

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Lifeway College Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 11 February 2014

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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:	Lifeway College Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	95 Mt Eden Road, Auckland
Delivery sites:	20 Goodall Road, Snells Beach, Warkworth (EER on-site visit) 95 Mt Eden Road, Auckland (EER on-site visit) 122 Wairau Road, Glenfield 38 Wainuiomata Road, Lower Hutt 33 Porowini Ave, Whangarei 110 Montgomerie Road, Mangere, Auckland 40 Saxton Rd, Nelson
First registered:	21 November 1991
Courses currently delivered:	Lifeway College has approval and accreditation to offer the following qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifeway Certificate in Christian Ministries (Level 4)• Lifeway Certificate in Christian Ministries (Internship) (Level 4)• Lifeway Diploma in Christian Ministry (Level 5)• Lifeway Diploma in Christian Ministry

	(Internship) (Level 5)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifeway Diploma in Counselling (Level 6) • Lifeway Diploma in Business Information Systems (Level 5) • Lifeway Diploma in Business Administration (Level 5) • Lifeway Diploma in Business Administration (Level 6) • Lifeway Diploma in 3D Animation (Level 6) • Lifeway Diploma in Advanced 3D Animation (Level 7)
Code of Practice signatory	Yes
Number of students:	<p>Domestic: 119 equivalent full-time students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori: 30 equivalent full-time students • Pasifika: 11 equivalent full-time students <p>International: 88 equivalent full-time students. The majority of international students are Indian (60); the remaining represent a range of nationalities including Chinese, Nepalese, American, Korean, Chilean, Columbian and Pakistani.</p>
Number of staff:	16.8 full-time equivalents
Distinctive characteristics:	Lifeway College was founded in 1986 by Lifeway Trust, a charitable trust. It is a Christian tertiary provider open to students from all nationalities and faiths. Christian principles underpin its philosophy and practice. It offers education and training in digital media, business and ministry. Lifeway College has formed a holistic approach to education, teaching universal life-skills along with its approved academic programmes.
Recent significant changes:	Since the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in November 2009, Lifeway College has appointed additional members to the board and staff to provide further education expertise.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the previous EER, NZQA was Highly Confident in Lifeway College's educational performance and Confident in its self-assessment.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER included the following focus areas:

- Lifeway Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5)

This programme demonstrates the special character of the PTE. It is a pathway for graduates of the Certificate in Christian Ministries (Internship) (Level 4), and currently has 23 students enrolled.

- Lifeway Diploma in Advanced 3D Animation (Level 7)

This programme has the largest number of students, including international students, and pathways from the Diploma in 3D Animation (Level 6), which was a focus area of the previous EER. It currently has 43 students enrolled.

The scope also included the mandatory focus areas of:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International students

The majority of international students are enrolled in the level 5 and level 6 Diploma in Business Administration qualifications, with some students enrolled in the level 6 and level 7 animation qualifications.

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.

Two evaluators conducted the EER over three days, starting with a day at the Auckland city campus, and two days at the Snells Beach, Warkworth campus.

The evaluators spoke to the Lifeway College board, the principal, the academic dean, operations dean, registrar, administration manager, heads of schools, and the programme managers, tutors and students from the two programmes selected as programme focus areas. In addition, international support staff and students were interviewed. Stakeholders, including industry advisory board members, employers of graduates and graduates were interviewed at both campuses.

The evaluators reviewed a range of strategic planning documents, including the investment plan submitted to the Tertiary Education Commission, the strategic plan and the plan of excellence, which includes the self-assessment plan and the risk management plan. The evaluation team also viewed documents to triangulate evidence, including student outcomes showing educational achievement through course completions, qualification completions, retention, progression and destination and benchmarking data. The team also reviewed student satisfaction survey results (domestic and international), alumni survey results, student services survey, tutor performance reviews, student evaluation analysis, board reports and meeting minutes, programme reviews, industry board minutes, student council minutes and programme staff minutes.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Lifeway College Limited**.

The key reasons include:

- Lifeway College has a clear vision and direction to achieve the delivery of valued quality education outcomes based on the identified needs of its learners, employers and the community. Strong processes, including timely responsiveness to self-assessment, underpin and support this delivery.
- The college has achieved consistently in the top quartile in the PTE sector, has exceeded the sector median for course and qualification completions, and compares strongly with similar providers. There has been a steady increase in learner achievement (course completions) from 2009-2012 (77-92 per cent).
- Māori, international and Pasifika learners in this same period have exceeded Lifeway College achievement rates for course completion, with achievement ranging from 87-100 per cent for Māori and 86-100 per cent for Pasifika learners. The international learners' course completions range from 98-100 per cent.
- Employers of the animation graduates value the skills gained and their 'industry-readiness'. More than 75 per cent of the animation graduates consistently gain industry placements.
- Christian ministry internship graduates attest that the skills gained prepare them well for future employment in ministry or for further study. During the programme they voluntarily use skills gained to serve their communities, including working with youth.
- Learner testimonials attest to the academic, employment and personal growth attributed to the courses. Staff identified criteria to recognise and acknowledge character-building and personal growth, including work ethics, attitude, integrity, punctuality, diligence, life-skills, time-management and budgeting.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Lifeway College Limited**.

The key reasons include:

- Lifeway College's approach to self-assessment is comprehensive and modelled by governance and management reviewing educational progress and achievement and its underpinning processes. This includes reviewing the quality and value of the programmes for the students, their employers and communities.
- Board and management self-reviews have resulted in strengthened board and management composition and expertise. Strategic planning, resulting actions and progress reporting are more focused on learner achievement and outcomes. Improved monthly reports include progress against key performance indicators, including educational achievement.
- Strengthened processes have led to improvement in educational progress and achievement. These processes include the implementation of a new student management system which reports key performance indicators by course and ethnic group, improving the monitoring of and response to achievement in real time. The process for the moderation of assessments to ensure they are varied, consistent and valid has been greatly improved by the inclusion of professional development for internal staff, and external scrutiny.
- Improved systems to seek and respond to feedback from students and stakeholders include input from industry advisory boards, networks, alumni surveys, post-course evaluations, one-to-one student interviews and the student council, and has led to improved staff and teaching resources, and improvements to programmes and course assessments.

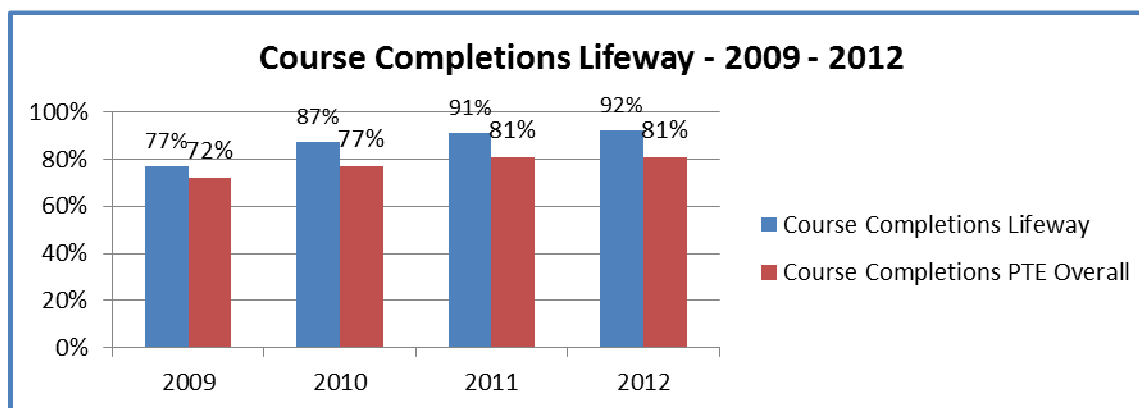
Findings¹

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 **Excellent**.

Lifeway College's motto is 'success for life'. The intent of the motto is reflected in steadily increasing course completions, which demonstrate new knowledge and skills gained, and increased personal growth and employability. The course completions performance indicator has seen Lifeway College consistently in the top quartile in the PTE sector. There has been a steady increase in learner achievement (course completions) from 2009-2012 (77-92 per cent). Lifeway College benchmarked its educational performance against other PTEs offering like programmes, and compares very strongly (see graph below). The evaluation confirmed this benchmarking by data and stakeholder endorsement. However, while still achieving very well with the qualification completions indicator, in 2012 the PTE reported a drop in qualification completions from 90 to the 80 percentile, attributed to the timing of qualification completions of a particular programme. The evaluation team considered this a fair attribution. Monthly reports to the board include educational performance.



Lifeway College tracks achievement by programme, campus and ethnic group. Māori, international and Pasifika learners in the period 2009-12 exceeded the total Lifeway College student achievement rate, with course completion achievements ranging from 87-100 per cent for Māori and 86-100 per cent for Pasifika learners. International learner course completions range from 98-100 per cent. These are excellent results in that all these groups are consistently achieving above the sector median. While these are excellent achievement outcomes for Māori and Pasifika

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

learners, the number of learners enrolled is not high, and Lifeway College is trying to increase numbers. The organisation is also working to increase and diversify its international learners to minimise the risk resulting from the majority of learners coming from one country, and minimal numbers from the other countries represented.

The excellent educational achievement results also manifest in skills gained. Work-readiness is valued by employers of the animation graduates. This has led to more than 75 per cent of the animation graduates consistently gaining industry placements. Graduate testimonials show employment on major animation films and advertisements in New Zealand and overseas.

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

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

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

Lifeway College provided clear evidence that it is delivering most of the valued outcomes for its students and stakeholders. Students value the skills and qualifications gained, which increase their employability. The animation students interviewed acknowledged the skills gained and their preparedness to create 'showreels' – their final project that showcases their skills and knowledge to prospective employers. Graduate testimonials identified the range of skills learnt, which helped them in their work. Some of these graduates are employed by well-known studios and have worked on major animation films and advertising both in New Zealand and overseas. Employers appreciate the work-readiness of graduates. Eighty per cent of the 50 staff at one large animation studio are Lifeway College graduates, as are 30 per cent of another studio with 120 staff.

Christian ministry internship graduates attest that the skills gained prepare them well for future employment in ministry or for further study. During the programme they voluntarily use skills gained to serve their communities, including working with youth and the elderly. Learner testimonials attest to the personal growth attributed to the programmes, and staff identified criteria they use to recognise and acknowledge character-building and personal growth including work ethics, attitude, integrity, punctuality, diligence, life-skills, time-management and budgeting. Lifeway College has a strong connection with the Life Church, and students gain a practical realisation of what it is like to work in ministry as they serve or support others in performing their roles with the Life Church. Employers appreciate the skills gained by those graduates who choose to be employed as pastors, and the additional support provided by volunteers.

In addition, during their courses the students volunteer their services for work-related activities, contributing back to their communities. These activities include the ministry internship students contributing their new skills to working with youth

and the elderly, and business students invited to attend the annual Life Conference and monthly Life Business events voluntarily helping to run the event and network with the business community participants. Packing charity Christmas boxes is an end-of-year community voluntary activity open to all students.

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**.

High retention and course completion rates and destination data are indicators that Lifeway College programmes are matching most of the important needs of learners and stakeholders. Programmes are continuously reviewed to ensure ongoing currency and relevancy. Each school (digital media, business and ministry) has an industry board providing external input into the programmes. Programme improvements resulting from this feedback include the introduction of a computer gaming component to the animation programme. The computer gaming interest has continued, with Lifeway College investigating the viability of a stand-alone gaming qualification. The final project where students create their showreel to demonstrate their knowledge and range of skills to prospective employers was lengthened following feedback from industry suggesting a balance between 'performing under industry standards' and giving students optimum time to create and complete the project.

Improved reports for the ministry programme better inform understanding of student needs, and the character framework assessment criteria have been refined to acknowledge growth in personal development. These are clear examples of the input by the respective industry boards working collegially with Lifeway College staff to match industry, community and employer needs.

Following review, processes for the ministry internship programme were improved to determine whether learners were at the correct level to better ensure retention and success. These processes included introducing prerequisites for the diploma programme to ensure that learners were at the certificate or equivalent level. One-week taster courses are also used to enable learners to gauge levels of understanding and to confirm course choices.

Lifeway College introduced a number of improvements for international students. An ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher was recruited for both testing and support for international students. The academic dean introduced Skype interviews for international students to clarify Lifeway College and student expectations, validate written documentation, affirm levels of understanding and determine support requirements. The academic dean has also incorporated life-skills components – such as CV writing, job applications, work attitude and

interview preparation – into career workshops for all students to increase student preparedness for employment.

Lifeway College board, senior management, and teaching and support staff demonstrate effective stakeholder and community engagement through strong networks. Articulation agreements with other institutions have provided additional teaching space to accommodate students and helped develop programmes for mutual delivery and learning pathways. Ongoing engagement with industry and the Life Church through the industry boards and networks has provided feedback on programmes. Network links with sector groups have provided venues for discussion and debate on policy matters, such as the NZQA Targeted Review of Qualifications process and changes to international student rules, to enable proactive risk management for the organisation and the students. Lifeway College has engaged with a large Māori institute to provide reciprocal opportunities (programme pathways for students and accessing mentoring opportunities from staff teaching Māori and Pasifika students). This engagement and the recent recruitment of cultural advisors (Māori and Pasifika) is expected to support Lifeway College's goal to increase Māori and Pasifika student numbers.

Lifeway College has strengthened strategies to seek feedback on programmes to better ensure needs are met. These strategies include effective industry boards, alumni surveys, student surveys, end-of-course student evaluations of courses and tutors, library surveys and programme reviews. Actions based on these surveys and reviews have resulted in improved premises, facilities and programmes, contributing to the high educational performance achieved.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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 continued upward trend for course completions, retention and attendance indicates that teaching is effective. While Lifeway College employs highly qualified and skilled tutors and programme managers, senior management implemented strategies to support tutors to continue these positive trends. They include strengthened processes in tutor appraisal through peer and management observations, and mentoring and student evaluations to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Where strengths were identified, tutors provided mentoring support to colleagues, and where areas were identified for improvement, support was provided by the operations dean to improve delivery. In one case where sufficient improvement was not detected, the guest tutor was not re-engaged. Professional development is encouraged, both internally through peer support, and support from the academic dean and the operations dean, and externally through continued links to industry and academic institutions.

Moderation processes to ensure fair and valid assessments were identified by the senior management team as not happening frequently or effectively enough to improve practice. Lifeway College moved from a 10 per cent internal moderation sampling to moderating all assessments. More varied assessments also resulted. Lifeway College has settled into an effective and manageable cycle of moderation that provides timely feedback for the programmes while validating marker judgements. This provides assurance to management, since the assessments are not required to be moderated by external standard-setting bodies. Lifeway College considers that the increased variety and moderation of assessments has helped to minimise plagiarism. The evaluation team considers that these improved moderation processes have strengthened assessment practices.

Student evaluations of courses and tutors are generally positive and any issues are highlighted and responded to in a timely manner. Teaching staff identified that student/tutor relationships are key to identifying, responding to and meeting student needs. Therefore, timely response to feedback is considered important to maintaining these relationships. Students interviewed commented on the balance of theory and practice in the programmes. Ministry students benefit from the structure of their programme, which begins with classroom delivery, followed by tutorials and then the opportunity to practise their learning within the college's church and community activities. Animation students benefit from tutors with acknowledged industry experience (several have worked on major animation works, two have their own animation studios, and one has written two books which are used in the programme) working alongside tutors who are still contributing to the animation and gaming industry.

A tension between producing a generalist or specialist animation graduate has generated much discussion and debate between the industry advisory board members, tutors, graduates and students. Feedback from one group of international students during the evaluation showed a preference for specialising, while another group of international and domestic students preferred the generalist approach. Lifeway College has responded to feedback from trialling both approaches. Changes will be introduced to the 2014 programme to lengthen the specialisation module.

Students have a number of options to provide feedback on the courses, student services and tutors. Lifeway College is very responsive to student feedback, as exemplified in the improvements to resources and programmes.

All modules have been logged on the internet, enabling students to reflect on taught material and for tutors to review teaching materials. To maintain quality and consistency, any required changes following revision of these materials are only made by programme leaders. This system is also used to post the daily progress of projects, to enable tutor monitoring and feedback on students' animation work. This has the added value of providing industry-like conditions for freelancing practice by students.

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**.

Lifeway College prides itself on having strong processes in place to guide and support students. This begins with comprehensive course information to enable students to make informed choices about study options. Week-long taster courses are provided to give students a sense of programme expectations and to gauge whether their own needs would be met. Strengthened processes previously reported ensure that students are at their correct level.

A strong pastoral care programme is in place. Students have access to a professional counsellor and counselling services if required. Students with special needs such as Asperger syndrome are accommodated and have additional support in place to help them achieve. International students have an identified staff member available for 24/7 support at each campus. Lifeway College is intent on building and diversifying its international student population and is working with industry networks to recruit in different countries.

An ESOL tutor is available to provide additional study support where required, which learners appreciate as it means they can focus on developing their English to help them with their studies. As mentioned, the academic dean holds career workshops to increase student preparedness for employment. The new student management system has enabled staff to monitor students to ensure they continue to meet the obligations of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, for matters such as achievement, attendance, travel and health insurance and visa requirements.

As reported earlier, all programme teaching information is loaded on the internet support network to enable students to review the material as required. Students report on the usefulness of this facility for posting assignments and receiving feedback and support from their tutors.

Support for students is reflective of Lifeway College's values.² The attention Lifeway College gives to the support of students has ensured needs are identified and responded to. The students' very positive feedback on how well they are communicated with and how well they are supported attests to this support.

² Lifeway College values: 'People are our priority, excellence is our essence, time is our testimony, communication is our commitment'.

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

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

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

With its strong leadership group, including the principal, governance and management are very effective in supporting educational achievement. The consistently high achievement across the educational performance indicators agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission, has resulted in the commission acknowledging this achievement by doubling both the allocated student EFTS (equivalent full-time students) numbers and funding allocation since 2009. Following the previous EER, Lifeway College reviewed its practices and increased numbers and expertise on the governing board, and recruited a new principal, academic dean and operations dean. The PTE reviewed and affirmed its mission, motto, values and strategic plan.

Lifeway College is focused on achieving valued outcomes for its students and stakeholders. Educational achievement is reported monthly against performance targets, so the board and management team are fully aware of educational achievement progress, and intervention action can take place if required.

The board has risk management strategies in place, including increasing Māori and Pasifika learner numbers. While these learners are achieving very well, their numbers are not very high. Lifeway College has engaged Māori and Pasifika advisors and forged reciprocal relationships with other providers to offer further learning pathways and to access mentoring support for its tutors for building relationships with Māori and Pasifika students. Likewise, the majority of the international learners are from one country, and Lifeway College is keen to increase the numbers from other countries. It is growing its agent base, along with using its industry networks, to access learners from these other countries.

Management revived industry advisory boards to provide external feedback to the programmes. Changes made to programmes based on industry board feedback have been mentioned. To provide assurance to governance and management that its assessment judgements are validated internally and externally, Lifeway College strengthened its moderation of moderation practices.

Lifeway College has replaced its student management system with a more sophisticated system to provide a range of reports, including educational achievement reports by course, campus and ethnicity in real time. This enables comparisons between campuses and monitoring of educational achievement progress for early intervention. It also enables the collation of evaluations and surveys for ease of analysis by management.

Board members and management have very strong networks within industry, the church, PTE sector groups, other institutes and the community. These networks

are very useful as they provide feedback on programme review, pathway opportunities for learners and collegial support for tutors.

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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5)

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Diploma in Advanced 3D Animation (Level 7)

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Student support including international students

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Lifeway College continue its comprehensive approach to self-assessment to fulfil its strategic themes.

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz