels of improvement.

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**.

Fundamental changes to the interview and entry process at Wellpark College have seen a rise in course completion which should result in full qualification completions in the near future. The students are now interviewed thoroughly by a member of the faculty who can ascertain their levels of previous experience, passion, and commitment to the programme. Students are therefore enrolled with more care and accuracy on programmes that suit their abilities, needs, and aspirations.

During the training the tutors diligently inform and advise students of their options to complement or further enhance existing skills following completion of the programmes. This is reflected in the high percentage of students going on to further study at Wellpark College or another tertiary provider, or to employment in their field.

Students are very well supported academically by faculty staff. Thorough self-assessment also reflects that the pastoral care and learning support for the students is very effective.

One faculty had successfully introduced one-to-one sessions with each of the students and the head of faculty. This has had a positive impact on students' morale and has also provided feedback resulting in the communication of changes made for improvements.

International students are well cared for by the college and have a specified person to go to for assistance. All students are closely monitored throughout their programme with regard to attendance and academic achievement, and the support person for international students ensures that all students are settled and happy.

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 purpose and direction of Wellpark College clearly starts with the current principal and founder of the college and is shared and developed collaboratively with all staff. This inclusive leadership style has enabled the college to manage the challenges they have faced when presented with changes. Examples are the reduced government funding for the programmes and the substantial changes being implemented over the last four years (as stated under Findings above).

The management style at Wellpark College is very open and transparent and welcomes input from staff and fully supports and values all the self-assessment activity and its outcomes. Support for educational achievement is evident in the changes being made and the ongoing, active self-assessment for continuous improvement.

The policies and practices of the college have been strengthened by the systems upgrade, improved financial management, and additional personnel to manage and support the faculties.

Having made these changes, the college has developed a robust self-assessment framework which effectively measures, collates, and analyses the data to inform further changes for improvement. This continuous improvement philosophy is evident throughout the college with all staff involved. There was strong evidence to show that the comprehensive ongoing professional development programme for all staff has had a positive impact on quality.

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 **Good**.

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

2.1 Focus area: International students

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 of Nutrition (Level 6); two-year programme

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Diploma of Yoga (Level 5); one-year programme

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

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz