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External Evaluation and Review Report

Newton College of Business and
Technology Limited

Date of report: 18 May 2021

About Newton College of Business and Technology Limited

Newton College of Business and Technology (NCBT) delivers undergraduate diploma programmes in business and technology. All current students are international students.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	25 Union Street, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 26 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) as of 14 October 2020 Domestic: nil
Number of staff:	12 full-time and part-time staff
TEO profile:	See Newton College of Business and Technology on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In 2019, NZQA was Not Yet Confident in the educational performance, and Not Yet Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Newton.
Scope of this evaluation:	The focus areas selected for this evaluation were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diploma in Applied Business (Marketing and Production Systems and Design) (Level 7) (DAB)• New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6) (NZDSA) <p>Context: Following the last EER, concerns were raised by NZQA around the quality of some of the educational practices at NCBT. As a result of this, NCBT voluntarily ceased delivering the following programmes: New Zealand Diploma in Business (with strands in Accounting, Administration and Technology, Management and Leadership) (Level 5) and (Level 6). The PTE has chosen instead to focus on a smaller suite of qualifications. The withdrawal of the programmes offered, plus</p>

Final report.

border restrictions, means NCBT now teaches a small and declining number of students.

At the time of the EER, NZQA began conducting moderation of the level 7 DAB.¹ At the time of the EER, five students were enrolled in the level 7 programme.

Issues were noted in the following areas:

- Assessor decisions
- Level and appropriateness of assessment materials
- Inconsistencies in stated learning outcomes when compared with course approval documents.

MoE number:	8437
NZQA reference:	C44373
Dates of EER visit:	14-16 October 2020

¹ NZQA's Final Moderation Report (March 2021) reported an agreement rate of 27 per cent based on nine assessments undertaken from September 2019 to August 2020.

Summary of results

Newton has made uneven progress implementing its policies around programme quality. Doubts remain about Newton's capability to self-manage an organisation-wide system of self-assessment, and to maintain the quality of its programmes.

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

- Despite high learner completion rates, external moderation results indicate that Newton is not meeting NZQA assessment and programme criteria.
- Programme relevance to industry and employment is not evident, or well documented. Sector-related employment outcomes for learners are weak.
- Management has failed to satisfactorily implement improvement plans developed after the last EER. Programmes lack robust scrutiny. Organisational self-improvement is still highly dependent on NZQA feedback.

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

- On the other hand, Newton has an experienced leadership team that is well connected with a range of external stakeholders.
- Students are well supported, with good processes to ensure their progression through the programmes.
- Likewise, Newton has the advantage of experienced staff who are properly valued by the organisation.
- Serious challenges remain, however. Support for targeted staff professional development needs to be a priority. So does a more robust system for ensuring the quality of learner assessments and programme design. Above all, Newton needs to take stronger ownership of its organisational self-assessment.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Learner achievement data provided by NCBT is good, with relatively high levels of course completions and qualifications. See Appendix 1.</p> <p>There is good supporting evidence that students' progress well and that reasons for non-completion are understood by PTE staff, and are reasonable.</p> <p>However, recent moderation results for the level 7 DAB raise doubts about the reliability of achievement results for this programme. Level 6 moderation is well managed, with both internal and external moderation confirming assessment decisions.</p> <p>Clear pathways between programmes can foster higher-level learning, and there is sound evidence of progression up the levels of learning. In doing so, students gain knowledge of academic processes within the New Zealand context and improve their employment prospects through gaining technical applied skills and developing other skills. There are effective systems in place to track individual progress through the programme. A learning plan is put in place for students who re-sit, have low attendance, or are experiencing learning difficulties. Systems such as regular team meetings enable staff to discuss learner progress, and information is shared across the organisation.</p> <p>Some good initiatives have recently been introduced, including analysis of assessment resubmissions and re-sit events for the DAB. Using this information to improve learner achievement is developing.</p>
Conclusion:	Most students in the focus areas complete programmes and gain qualifications. However, poor assessment practice and

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

	recent moderation results in the level 7 programme undermine confidence in the validity of achievement results.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Key stakeholders in this instance are identified as mainly being students, employers and other education providers offering higher-level programmes.</p> <p>Evidence that the programmes evaluated had value to stakeholders is limited. Newton seeks to gain outcome and destination data from its stakeholders by surveying recent graduates and, in some instances, employers. Information gained from these surveys over the date range showed that while the majority of graduates were in employment, a significant number of those surveyed were in jobs unrelated to their programme. See Appendix 1.</p> <p>The EER team acknowledges that during 2020, many employment sectors were adversely affected.</p> <p>The 2019 NZQA consistency review of the NZDSA found Newton was 'Sufficient'. Reviewer feedback requested improvements in data capture and analysis but, to date, this has not been well managed. The application of skills learnt from the level 7 DAB is not particularly well evidenced in relation to both programme level and content. There is also an obvious opportunity to develop some form of work-integrated learning to support higher-quality outcomes for more graduates.</p> <p>A small sample of students contacted by the evaluators had progressed to degree and Master's programmes and/or significant industry roles over time, showing that Newton has the capability to produce successful graduates and has done so.</p> <p>Newton has a number of industry and academic connections but was unable to evidence their input or effect on programmes.</p>
Conclusion:	Value gained by stakeholders is not well evidenced. Improving the quality of self-assessment information available needs strengthening.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Poor
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>As mentioned on pages 2-3 of this EER report, Newton has significantly restructured its programme portfolio. Newton ceased delivery of some programmes following NZQA moderation feedback on their assessment and moderation practices. Current programme curriculums provide students with theoretical and applied knowledge. Students in both the level 6 and 7 focus area programmes attested to enjoying either practical tasks or the opportunity to bring their individual case studies into the programme content.</p> <p>Aggregated student feedback forms indicate positive learning experiences, and these results were confirmed by learner interviews.</p> <p>While Newton has a student library, and shared learning resource platforms for student access. Programmes are reviewed annually, but the process of review lacks cohesion over the two programmes, with resulting variability in quality assurance. Overall, there was insufficient evidence of assessment of outcomes being met or how well the programmes were meeting the needs of stakeholders. Improvements made to programmes from external input is limited to individual tutors. Understanding how Newton is going to manage maintaining currency and connectivity between programme delivery and the New Zealand workplace is not readily apparent.</p> <p>Moderation schedules were provided for both programmes, and moderators assigned are appropriately skilled and offer constructive feedback. Notwithstanding, the recent NZQA moderation of the DAB raised significant concerns about assessor decisions, assessment materials and the level of learner work.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme delivery ensures that students receive timely feedback and progress well through the prescribed course of study. Programme relevance to meeting the needs of stakeholders is limited. The programme review processes are as yet ineffective and do not show improvements. At present,

	academic quality processes are not well embedded, contributing to deficiencies in the management of assessment practice.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at Newton are well supported. Student welfare is closely monitored through ongoing surveys, and the findings are used to improve the student experience. There is good evidence of interventions that result in improved student performance, for example, individual learning plans to support students needing re-sits of assessments.</p> <p>Academic and student support staff work closely together to monitor attendance and progression. Students attest that the induction process is thorough and that they receive good programme information on learning outcomes, the assessment process, APA referencing and the authenticity of work. There are high levels of satisfaction with the tutors, and tutor feedback on student performance appears appropriate. Teaching staff demonstrate a good understanding of potential learning barriers and, as individuals, employ teaching strategies such as including industry-specific workshops to support students in their learning journey.</p> <p>All the current student cohort are international students. Entry to programmes is supported by having a dedicated staff member in India to assist with entry criteria validation. Visa approval rates of around 40 per cent at the time of the EER are lower than Newton would like.</p> <p>Integration of students into the wider New Zealand community appears limited. Few opportunities for industry and wider stakeholders to contribute to the learning experience are included in the programmes.</p> <p>Newton was responsive and proactive to the extra needs and requirements of students during 2020. Examples include offering and delivering hardware resources to students, digital tutorials, and increased monitoring of the students' mental and physical welfare. The student handbook and welfare staff direct students towards external pastoral support services. An opportunity exists for monitoring the uptake of these services, but otherwise</p>

	Newton has done well by its students.
Conclusion:	Student support is well managed using organisation-wide reporting. Evidence of improved outcomes through interventions could be stronger.

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Newton has undergone a period of significant change, one of the outcomes of this being a more focused approach to the programmes currently being delivered. Newton has a strategic plan in place to broaden the scope of delivery to the domestic market.</p> <p>Newton is led by experienced senior management, and operational reporting processes are well established and evidenced. Overall, however, management and leadership has not been effective in supporting educational achievement. There is a need for improved academic oversight to support and strengthen academic processes. All tutoring staff are suitably qualified to assess, but only the heads of department hold adult education qualifications. Staff performance appraisals are currently informal. Programme reviews are not consistent across the organisation, which leads to variability in their effectiveness. There are significant limitations in academic quality processes that are still apparent to NZQA.</p> <p>The overall policy and procedure structure (including planning, oversight, and engagement with suitable external moderators) appears to have been strengthened since the last EER. While the advisory board and other external stakeholders attested to ongoing and regular consultation, better evidencing of this contact, and any subsequent changes or improvements to delivery would strengthen the value of self-assessment.</p> <p>Newton has shown responsiveness to NZQA findings. However, capability in managing quality and evaluating programme performance needs strengthening.</p>
Conclusion:	Since the previous EER, management has focused on improving the quality of academic delivery. The impact of this focus, however, has been inconsistent. There is limited evidence of

