

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Vineyard Christian Fellowship Trust  
trading as Vineyard College

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 August 2012

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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:	Vineyard Christian Fellowship Trust trading as Vineyard College (Vineyard)
Type:	Private training establishment
Location:	Henderson, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Distance education
First registered:	8 January 1998
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certificate in Christian Ministry (Level 4)</li><li>• Certificate in Christian Ministry (Advanced) (Level 4)</li><li>• Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care (Introductory) (Level 4)</li></ul>
Code of Practice signatory?	No international students and not a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students
Number of students:	Domestic: 48 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	As per courses currently delivered (above)
Distinctive characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vineyard is a distance learning institution which provides training in pastoral care, youth work, and social service skills at level 4.</li><li>• It is a not-for-profit organisation providing</li></ul>

workplace-based training assisted by mentors known as supervisors.

- The programmes are open to anyone aged 17 years and over. Vineyard accepts rolling enrolments, but a waiting list has been in existence for the last three years.
- Full-time students in the Certificate in Christian Ministry programme are expected to do internship work for 30 hours a week, consisting of 20 hours practical work and 10 hours study.
- The two internship courses are worth 40 credits each. The remaining 40 credits consist of four ten-credit courses which are the focus of the block course held for a week in May each year.
- The Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care (Introductory) programme is 40 weeks part-time or a shorter term for full-time study.
- Less than 20 per cent of Vineyard's students are members of Vineyard Church.

Recent significant changes: Vineyard is increasing the number of block courses.

Vineyard is working towards applying to deliver a second-year qualification at level 5 in the form of a diploma.

Previous quality assurance history: A validation visit from NZQA in April 2011 found compliance with the policies and criteria for registration. The latest NZQA quality assurance visit, an audit in 2008, found that Vineyard met all applicable requirements of the standard in force at the time.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

In accordance with NZQA policy, the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy was included in the scope of this external evaluation and review. The Certificate in Christian Ministry was selected as a focus area as this is a Ministry Internship programme with 120 credits and caters for over 80 per cent of Vineyard's students. The Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care (Introductory) was also selected as a focus area as it is a part-time or short-term programme with 40 credits consisting of a number of courses.

## 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.*

The external evaluation and review was conducted over two days by two NZQA evaluators at the office in Henderson, Auckland. The evaluation involved interviews with:

- The principal
- The systems and operations manager
- Two members of the board
- The administration manager
- Three members of the administration
- A range of current and ex-students
- Supervisors
- A range of stakeholders via phone

The evaluation also involved a review of relevant documentation such as the investment plan, the student handbook, achievement data, student evaluation forms, meeting minutes, self-assessment reports, student satisfaction surveys, and associated correspondence.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Vineyard Christian Fellowship Trust trading as Vineyard College**.

The completion rates of Vineyard's programmes are usually very near the Tertiary Education Commission medians. This is commendable in light of the fact that the courses are delivered by distance education. The course completion rate rose from 79 per cent in 2010 to 87 per cent in 2011, and the qualification completion rate rose from 72 per cent in 2010 to the provisional figure of 82 per cent in 2011. These rates of achievement are good and the value of Vineyard's programmes is further demonstrated by the excellent outcomes being achieved. The three targeted outcomes of the programmes are ministry, community work, and lay work, for example working with youth and families. The latest alumni survey conducted in May 2012 found that out of 77 returned surveys, 82 per cent of the respondents were still involved in ministry or other community work. This is a high figure and such outcomes show that Vineyard is committed to serving a much wider community than its own church.

The engagement with stakeholders is continuous and starts at the highest level, with all the governing board members being pastors and some being supervisors of Vineyard interns. The internship model works particularly well as it means that all the theory is applied, so it is linked to actual practice. The case studies presented to the evaluation team provided evidence of personal growth and this was reinforced by current and ex-students interviewed by the team.

All the students interviewed gave positive feedback about their experiences with the Vineyard programmes. They particularly appreciated the contribution of their supervisors and the use of block courses. The overall level of support for the students is very good. Vineyard College is exploring a variety of future directions and needs to include the use of more visual material and an earlier analysis of students' learning needs in these discussions.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Vineyard Christian Fellowship Trust trading as Vineyard College**.

Vineyard is committed to self-assessment and displays an evident interest in expanding it. Some internal and external benchmarking is already carried out and different ways of doing it are being considered. Comparison with other providers of distance education would be particularly valuable, and Vineyard management accepts the need to go down this path.

Vineyard undertakes comprehensive student evaluations of each course and receives a wide range of feedback from stakeholders. It uses the feedback to

reflect on the extent to which the programmes are achieving the desired outcomes and to devise ways of improving the programmes. The alumni surveys are particularly useful as they reveal the longer-term impact of the programmes. The survey in May 2012, for example, revealed the positive ways in which the Vineyard programmes helped the students in other areas such as self-discipline and interaction with other people. Such findings, along with the destinations of its graduates mentioned earlier, are important aspects for Vineyard management to consider and to use as a springboard for action.

Vineyard used the results of self-assessment to guide it in the development of block courses to supplement distance education, and this process is continuing. There have been other examples, such as the sharing of student liaison tasks, when self-assessment has been insightfully used to effect improvements. This approach is also apparent in the planning taking place for the future. Reflection and the use of data are frequently evident before any decisions are made.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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 **Good**.

The achievement rates of Vineyard students are generally very close to the Tertiary Education Commission medians, as was the case in 2010. In 2011 the rate improved. The course completion rate rose from 79 per cent in 2010 to 87 per cent in 2011, and the qualification completion rate rose from 72 per cent in 2010 to 82 per cent in 2011. This last figure is a provisional one as it is part of the April 2012 single data return. These figures indicate that the levels of achievement at Vineyard are good, particularly as the courses are delivered using distance learning.

Vineyard is conscious of the importance of maintaining good achievement rates. It quickly took measures in January 2012 when it realised internship interviews had not been completed as expected, leading to an apparent drop in the qualification completion rates for 2011. The effect of the remedial measures was a sharp rise in these rates by April 2012. The board had a general understanding of this issue and now appreciates that it should consider ways of ensuring it receives comprehensive student achievement information in the future.

Vineyard sets itself a target of 80 per cent for course and qualification completion. This target reflects the high standards set and serves as a useful benchmark. Vineyard also carefully considers the impact of factors beyond its control on the completion rate. An example of this was the discussion in a staff meeting in September 2011 of the impact of the Christchurch earthquake on the three students from that city who withdrew from the Certificate in Christian Ministry programme. Self-assessment at Vineyard is effective and could be considered comprehensive if more attention was paid to internal benchmarking and more thought was given to making full use of the opportunities that arise for external benchmarking.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 **Good**.

The outcomes achieved by Vineyard are highly valued in the sector. The board takes a strong lead and emphasises how the outcomes are much greater than Vineyard Church or the church in the widest sense, but spread out to the wider community. The board members met by the evaluation team were very conscious that the main destinations of Vineyard's trainees were ministry positions, social work positions, and positions as lay ministers. Both of the board members interviewed were pastors in Vineyard Church and acted as supervisors for some of Vineyard's students. Such close contacts are examples of Vineyard's continuous engagement with its stakeholders. Further contacts exist through the other supervisors who are frequently ex-Vineyard students and members of other churches. These contacts reinforce the value of the outcomes in strengthening the links between Vineyard and the community.

One of the main outcomes claimed from the Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care programme was that it helped to produce people who would be equipped to help others through their church activities. The Certificate in Christian Ministry programme also had this as a focus. The case studies describing the growth in the trainees reinforced the positive impression that this outcome was being achieved. The students expressed to the evaluation team how they felt more self-aware and how they drew strength from the sense of community that developed among them. Stakeholders took this a step further when they described how Vineyard provides a valuable network by bringing people together from a wide variety of organisations. These are all significant outcomes and Vineyard actively encourages them.

The internship that is such an integral part of the Certificate in Christian Ministry programme is a key contributor to these positive outcomes. It provides the students with an experience similar to an apprenticeship where they apply theory in a practical context. The internships are also valuable as the students can stay in their local communities and build equity. The value of the experience is further enhanced by the supervisors who help the interns find what they want to do with their lives.

Vineyard stays in touch with its alumni and regularly surveys them as a way of assessing the college's contribution to their vocational path. The survey in May 2012 found that out of 77 returned surveys, 82 per cent of the respondents were still involved in ministry or other community work. This is a high percentage and reflects the valuable outcomes of the programmes. The survey also asked the respondents to rank different aspects fostered by the Vineyard courses. These were, in the order ranked by the respondents: personal growth, self-discipline, interaction with others, time management, and problem-solving.

Vineyard receives positive feedback from the students regarding the value of the internships and also makes effective use of the material disclosed in the students' journals about their personal growth. The case studies provide further information which is used by Vineyard to check what is being achieved by its students. Vineyard now needs to consolidate all this data and make improvements where a need is seen.

### 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 **Good**.

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

The internship model underpinning the Certificate in Christian Ministry programme effectively matches the needs of both learners and stakeholders. Its practical orientation ensures the programmes are both current and relevant. Every effort is made to align the passions of the students with the interests of the supervisors and the different branches of church activity. The evaluation team spoke to students who looked forward to working with children, for example, or doing service overseas.

The Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care programme meets the needs of the church and social work organisations for middle-level leadership. For some students, this is a satisfactory outcome, but for others this programme is used as a pathway to the Certificate in Christian Ministry programme. Stakeholders endorsed this by describing how Vineyard is accessible to most people and provides a pathway for progression to those wanting to train in ministry. Although Vineyard could undertake more thorough investigation into the specific needs of each of its students, it does respond well when those needs are articulated. An example of this occurred when a student lacking information technology skills was talked through the process of accessing the material on the CDs.

Most of the assessment of whether needs are being matched occurs informally. Vineyard could easily enhance the effectiveness of its self-assessment by including an investigation of the extent to which needs are being matched in the regular student evaluations. The journals completed by the students at regular intervals check the progress being made by each student but could be more extensively used by Vineyard to ensure specific needs are being met. Nevertheless, Vineyard does adapt its practices when it realises there is a need to do so. The interviews in the Internship Practical Experience courses, for example, are being started earlier in 2012 in order to avoid the problem encountered last year in arranging times suitable to the parties concerned.

## 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**.

The material for both certificate programmes selected as focus areas is provided on CDs that are individualised according to the combination of courses selected by each student to provide the necessary credits. Although the supervisors and students spoken to by the evaluation team confirmed the value of the course material, the feeling was expressed that it would benefit from including more visual material.

The material is supplemented for the Certificate in Christian Ministry programme by block courses. These are optional and generally take place in the North Island, but one was held in Invercargill in 2010 and Vineyard is holding a special one for the Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care programme in Te Anau in June 2012. The combination of internship, distance education via CDs, and block courses provides an effective teaching approach which received affirmation from the students interviewed by the evaluation team. The block courses develop a sense of community and provide face-to-face interaction between students and staff. In this way they facilitate learning, sharing of ideas, and assignment completion, as well as provide a base for the pastoral care of the students.

The way in which the programmes are assessed is also a good combination of different methods, using journals and interviews regarding personal growth during the internships as well as written assignments. All the assessments are marked by two specialist assessors who are completely separate from the teaching staff. Each written assignment has an assessment grid tailored for it. The assessments are externally moderated by a tutor from another college.

The students interviewed by the evaluation team expressed their satisfaction with the assessment system. It is both valid and fair. The students receive effective feedback from the assessors in a written form and from their supervisors verbally. The practical experience of the internships provides substance to the theory learned during other parts of the course.

Vineyard has established effective systems for receiving feedback. Student satisfaction surveys are conducted at the end of each course and there are feedback sheets for the assignments and the courses. Vineyard generally reserves a day at the end of each block course for staff reflection. These opportunities are used by Vineyard staff to make changes that will benefit the students. One such change was the decision to add more block courses after receiving positive feedback regarding their value.

## 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**.

The positive student feedback about the administrative support and the support from the supervisors endorses the value of the support provided to the students. The enrolment process is thorough and each student receives a CD tailored to the courses selected. Vineyard is prepared to modify a programme according to a student's needs, such as the way in which a programme was changed to enable a student's access to a degree course at another theological college. Another student with dyslexia was allowed to undertake oral assessments rather than written ones.

Vineyard appreciates the importance of student guidance and exemplified this when it restructured the position of student dean so that it could be shared among three people to provide a more pastoral support emphasis to the role. The drawbacks of distance education are appreciated and steps are taken to alleviate them. Two examples of these are the reminders to students about the due dates for their assignments and the provision of finance for flights to block courses in the North Island for some students located in remote areas of the South Island.

The written and verbal feedback from the assessors and the supervisors provides another effective form of support. The role of the latter is extremely important in this context as many of them are in contact with the students every day. The supervisors have an excellent understanding of each student's particular needs as they have a formal meeting with the student each fortnight and they receive further confirmation of the progress being made through the student journals that are continuously being compiled. The summary of 42 interviews with students conducted between July 2010 and September 2011 recorded an approval rate of 100 per cent for the relationship with the supervisors. The comments ranged from 'my supervisor is awesome' to 'amazed by my supervisor's honesty and willingness to encourage me to grow'.

Although some of the feedback from the supervisors about individual students is informal, it is recorded in the database. The understanding gained about the effectiveness of the support provided to individual students is enhanced by the day of reflection after the block courses. The commitment of Vineyard to assessing its effectiveness in this area is exemplified by a specific question targeting guidance to students as part of the students' evaluation sheets and the importance placed on the feedback provided by the students about their supervisors.

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

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**.

The board shows a good understanding of its role as a governance body. It is very clear about ensuring that the vision of Vineyard College encompasses more than being an educational institution and in this way helps the college to stay focussed on its task. The board members exemplify their commitment to the church, the college, and the wider community through their work as pastors and supervisors. This high level of involvement not only ensures they are in touch with the sector but also assists them when exercising their governance roles. The valuable discussions taking place among the three members of the vision team about the future shape of the college is another example of effective governance.

The board appreciates that it has to plan for the short-term future of the college and is fully supportive of the move to introduce the level 5 diploma programme when the current NZQA-led review of national qualifications is completed. The members understand that Vineyard's training might include some courses in the future that do not come under the supervision of NZQA. The board minutes reveal that discussion has taken place regarding succession planning. The level of resourcing is good and staff members appreciate the care shown to them by the board. It is now time for the management to tighten the performance systems in order for it to be assured that educational achievement is reaching the highest possible level.

Vineyard has good communication processes. When another church was considering which programme it would suggest for the training of its ministers, it chose Vineyard partly for the conclusion it reached after research that its communication was superior to that of other providers.

Vineyard's organised programme of self-review highlights areas that can be improved. Reflection then takes place before changes are discussed and implemented. This process is just starting with the review of the quality management system which has been recognised as being compliance-based. A week has been set aside to rewrite the quality management system to reflect the role now played by evaluation. A similar process resulted in the move to Cloud computing so that staff members can work at home when they have domestic commitments. Another proposal being considered after consultation with a lecturer from another educational institution is for the introduction of more management and leadership skills into Vineyard's programmes.

The issue of moving the student dean's role to Auckland from Wellington was first raised in the principal's update to the board in September 2011. However, nothing eventuated until the student dean left his position and Vineyard took the opportunity to restructure the position as student liaison, to base it in the Auckland office, and to share it among three people. This has already resulted in an improvement in qualification completion rates.



## 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 **Good**.

### 2.2 Focus area: Certificate in Christian Ministry (Level 4)

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

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

### 2.3 Focus area: Certificate in Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care (Introductory) (Level 4)

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

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

# Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those expressed or implied within the report.



# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.*

*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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.*

*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 EER process 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](http://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/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>*

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