



NEW ZEALAND **QUALIFICATIONS** AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

External Evaluation and Review Report

New Zealand School of Dance

Date of report: 3 November 2021

About New Zealand School of Dance

The New Zealand School of Dance, located in Wellington, is one of the Southern Hemisphere's leading dance training institutions, preparing students for careers in professional classical ballet or contemporary dance. It is a registered charitable trust, funded by government and governed by a board of trustees.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	11 Hutchison Street, Newtown, Wellington
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students (at the time of the EER):	Domestic: 68 students, Māori 12 (17 per cent) and Pasifika four (6 per cent) International: two students
Number of staff:	Seven full-time and 20 part-time
TEO profile:	New Zealand School of Dance
Last EER outcome:	At the last EER (2017), NZQA was Highly Confident in New Zealand School of Dance's educational performance and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Diploma in Dance (Level 6) Ref: 3426-1, Programme ID:125456• New Zealand School of Dance Certificate in Dance Performance (Level 6) (this qualification is scheduled to be retired at the end of 2021) Ref: PC9736-1, Programme ID:109481• New Zealand School of Dance Diploma in Dance Performance (Level 7) Ref: PC9737-1, Programme ID:109482
MoE number:	8503
NZQA reference:	C45347
Dates of EER visit:	17 and 20 August 2021 ¹

¹ The EER was disrupted by the most recent pandemic lockdown. NZQA would like to acknowledge NZSD and stakeholders for their willingness to continue with the EER process despite the lockdown.

Summary of Results

The New Zealand School of Dance (NZSD) is providing high value for the students and the dance community of New Zealand and overseas. Students are skilled and versatile dancers who are readily gaining employment and/or establishing dance and other related careers upon completion of the programme. Self-assessment practices are effectively identifying and reviewing most areas, with findings used to improve valued outcomes, programmes and student support.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Overall, achievement is high and validated through robust moderation processes.
- Since the last EER, NZSD has continued to meet or exceed most of its Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) performance targets. The TEC accepts that the targets not met in 2020 were due to external factors, such as the impact of Covid-19 (see Appendix 1).

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Performance standards are aligned with dance profession expectations through regular input into programme design and content, and tutoring and assessment provided by local and international dancers and choreographers.
- Students and the dance community highly value the outcomes. Graduates readily gain relevant employment and/or are establishing their dance careers.
- Programmes and the studio-based training are well designed and delivered in purpose-built facilities, developing student attributes that meet industry needs while extending the boundaries of the art form.
- Exposing students to a range of cultural values and perspectives within Aotearoa New Zealand is in its early stages and requires further development.
- Students are well supported, having their academic, physical and mental wellbeing needs met. Physical conditioning and a proactive approach to injury prevention and management has had a

positive impact on students' dance performance, and has reduced withdrawals.

- Strong leadership and a clear direction is provided by an active, well-informed and connected board of trustees and a management team. Staff feel valued and supported by the open and approachable culture of the organisation.
- Key accountabilities are managed well by the business manager, with good oversight by the board of trustees.
- Self-assessment is of high quality in relation to achievement and design and delivery of programmes. There are opportunities to enhance student and staff communication, including closing the loop on feedback.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Achievement rates are high. Data³ for the four-year period 2017-20 shows that 124 of 147 students (84 per cent) completed the level 6 certificate, with 95 (77 per cent) progressing to the level 7 diploma and 77 (87.5 per cent) of these graduating. This final year of study enhances the students' employment opportunities and advances their performance skills. Ten students withdrew due to injury or the impact of Covid, excluding international students, who were unable to return once the borders closed.⁴</p> <p>Progression from the level 6 programme to the level 7 diploma is high, with 95 of the 124 students between 2017 and 2020 continuing with NZSD for their third year of training, and exceeding the TEC target (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>Māori and Pasifika achievement rates are also high.⁵ Fourteen of the 15 Māori/Pasifika students graduated at end of the level 6 certificate, with the student who failed re-enrolling in 2021 to repeat the second year. Twelve enrolled in the level 7 diploma, 10 had graduated, with two continuing their studies at the time of this EER.</p> <p>Since the last EER, NZSD has continued to meet or exceed its funding targets set by the TEC. In 2020, despite the teaching and learning challenges Covid-19 generated, most targets were exceeded (refer to Appendix 1).</p> <p>Robust moderation exercises and assessment panels – with</p>

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

³ Data provided by NZSD for 2017-20.

⁴ With border closures, only the second and third-year Australian students were able to return and resume their studies as they were deemed 'ordinarily resident' in New Zealand.

⁵ Māori and Pasifika data is grouped together, and therefore not able to be reported separately.

	<p>input from external dance professionals – validates student achievement. These high levels of achievement are also supported by the dance community’s regular tutoring and confirmation that dance performance standards are maintained and aligned with expectations.</p> <p>Students interviewed reported that the training is holistic. Not only does it equip them with technical dance competencies, it also gives them a range of knowledge in areas such as nutrition, anatomy, psychology, music and cultural studies. Their leadership and ability to work in teams are developed through dance performance, and prepares them well for their future careers.</p> <p>NZSD’s understanding of student participation and achievement data is strong. Data is being used effectively to plan improvements, for example the board of trustees and management are implementing a range of strategies to increase Pasifika participation. Data is also used to plan for the impacts of changes on cohort sizes, for example modelling how to ensure students are able to complete partnering and pas de deux techniques.</p> <p>Separating the Māori and Pasifika data for reporting purposes is recommended.</p>
Conclusion:	NZSD achievement rates are high, and meet or exceed TEC targets, and are validated through robust moderation processes. Data is well understood and effectively used for making improvements. Separating out Māori and Pasifika data would enable analysis of achievement for these priority groups.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	Employment outcomes are strong, with 62 (81 per cent) of the graduates from the level 7 diploma between 2017 and 2020 employed in the dance industry, five (6 per cent) involved in project-based work, and seven (9 per cent) continuing in further education. These outcomes exceed the target set by the TEC (see Appendix 1) and demonstrate high value for the New Zealand and overseas dance communities.

	<p>Māori and Pasifika employment outcomes are on par with other students, with 12 of 14 progressing to the third year, and one going directly into the dance industry. Eleven of the graduates from the diploma went into relevant employment, and one continued with further study.</p> <p>The internship/secondment built into the programme provides value to both the students and dance companies. Students have opportunities to present their performance skills to potential employers, and employers have time to assess these and the students' fit with their business. This has frequently led to offers of employment.</p> <p>Covid-19 had some impact on students' access to international employment opportunities at the end of 2020, due to border closures and the cancellation of auditions. Government's funding boost to the arts provided some new openings that assisted graduates to find dance roles upon graduation in New Zealand, as opposed to achieving their goals of commencing their careers with international dance companies.</p> <p>NZSD has a special position within the New Zealand dance community, being the only classical ballet training provider at tertiary level, and has a strong reputation among the contemporary dance community, with many companies managed and staffed by graduates. These connections and close relationships add value through ensuring standards and expectations are aligned, and that students have access to industry practitioners and scholarships and are provided with opportunities to support performances.</p> <p>NZSD graduates continue to contribute and add value to the dance community, beyond their dance careers, in roles such as choreographers, company management, and related professions such as physiotherapy.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Students and the dance community highly value the outcomes from the NZSD programmes. Graduates readily gain employment and/or establish their independent dance careers.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The NZSD professional advisory panel, with strong industry and student representation, meets annually to advise the board of trustees and management on trends and insights from the dance industry and any implications from those for the school and its programmes. The minutes from the August 2020 meeting note trends such as the impact of Covid-19 on the arts/dance industry, and the continuing shift towards portfolio careers.⁶ This information complements that provided by tutors, visiting dancers, moderators and partners to ensure the school is kept current and programmes are well matched to the needs to students and stakeholders.</p> <p>A comprehensive review of the school's local level 6 certificate programme, including input from industry practitioners and the advisory panel, has resulted in the newly designed and approved level 6 programme, which leads to the new New Zealand Diploma in Dance. This programme is being successfully delivered to the first-year cohort in 2021, with the content providing students with a broader range of skills, designed to prepare them for managing their own professional practice, professional development and industry knowledge to foster employment, such as portfolio careers. Development of assessments and resources for the second year is currently underway, informed by the first-year implementation, and will be rolled out next year.</p> <p>The programmes are well structured, provide a balance between performance and academic learning, and are supported by comprehensively documented programme regulations. The studio-based training is delivered in purpose-built facilities that meet industry standards. Well-resourced exercise rooms provide space for physical conditioning and fitness, with the social</p>

⁶ A portfolio career involves other activity, such as teaching and/or choreography, in addition to performing. A freelance career involves performing for multiple employers/projects. NZSD Professional Advisory Panel Minutes August 2020.