	effective management of quality assurance processes.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Newton has ineffective processes for managing compliance accountabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newton has increased its focus on assessment and moderation for its current programmes. However, NZQA's most recent report on one of the programmes has indicated that it is not yet meeting NZQA's expectations for assessment, moderation, and review. • Newton has cooperated with NZQA in withdrawing accreditation of two business programmes following the findings of NZQA monitoring reports. • Learner attendance is monitored and followed up by experienced staff. • A check of student files showed all available information was accurate and conforming to visa, insurance and entry requirements. Student support staff attest to receiving training in the international Code of Practice and referencing their work against the Code's policies and processes. Newton supplied evidence of the Code of Practice in use but was less able to describe how the evidence was used to rate their effectiveness. • An opportunity exists for improved self-assessment of compliance against the PTE's own quality management system.
Conclusion:	Newton has ineffective systems for managing key areas of compliance. Limitations in regard to managing academic quality and effective programme review need ongoing and robust management and self-assessment. Deficiencies in the management of assessment and moderation practices do not meet expected standards.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Diploma in Applied Business (Marketing and Production Systems and Design) (Level 7)

Performance:	Poor
Self-assessment:	Poor

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal

2.3 Focus area: International students: support and wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that Newton College of Business and Technology Limited:

- Build academic leadership capability to oversee educational performance and support tutors. Strengthen oversight of the management of programme delivery, assessment and moderation and develop an organisational approach to programme review.
- Resolve issues regarding the quality of assessment and moderation practice.
- Develop and evidence industry connections in programme review.
- Improve tracking and evidencing of graduate outcomes, including their feedback to the organisation.
- Consider, with advisory input, means of introducing work-integrated learning into the programmes.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. These include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Completion data for students from April-August 2019 intake*

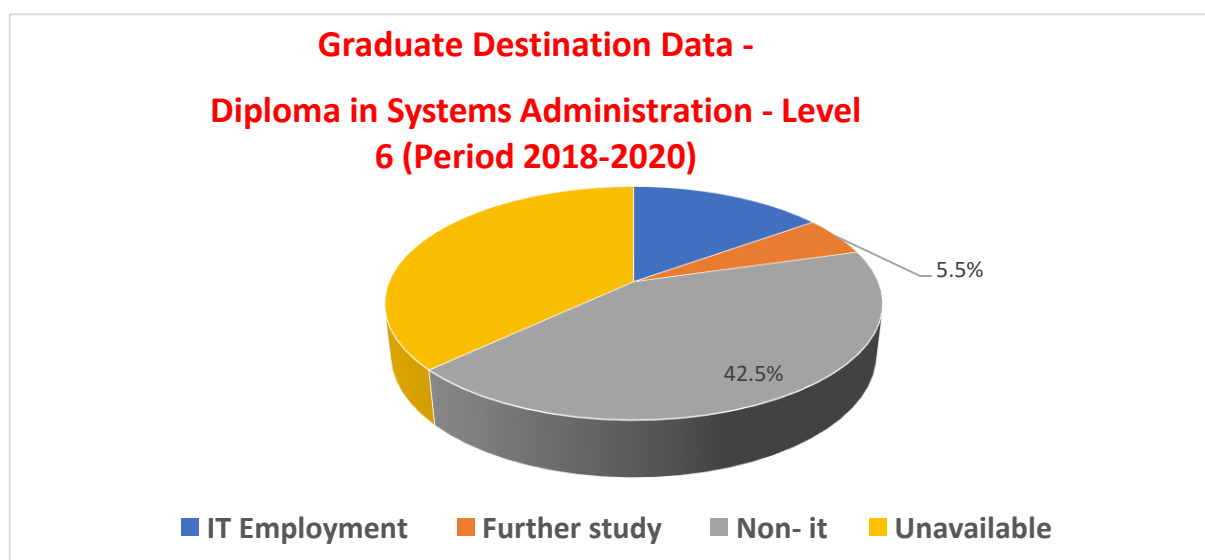
	Total	NZDIB L5	NZDIB L6	DIB L7	NZITTS L5	NZDSA** L6†	DIC L7	NZCEL L4	DAB*** L7†
Enrolled	103	11	28	1	7	12†	3	28	13†
Completed	81	10	25	1	5	12†	3	16	9†
% completion	79%	91%	89%	100%	71%	100%†	100%	57%	69%†

*NCBT-supplied data, captures students gaining qualifications within the timeframe since the last EER

**NZDSA = New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6)

***DAB = Diploma in Applied Business (Marketing and Production Systems and Design) (Level 7)

†These students graduated between March and August 2020



NCBT-supplied data, captures all graduates from 2018-2020

Table 2. Graduate destination data – June-August 2020, Diploma in Applied Business (Level 7)

Status	Total	Percentage
Relevant job	7	44%
Non-relevant job	8	50%
Not reachable	1	6%
Total	16	100%

NCBT-supplied data. This data is of students who graduated between June 2019 and August 2020.

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 fraud³*
- *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.*

³ 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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