

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Whitecliffe Enterprises Limited
trading as Whitecliffe College of Arts
and Design

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 26 June 2014

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Whitecliffe Enterprises Limited trading as Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design (Whitecliffe)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	24 Balfour Road, Parnell, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above and at St George's Bay Road, Auckland
First registered:	1 April 1991
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master of Arts in Arts Therapy (Clinical) (Level 9)• Master of Arts in Arts Therapy,• Master of Fine Arts• Master of Arts in Arts Management (Level 9)• Bachelor of Fine Arts• Diploma of Art and Design (Advanced) (Level 7)• Diploma of Art and Design• Certificate of Art and Design• Certificate of Arts and Design (Preparatory) (Level 5)• Certificate in Arts and Design (Foundation) (Level 4)• Intensive English Review, General English

Code of Practice signatory:	Yes for students aged 18 years and upwards. Students must be turning 18 years of age in their first year of study.
Number of students:	Domestic: 364 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) (NZ European/Pakeha 49 per cent, Māori 9 per cent, Pasifika 7 per cent, Asian 19 per cent, Other 16 per cent) International: 39 EFTS
Number of staff:	45-48 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Refer 'Courses currently delivered' above
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Whitecliffe is the only degree-awarding tertiary institution in New Zealand that is solely focused on art and design and the related fields of arts therapy and arts management. Postgraduate courses all offer blended delivery. Whitecliffe has a niche in the tertiary art and design, arts therapy and arts management areas. The college has produced 3,000 graduates over its 30 years of operation with, approximately 100 students graduating each year.</p> <p>The Bachelor of Fine Arts is a four-year degree which has a number of exit qualifications. These include two level 5 Certificates of Arts and Design (one of which is structured to provide English language assistance), a level 6 Diploma of Arts and Design, and a level 7 Diploma of Arts and Design (Advanced). From year 2, students in the Bachelor of Fine Arts specialise in fine arts, graphic design, photography, or fashion design. Students can exit at year 1 with a certificate-level qualification and at year 2 with a diploma-level qualification.</p> <p>The postgraduate programmes (level 9) include a Master of Fine Arts, a Master of Arts in Arts Therapy, a Master of Arts in Arts Therapy Clinical, and a Master of Arts in Arts Management.</p> <p>Whitecliffe caters for an older student demographic, with 60 per cent of undergraduate students being over 20 years of age and 20 per</p>

cent over 25 years of age. Less than 10 per cent of postgraduate students are under 25 years of age. Female students are 78 per cent of the student body and male students are 22 per cent.

The St George's Bay Road site has studio space for students and includes the Pearce Gallery which hosts a number of exhibitions of work by students and faculty. Whitecliffe offers a wide range of programmes from foundation (level 4) to postgraduate (level 9).

Recent significant changes: Whitecliffe appointed a new dean of college in November 2011. In 2013 it has made changes to the governance and management structure by creating a new executive and senior management group. The fashion department has undergone significant growth in student numbers in the last few years.

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2009, NZQA was Highly Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Whitecliffe.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Focus areas selected were the mandatory focus areas of governance, management and strategy, and international student support.

The programme focus areas were selected from the fashion design and fine arts departments. The focus areas from the fashion department included: the Diploma in Arts and Design, Diploma in Arts and Design (Advanced), and the Bachelor of Fine Arts.

The focus areas selected from the fine arts department included: the Diploma in Arts and Design, Diploma in Arts and Design (Advanced) Bachelor of Fine Arts, and the Master of Fine Arts.

These were the focus areas proposed by Whitecliffe at the scoping phase of the EER and were agreed to by NZQA. The focus areas selected provided a cross-section of the two core activities of arts and design, and are delivered by two specialist departments that use all the systems of the college. Another reason for the fashion focus was that the fashion department has undergone significant growth in the last few years. Also, Whitecliffe was interested in discussing the changes that have been made to the Master of Fine Arts programme in the last

year and to look at areas not covered in the 2009 EER – the generic Bachelor of Fine Arts (year 1) and student support areas.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

The EER team consisted of a lead and external evaluator and was conducted over two days at the Whitecliffe Balfour Road and St George's Bay Road sites. The evaluation team met with the president, dean of college, business manager, dean of instruction and undergraduate studies, marketing manager, academic registrar, director of research, heads of departments for fine arts and fashion and a number of academic staff across both the fashion and fine arts departments. The team met with a range of students in both the fashion and fine arts departments from different year levels of their respective qualifications; and with eight international students.

The team consulted a range of documentation including the Whitecliffe self-assessment document, evaluations by students of the teaching and their learning and programmes, the annual review of the Code of Practice, memoranda of understanding with language schools and other tertiary institutions, the student guide, international agent handbook, lecturer induction information, the annual programme evaluation report for 2013, minutes of the executive management group and senior management group, external assessor and international visitor reports, and the report on the Whitecliffe Master of Fine Arts programme from July 2012.

The team also requested and reviewed further documentation post-visit, including: the 2012-2013 annual report to NZQA, the fine arts department report 2012-2013, the Master of Fine Arts report 2012-2013, the fashion design department 2012 annual report, the staff qualifications of the Whitecliffe faculty, further data and a business goals and the strategy document. Whitecliffe also provided email contact details for graduates and external stakeholders.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Whitecliffe Enterprises Limited trading as Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design**.

Whitecliffe's learners complete courses and gain qualifications. The college meets all the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) educational performance indicators. Over the years 2009-2012 there was 100 per cent course completion, at year 4, in both fine arts and fashion. Learners are closely tracked individually and anyone who successfully completes a given year gains a certificate, diploma or degree qualification respectively, ensuring that students' successes are acknowledged.

Learners acquire useful and meaningful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities, including learning to learn and self-management as they progress through the year levels. Both fine arts and fashion students become increasingly independent of direct instruction and develop a level of critical analysis that allows them to monitor their own progress constructively.

Assessment provides learners and teachers with feedback on progress, both formal and informal. Learner outcomes are verified by input from local and overseas moderators and visits from industry specialists, to ensure that the standard of the assessments and grades achieved meet international criteria.

Whitecliffe achieved results in the latest Performance-Based Research Funding round that exceeded most other private training establishments and most polytechnics. The NZQA degree monitoring process is thorough and Whitecliffe is approved by NZQA to be self-monitoring. The reporting processes to NZQA via annual programme evaluation reports have met NZQA requirements.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Whitecliffe Enterprises Limited trading as Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design**.

Whitecliffe focuses on individual student achievement and provided detailed information to the evaluation team about a number of graduates and their progress, work situation and exhibition history. The organisation also has strong industry networks and contacts and uses the information gained to inform programme content. Whitecliffe knows its graduates and there were high levels of satisfaction reported from all stakeholders who have worked with Whitecliffe graduates. The achievement course completion of year 4 students is exemplary, and Whitecliffe understands the reasons a small number of students do not progress from year to year. These reasons are generally personal and outside of Whitecliffe's control. Whitecliffe actively supports students to assist them to maintain their study and has not identified any patterns across the students who do not advance from year to

year. However, particularly in light of the growth in student numbers at Whitecliffe in recent years, this is an area for ongoing scrutiny.

Whitecliffe's self-assessment document provided to NZQA prior to the EER referenced other documents and reports and these documents and reports were made available to the EER team on site. However, evaluative discussions at the EER were unable to clearly show how some of the self-assessment activities in these documents had led to changes or worthwhile improvements. Follow-up information provided post-visit has gone some way towards addressing this gap, but Whitecliffe might find it useful to incorporate the key information across these documents into an overarching summary that is accessible to all staff to help them to better contribute to and understand self-assessment activities at Whitecliffe.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Learners complete courses and gain qualifications. Whitecliffe meets all the TEC educational performance indicators. Over the years 2009-2012 there was 100 per cent course completion, at year 4, in both fine arts and fashion. A small number of students do not reach the year 4 degree level because of a range of factors, mostly outside the control of Whitecliffe. However, the embedded qualifications enable students to gain certificates and diplomas at years 1, 2 and 3 of all programmes, ensuring that student success is recognised.

Learners acquire useful and meaningful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities, including learning to learn and self-management as they progress through the year levels. Both fine arts and fashion students become increasingly independent of direct instruction and develop a level of critical analysis that allows them to monitor their own progress constructively.

Assessment provides learners and teachers with feedback on progress, and this is verified by input from local and overseas moderators and visits from industry specialists, to ensure that the standard of the assessments and grades achieved meets international criteria. Staff also meet daily to discuss student progress and, when there are issues that need addressing, to develop an action plan with the student, which is monitored regularly.

Whitecliffe's self-assessment processes showed that feedback from learners is most usefully gathered in a range of formats: evaluations, interviews or informal discussion. As a result, learner feedback on lecturers and programme quality is sought regularly and formally in year 1 through written evaluations and in other formats in the later years. The exception is that where an issue is identified, detailed feedback is sought. The evaluation team sighted an example of this kind of feedback and noted the measures taken to resolve the issue, including feedback to the students involved and checking processes to ensure the issue had been resolved longer term.

Whitecliffe provided detailed information to the evaluation team about individual graduates and their progress, work situation and exhibition history. It showed that Whitecliffe graduates are highly regarded in industry. However, while this

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

information is useful Whitecliffe has not analysed it to identify patterns around graduate outcomes over time.

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**.

Graduates are closely tracked individually and anyone who successfully completes a given year gains a certificate or diploma qualification. This is an added advantage for Whitecliffe students and a factor in a student choosing to study at Whitecliffe.

Learners have opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts, such as New Zealand Fashion Week and exhibitions at the Pearce Gallery. The feedback from organisers of external events about the participation and skill levels of Whitecliffe students is all very positive. Internships in years 3 and 4 of the degree programmes and close industry contacts lead to work opportunities for students on graduation. Industry and alumni speakers visit the campus regularly, helping to keep students and staff up to date with industry requirements and trends. Student awards and prizes are offered by industry, and both Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts student work has been purchased by significant private and public galleries, indicating that the work is valued by knowledgeable critics.

Whitecliffe's self-assessment has led the organisation to consider other ways to increase input from industry and graduates, including the development of an alumni website and investigating digital platforms such as Moodle. These developments recognise that there are a number of employment pathways for graduates and that it is beneficial to the college and future graduates' employment opportunities to maximise the linkages and synergies available through graduates and industry contacts.

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**.

Learning environments at Whitecliffe are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners. The generic year 1 programme that all students complete gives them an overview of the possible majors and assists them to develop and match their needs before applying for the year 2 programmes. The students also like the

college's physical location, small classes (15-20 students), and the overall size of the college. Compulsory business studies courses are offered to students. This is beneficial as many graduates will be self-employed or go on to further advanced study, both of which require good time and financial management and organisational skills.

Other examples of Whitecliffe meeting students' needs well were the response to a fashion industry representative who told them that all fashion graduates needed to be proficient in computer software packages such as Illustrator. Whitecliffe responded promptly by timetabling classes in these packages for year 2 students and offering year 3 and 4 students intensive block courses. Other examples of matching student needs well are the purchase of a CAD (computer aided design) machine and employing a dedicated tutor to help students to use it, and gaining access to a global forecasting website that tracks upcoming fashion trends.

At a strategic level, the college balances innovation and continuity by ensuring that programmes maintain relevance to stakeholders. It does this through individual staff networks, industry contacts and community outreach to stakeholders, for example aligning the college's strategic plan with the Auckland Plan (Auckland Council) and marketing, and building networks with local secondary schools, especially around art and design.

Whitecliffe also produces a newsletter to profile student success, which is sent to a wide range of contacts, such as graduates, parents, agents, businesses and local schools. Other initiatives are the 'student for a day', where secondary school students spend time on campus, and short course programmes that build community links. For example, evening classes attract 100-400 people a year and introduce people to the college and may result in longer-term enrolments into day programmes. Overall, Whitecliffe understands its student and community groups well and has developed programmes that are responsive and relevant to stakeholders and communities.

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**.

Resources are allocated to support learning teaching and research. In 2011 a new position of director of research was created, the first time research activities have been coordinated in one role. Staff now produce an annual research plan that is monitored throughout the year and includes an end-of-year report. These changes have led to improved research outputs, particularly among staff whose outputs were low previously. Whitecliffe has a good record with the Performance-Based Research Fund and meets all NZQA monitoring requirements. There is a research plan for all staff who teach degree programmes, although there was some evidence

of overwork for some of the fine arts lecturers as there is little time between the end of one course and the start of the next. Whitecliffe is aware of this issue and is currently addressing it. Most lecturers are also practitioners, which helps them to stay current with and connected to their specialist areas.

Staff described Whitecliffe as a good place to work, that other staff were supportive and that it is possible to follow one's own career as well as to teach. Whitecliffe supports the professional development of staff, and lecturers can develop their own passions. Staff also noted that it was a pleasure to watch students blossom and transform from nervous to confident, and that this confidence flowed over into other parts of the students' lives. Staff facilitate this process by challenging students to take increasing responsibility for their creative progress.

New staff are inducted, closely monitored and well supported. Fashion students questioned the teaching effectiveness of some of the recently appointed staff. The college has recognised this issue and is providing ongoing support for these staff members. Fine art students noted that resources and facilities were generally good, except for the technical facilities for wood and construction and the need for a spray room and print room and better equipment for editing videos. They also wanted more formal written feedback each semester and said the contextual studies, such as for art history, had repetitive content. However, the evaluation team noted that the Whitecliffe learning environment is one of active critique and that most issues raised by the students were either known to management and/or already being dealt with.

Overall, both fine arts and fashion students valued their educational experience at Whitecliffe and would recommend studying at the college to friends and relations. While most of the teaching at Whitecliffe is effective and valued by students, and teachers are well qualified in their respective fields, the evaluation team concluded that, particularly in the fashion programmes, a review of the support and training that staff receive in adult teaching skills is likely to be of 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**.

Whitecliffe responds well to the well-being needs of domestic and international students who described their teachers as helpful, friendly and patient. Students felt respected by teachers and treated as equals, and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The majority of the international students (comprising about 10 per cent of the student body) had attended secondary schools in Auckland and did not require intensive orientation to the city and environs. Whitecliffe meets all the requirements of the Code of Practice by providing 24/7 contact for international students, appropriate homestay arrangements and dedicated staff. An added

bonus for Whitecliffe's international students is that several of the pastoral care staff are also their subject teachers, which means they have a lot of day-to-day contact with the students. This allows staff to monitor the students' behaviour and well-being and track their attendance and progress closely.

Other useful initiatives developed by Whitecliffe for international students include the development of a handbook for agents and a checklist for students to ensure they have arranged the required insurances and appropriate visas. In 2014, students will be asked to sign off on this checklist. Because of the low uptake of activities organised for students, a survey is being conducted to find out what activities and events international students would like to see offered.

Whitecliffe has a focus on bridging foundation programmes, where support in English language and academic writing is offered in small classes or individually for students, for both domestic and international students. The college provides excellent pastoral guidance and support to both domestic and international students and has systematic processes that have led to worthwhile improvements, including a student at-risk register that is analysed to look for any trends over time.

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 **Good**.

Whitecliffe supports educational achievement in a number of ways, including through memoranda of understanding with other educational organisations such as Design and Arts College of New Zealand in Christchurch and Waiariki Institute of Technology. These arrangements provide flexibility of physical location for study, delivery options and future study options. The integration of theory, research and practice and the focus on interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary flexibility in the courses offered provides Whitecliffe students with an exciting environment in which to develop their creative talents.

As part of a process of ongoing improvement, Whitecliffe participated in a national survey in 2012. The college has been systematically implementing the recommendations from this survey in 2013. Actions taken in 2013 include a new management structure with a realigned executive team (including the marketing manager), the appointment of the academic registrar position and the formation of a senior management group. This group meets fortnightly and includes heads of department who now have a more effective forum to share common issues with management and between themselves. Early responses to these changes are positive, with heads of department reporting that concerns are being heard and solutions actioned appropriately.

Whitecliffe's vision, mission and strategy fits well with industry, regional and government priorities, for example, the TEC requirement for 14 per cent Maori/Pasifika participation at Whitecliffe by 2014. Whitecliffe is promoting this by a pilot programme with 11 foundation students at the Manukau Pacific Centre. In this way, Whitecliffe is taking the learning opportunity to where the students live and are most comfortable. In 2014, these students will be brought by minibus to the Parnell campus, further minimising barriers to learning.

As Whitecliffe has grown and developed, the dean of college has modified the governance and management structures, in consultation with senior staff, to meet these needs, including delegating responsibilities more widely, of which the senior management group is a good example. The minutes sighted of this group's meetings indicate a close focus on operational matters and the ongoing development of a strategic focus.

While Whitecliffe has effective industry contact and advice at both an organisational and individual staff level, these contacts will be complemented by the planned development of an advisory board structure for more formally involving industry in curriculum development on an ongoing basis. This development could also provide opportunities for new interdisciplinary initiatives in addition to those already provided in-house.

NZQA's annual programme evaluation reports provided to the evaluation team post-visit, together with the summarised self-assessment report sent prior to the EER, added further understanding about the strength of Whitecliffe's self-assessment capability. While the annual programme evaluation reports are useful for identifying achievements, outcomes and stakeholder needs, they are largely descriptive in nature rather than evaluative and analytical. However, the reports are reviewed by the academic registrar and dean of college and any matters arising are discussed and actioned as required.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: International student support

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

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

Refer Findings 1.5.

2.3 Focus area: Fashion Design

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Fine Arts

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

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that Whitecliffe consider:

- Reviewing the support and training staff receive in adult teaching skills.
- Developing a high-level summary of self-assessment activities and resulting outcomes to assist staff to better understand self-assessment activities at Whitecliffe.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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