	<p>spaces and library resources being shared with the drama school.⁷</p> <p>Guest teachers support the school’s tutors, providing workshops in dance technique and choreography. Assessment panels, teacher observations with formal feedback and mentoring, moderation exercises between streams, and professional development activities contribute to the quality of tutoring and instruction and the consistency of assessment. Performance feedback is provided to students in group sessions and on a one-to-one basis at appropriate opportunities, for example during barre time in the ballet studios.</p> <p>Students interviewed by the evaluators praised their tutors’ skills and experience, the facilities, the programmes and delivery. A small group of third-year contemporary dance students advocated for greater exposure to cultural values and the perspectives of Aotearoa New Zealand. The board of trustees and management are aware of these voices and, alongside the current cultural activities and part-time Māori advisor, have engaged a cultural consultant to support the further embedding of cultural knowledge and practices where relevant.</p>
Conclusion:	Programmes and the studio-based training are well designed and delivered in purpose-built facilities, developing student attributes that meet industry needs while extending the boundaries of the art form.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	NZSD has robust selection processes, including auditions that confirm alignment of student goals with the programme and assess their capabilities to succeed in either the classical ballet or contemporary dance stream. Audition day ⁸ presentations and information sessions for students and their parents ensures they

⁷ NZSD shares the purpose-built performance arts facility Te Whaea: National Dance and Dance Centre with Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School. The two schools operate independently but collaborate in a number of ways.

⁸ NZSD NZ Audition Day 2020 – Accommodation Options and Student Support at NZSD Power point presentation and agenda.

	<p>are well informed and understand NZSD's expectations and the demands of the programme they are committing to.</p> <p>NZSD has introduced a number of initiatives that are purposely designed to help the students settle into their new environs and the rigours of the dance programme: an orientation programme, wellness group sessions – including topics such homesickness, stress management, work/life balance, routines – and workshops on healthy relationships⁹, drugs and alcohol¹⁰, and recovery techniques. International students are also provided with a city tour, advice on shopping, setting up their technology and bank accounts, and are able to access English language courses as required.</p> <p>Students' wellbeing is very important to management and staff, as they believe that 'if students' minds and bodies aren't well, then they won't be dancing well'. The school provides a comprehensive range of support services, including an on-site student support manager, access to the nearby university health service, and performance psychologist sessions. Attendance is monitored closely. Weekly sessions, built into the curriculum, focus on what is needed to fuel minds and spirits, develop self-reflective and communication skills, and build resilience.</p> <p>The recent introduction of a web-based human performance platform with a customised wellness questionnaire, mapping and recording health data and physical conditions, is proving a valuable tool and assisting with the reduction of long-term injuries. Students can monitor their wellness and physical progress, and staff use this information to plan and manage dance practice and provide appropriate treatments and interventions.</p> <p>During the Covid-19 lockdown the majority of students returned to their homes, with tutors providing online learning and practice routines. Students generally coped with this change in delivery style, although some were challenged by the limited space available and trying to maintain meaningful physical practice and their passion for dancing. Several international students elected to stay in New Zealand rather than return home, and appropriate pastoral support was provided to those students.</p>
--	--

⁹ ACC-funded programme Mates and Dates – usually offered to year 12 and 13 students in New Zealand schools.

¹⁰ Drugs and alcohol programme facilitated by a trained drugs and alcohol educator, using the reduction model.

	<p>Weekly staff meetings provide a forum for tutors and support staff to share and monitor student progress. School weekly assemblies are the avenue for updates and information, while less frequent longer assemblies are structured for open dialogue and feedback on relevant topics, with the outcomes recorded.</p> <p>Student feedback on the openness and effectiveness of communication was variable. Management was aware of these concerns and had begun a dialogue with students at the time of the evaluation.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are well supported, having their academic, physical and mental wellbeing needs met. There are opportunities to enhance communications and respond to feedback, with and from the student body.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZSD is effectively governed by an experienced, active and well-informed board of trustees. Senior management and the student representative report to the board at quarterly meetings, and participate in the development and refresh of the strategy.¹¹ The board's vision of 'shaping the next generation of dancers as industry leaders', is being achieved and is evidenced in several ways. These include the delivery of quality programmes producing high-performing and successful dance graduate partnerships – such as with the Royal New Zealand Ballet; close connections with the contemporary dance community in New Zealand and overseas; and through the investment made in the school's capability, including staffing and facilities, which creates a positive educational environment.</p> <p>The long-standing chief executive's connections with the international dance industry add significant value to NZSD. Prior to the border closures, the school benefited from regular visits from international teachers, professional development opportunities for staff, and a steady flow of international students, some of whom were recruited through international</p>

¹¹ Board strategy 2020 – the strategy is broken into four streams (students, partnerships, industry focus and foundational capability), using a strategic view of the future state activities to ensure the success of the school.

	<p>dance competitions.</p> <p>The NZSD team has a wealth of teaching experience, both in terms of years' service and dance industry experience, and is well complemented by recently employed tutors and short-term contractors. Supportive management, a positive team culture and strong academic leadership are stand-out features of the organisation.</p> <p>Developing staff cultural knowledge and capabilities is required to support further embedding of cultural values and perspectives of Aotearoa New Zealand into the delivery and everyday life of the school.</p>
Conclusion:	Strong leadership and a clear direction is provided by an active, well-informed and connected board of trustees and management team. Staff feel valued and supported by the open and approachable culture of the organisation.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Key compliance accountabilities are managed well by the business manager. The board of trustees is well informed through regular reporting from management, and by oversight provided through the audit and risk, and health and safety sub-committees.</p> <p>The evaluation confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NZQA yearly attestations are submitted in a timely manner. • Requirements for international students' entry, visas, enrolment and insurance are met. • Approved programme hours are monitored and met. • Attestation requirements under the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 and the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019 are submitted in a timely manner. Management identified two outcomes under the interim domestic Code where the school is still developing

	<p>their implementation (Outcomes 1 and 5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation is conducted in accordance with NZQA requirements, and ensures assessment is valid, fair and consistent. • Organisational policies and procedures, including programme regulations, are well documented, regularly reviewed and ratified by the board, discussed with staff, and consistently implemented. <p>Management acknowledges that the alignment of student support practices with the requirements of the Codes (as above) needs to be more broadly understood by staff.</p> <p>NZSD has a contractual arrangement with a local university for the provision of student accommodation. Homestays are also available. To ensure younger students are provided with the family support needed at this age and level of maturity, NZSD is implementing a new policy for 2022 requiring students under 17 years to take up the homestay option.</p> <p>At the time of the EER, the board was in the process of approving a policy related to safety checks for staff working with students under 18 years of age. Whilst the NZSD is not a provider of a regulated service under the Children’s Act 2014 (schedule 1), it does not have an obligation to conduct safety checks. However, the board has decided to proactively develop a policy and will be implementing a screening programme. This policy is in addition to its child protection policy, which is required under section 16 of the Act.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Key accountabilities are managed well by the business manager, with good oversight by the board of trustees.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Dance (Level 6), New Zealand School of Dance Certificate in Dance Performance (Level 6), and New Zealand School of Dance Diploma in Dance Performance (Level 7)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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 New Zealand School of Dance consider:

- Strengthening the embedding of cultural values and perspectives of Aotearoa New Zealand into programmes and delivery, where appropriate.
- Providing professional development for teaching staff on tikanga and te reo.
- Identifying ways to enhance communications and respond to feedback, with and from the student body.
- Identifying ways to develop greater understanding of the interim domestic Code by all staff.

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. Achievement of Tertiary Education Commission targets for the year ending 31 December 2020

Level 6 certificate achievement	Targets
78% of students completed the qualification by the initial proposed timeframe	75%
78% of students completed the qualification	80%
96% of new graduates plan to carry on to further education within 12 weeks of graduation	80%
Level 7 diploma achievement	Target
100% of students completed the qualification by the qualification end date	75%
100% of students completed the qualification	80%
Other expectations	
12 performances took place during graduation season	10 performances

Source: TEC response to the New Zealand School of Dance – 2020 S321 Grant Funding Report. Letter dated 19 July 2021.

NB: the letter noted that New Zealand School of Dance did not meet four of its targets, primarily due to the impact of Covid.

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 fraud¹²*
- *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.*

¹² 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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz