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# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Waikato School of Hairdressing  
Limited trading as Varda

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 24 April 2017

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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:	Waikato School of Hairdressing Limited trading as Varda
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 February 1991
Location:	389 Anglesea Street, Hamilton
Delivery sites:	389 Anglesea Street, Hamilton Shop 10, Casabella Lane, 307 Barton Street, Hamilton
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Zealand Certificate in Salon Skills (Level 2)</li><li>• Vocational Pathway (NCEA Level 2)</li><li>• New Zealand Certificate in Barber Skills (Level 3)</li><li>• New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support) (Level 3)</li><li>• New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing Emerging Stylist (Level 4)</li><li>• Salon Support and Emerging Stylist (Level 4)</li></ul>
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes – no international students currently enrolled
Number of students:	2016 domestic: 91 students (Māori, 68; Pasifika, 11; New Zealand European, 22)

	International: nil
Number of staff:	Nine full-time and one part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	Varda has a broad scope of accreditation including the domains of hairdressing and barbering, and a range of service sector skills. The full scope of accreditation can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=861311001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=861311001</a>
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Varda delivers predominantly service sector training in hairdressing and barbering. Learners access hairdressing and barbering salon facilities on site for practical training.</p> <p>Learners are predominantly full-time with part-time or block courses offered to secondary school STAR and Gateway learners, and off-job training for those already employed in hairdressing or barbering apprenticeships.</p> <p>Varda is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016. The organisation has not enrolled any international students and does not intend to do so in the foreseeable future.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>Varda has gained NZQA approval to offer the new New Zealand certificates in Hairdressing, Barbering and Emerging Stylist.</p> <p>Varda opened the Barber Shop, which is a second delivery site, at the beginning of 2016.</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of Varda was conducted in May 2013. NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Highly Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Varda.</p> <p>Varda holds the Best Practice Quality Mark of the Hairdressing Industry Training Organisation (HITO), which exempts providers from external moderation by the standard-setting body.</p> <p>Of the four unit standards requested for external moderation by NZQA in 2016, one numeracy unit</p>

standard did not meet requirements.

Varda has satisfactorily met Service IQ external moderation in the past. Service IQ did not request any assessments for external moderation in 2016 as the ITO is reviewing its own moderation practices.

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) conducted a scheduled standard audit in July 2016 to provide assurance that Varda was meeting the Investment Plan Funding conditions as required by the TEC. The audit found that Varda students were timetabled for the Vocational Pathways programme, Service Industries Sector (Retail and Salon Support) (Level 2) for 650 course hours for a 25-week programme. The NZQA approval document required the programme to be taught for 800 course hours. Varda subsequently sought and gained NZQA approval for the change in delivery hours. The TEC did not seek financial redress. Vocational Pathway students are those who have disengaged from school and any education services, and Varda found recruiting and retaining these students very challenging and no longer offers this programme.

Other:

The sole director of Varda has managed this PTE for more than two decades and was the PTE representative for the hairdressing and barbering Targeted Review of Qualifications (TRoQ) discussions with NZQA. She is currently the chair of the provider advisory group to HITO.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Following a review of submitted documents and communication between the lead evaluator and Varda, the following focus area was agreed for inclusion in the EER:

- New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support) (Level 3) which has the highest number of enrolled students (34)
- New Zealand Certificate in Barber Skills (Level 3) which has the second-highest number of enrolled students (33). This programme was first offered in mid-2015.
- Māori and Pasifika achievement.

Immediately before the EER, the lead evaluator was changed. At the opening meeting with Varda, the new lead evaluator, team evaluator and Varda governance and management agreed that Māori and Pasifika achievement would be evaluated and reported within the six key evaluation questions and not as a separate focus area.

## 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 evaluation team of two visited the Varda head office and delivery sites over two days. Interviews were conducted with Varda's sole director, the academy manager, tutors and students. Phone interviews were conducted with a number of stakeholders including four salon owners who have employed graduates, and representatives of the Varda advisory group, the independent Youth Transition Services and salon resource suppliers. In addition to the documents provided for the EER scoping exercise, the EER team sighted and was provided with various documents including meeting minutes of the management team and staff meetings, operational policies, learner, client and stakeholder surveys conducted in 2016, moderation reports and a variety of data relating to student progress and achievement.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Waikato School of Hairdressing Limited trading as Varda**.

The key reasons for these conclusions include:

- The organisation has a strong leadership with a focus on achievement. This was evidenced by the consistently very good achievement in course and qualification completions, collated, analysed and benchmarked specifically against a number of hairdressing PTEs and generally against the PTE sector. The continued retention for 14 years of the top criterion for external moderation by the hairdressing standard-setting body, HITO (Best Practice rating), attests to the validity of assessments.
- Varda provides outcomes of value to its students and graduates with a solid focus on personal development, employment and further training opportunities. This includes providing off-job training opportunities for apprenticeships.
- There was very good evidence of students gaining industry skills (hairdressing and barber skills), and soft skills (time management, punctuality, communication skills) to be effective employees, which are valued outcomes by employers in the hairdressing industry.
- The director has managed this education and training establishment for more than 20 years, actively participating at regional and national levels (TRoQ working party, chair of the HITO providers advisory group, member of the peak body Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand (ITENZ)) which keeps Varda up to date and current with developments and education requirements in the hairdressing and barber industry.
- Varda has made a smooth transition to the new New Zealand qualifications while retaining strong achievement outcomes.
- The organisation is well resourced (staff, newly reviewed programmes course content and assessments, commercial salons for hairdressing salon support and barber skills).
- Self-assessment activities are effective and include thorough collation and analysis of achievement by educational performance indicators, programme, funding cohort and ethnicity.
- Feedback is sought from students, employers and clients analysed and acted on to bring about worthwhile improvements.

- Varda has implemented a 'what's good' matrix to plan, review and measure the effectiveness of a number of self-assessment reviews, including course and qualification completions, Māori achievement, effective teaching, professional development, student support, resources and client satisfaction. This matrix is supplemented by management and tutor self-assessment tables, all of which inform Varda's ongoing continuous improvement. This is a well-connected and iterative process, reviewing changes and tracking resulting improvements.

This evaluation concludes that Varda is meeting the most important needs of its students and stakeholders, and that self-assessment is comprehensive, authentic and ongoing.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students 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**.

Varda students consistently achieve very good course and qualification completions. Student Achievement Component-funded students averaged 80 per cent course completions and 74 per cent qualification completions over the past four years. Youth Guarantee students achieved 77 per cent course completions and 86 per cent qualification completions over the same period. This is especially strong performance for Youth Guarantee students who have consistently exceeded TEC contractual achievement targets (qualification completions by 15-20 per cent and course completions by up to 12 per cent). Furthermore, these were students who had achieved little success in previous education settings. Apart from a dip in 2014, Student Achievement Component students consistently exceeded 80 per cent course completions, meeting TEC contractual targets.

Māori students, accounting for just over 50 per cent of all students, achieved between 60 and 83 per cent course completions for Student Achievement Component-funded programmes, and 60-76 per cent qualification completions for this same period. Similarly, Youth Guarantee learners averaged 69-82 per cent course completions and 62-86 per cent qualification completions. While Māori are not yet achieving parity with all learners, Varda continues to try to improve Māori achievement, including enrolling tutors in professional development with Ako Aotearoa research projects and workshops (successful Māori teaching practices and learning strategies).

Pasifika numbers are minimal and can skew results, i.e. achievement ranges from 100 per cent pass rates for three students for course completions down to 33 per cent qualification completions when two of the three do not complete.

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

**Table 1. Course and qualification completions, 2013-2016**

<b>Student Achievement Component</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016*</b>
<b>Course completions</b>				
TEC target	82%	82%	82%	82%
Overall	87%	73%	80%**	82%*
Māori	83%	73.9%	66%**	85%*
Pasifika	41%	59.4%	100%**	100%*
<b>Qualification completions</b>				
TEC target	78	75	78	78
Overall	83%	70%	87%	78%*
Māori	76%	66.5%	70%	75%*
Pasifika	33%	50%	n/a	100%*
<b>Youth Guarantee</b>	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Course completions</b>				
TEC target	70%	70%	70%	70%
Overall	82.5%	75%	82%	70%*
Māori	82%	69%	70%	68%*
Pasifika	51%	9%	100%**	100%*
<b>Qualification completions</b>				
TEC target	60	60	60	60
Overall	100%	90%	87%	79%*
Māori	86%	69%	70%	65%*
Pasifika	60%	n/a	n/a	100%*

\*2016 data is provisional at the time of the EER

\*\*Varda and the TEC are in discussions about these figures

Source: Varda Self-Assessment Report

Data is collated by programme, cohort, ethnicity, funding group, on-job and off-job training, and analysed and benchmarked for future planning. Varda strengthened the working relationship with Youth Transition Services, which provides additional support, and achievement outcomes have met or exceeded contracted targets. In 2015 the TEC approached Varda to deliver Vocational Pathways, an NCEA-based programme to learners who had disengaged from school. Despite all efforts to recruit and retain these students, staff found this group very challenging which reduced achievement data overall, and at the end of 2016 Varda decided to discontinue delivery of this programme.

Benchmarking is conducted using achievement data from 10 well-performing hairdressing PTEs. From 2014 to 2016, Varda improved its ranking, placing it into

the top half of the group. In its more specific benchmarking with two providers with like programmes and ethnic student demographic, achievement data exceeds the other two. Varda found there was little value in external benchmarking barbering at present as the only other PTE delivering barbering also just started offering the New Zealand certificate in 2016.

In addition to the achievements reported, learners gain relevant hairdressing industry skills including shampoo, colour and 'hair-ups' and also some very relevant soft skills of communication, reception skills, time management, personal development and self-confidence, all helping to raise graduates' employability.

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

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**.

Valued outcomes for graduates include further study and employment opportunities. Collectively, 81 per cent of graduates from the two focus areas progressed to employment or further studies in 2016. Of significant value to barber graduates were the high employment outcomes, which for 2016 was 70 per cent. Salon Support graduates achieved 92 per cent positive outcomes, with 67 per cent progressing to further study and 25 per cent into employment in 2016. Of additional value is that industry employment can include further training through apprenticeships. Barbering has a work experience component which can also lead to employment.

Employer feedback indicated that graduates are required throughout the year in preference to all of them graduating together at the end of the year. Varda has accommodated this by increasing enrolment intakes to four a year. This also meets the needs of graduates because it reduces competition for employment.

Varda encourages learners to participate in hairdressing competitions. This is valued as employers are in attendance and can see potential employees in action. Competitors include students and teaching staff. Learners get to see their tutors competing with the tutors of other PTEs regionally and nationally.

The organisation contributes to community initiatives, which are appreciated by recipients:

- Beautiful Links, a fundraiser for cancer sufferers where supporters cut their hair for wigs
- haircuts for Starjam, a disability actors annual show
- haircare and hair-ups for intermediate and secondary schools

- learners from other PTEs get haircuts and hair-ups for job interviews
- women's refuge clients get pampering and hair treatments.

Clients provide vital practice opportunities for students. As clients also include family members, this is an additional opportunity for Varda to communicate with family about student progress and achievement.

Graduates are followed up post-training at six-month and 12-month intervals to confirm longer-term destination outcomes. As employment is usually in the hairdressing industry, tutors easily access feedback about the value of the training. Client surveys follow each hair appointment and the results are used formatively to support learner progress and achievement.

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

Following TRoQ, 2016 was a transition year to the new New Zealand certificates which was smooth. There was no reduction in achievement and training remains relevant and current with industry requirements. Varda used the opportunity to review programme planning, content and resourcing. As a result, teaching and support resources have been improved.

The learning day is broken into two with half theory and practical as the salon space is rostered. This also provides learners with ample opportunities to apply their learning.

Staff are well qualified, with industry experience and teaching and assessment training. All new staff have already completed their teaching/assessment training. In addition, all staff complete the 80-hour HITO requirement of ongoing professional development (40 hours) and work in the industry (40 hours) which helps currency and relevancy. Hairdressing competitions play a key role in demonstration technique and creativity, and both staff and students compete. All staff are scrutineers at the regional competitions, which affirms their expertise.

Strong internal moderation has resulted in a Best Practice rating for external moderation with HITO for the past 14 years. Fewer than 10 providers have this rating. One numeracy unit standard did not meet NZQA moderation requirements, but action has already been taken to address this. Varda met previous Service IQ moderation and the ITO did not request any assessments for moderation for 2016 as

it is reviewing its own processes. Students commented on very good feedback during and post-assessment.

Varda has two sites, with the second site providing a commercial salon for barbering, mirroring the opportunities provided by the commercial hairdressing salon. There are ample feedback opportunities through learner evaluations, client surveys and employer surveys, and the industry advisory group. The director is chair of the HITO advisory group. A key finding from the client surveys was to remind students of the importance of retaining quality consistency with shampoo and colour treatments.

Guest speakers include barbers and hair stylists who share their experiences and demonstrate their skills. Students really appreciated these opportunities. One guest speaker was the winner of the New Zealand Hat and Hair Art national competition who was a 'hit' with students.

Tutors have self-assessment plans which they complete and share at fortnightly meetings. The final column of the plan, 'where to next', is used to begin the following period of planning. This has been an improvement which tutors find very useful as it focuses teaching goals, planning and review. Staff meetings provide an opportunity to share ideas such as the 'cultural share' idea introduced following professional development workshops, the use of yellow backdrop replacing whiteboard to help dyslexic students see print better, and students working together as a 'whanau'.

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

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**.

Student surveys and feedback note a positive orientation process and programme delivery and tutor effectiveness which was affirmed by interviews. A comprehensive student handbook is available for ongoing reflection and procedures post-induction. Student feedback has alerted Varda that the font is too small; this is a simple matter for Varda to address before the next intake.

The literacy and numeracy assessment at the beginning of training identifies where students may need additional support. Students are also introduced to Youth Transition staff (an independent support service) who can assist with personal difficulties which might affect learning. Staff and learners agree on individual learning plans and goal-setting. Within the first two weeks, all new enrollees meet the academy manager. This gives students a smooth start and lets them know who can support them apart from the tutors. As reported in Findings 1.3, daily opportunities are provided for students to apply learning, which they can do as individuals or with peers. One day is set aside each week for self-directed learning, and staff are

available should students require additional support. Students comment that 'class is like a whānau' as they work in pairs and groups.

Since 2014, tutors have provided catch-up sessions at the end of each term to assist students with theory and practice support to complete any outstanding assessments, and to encourage those with poor attendance. The second TEC literacy and numeracy assessment test is conducted nearer the end of training. Tutors found that students are motivated to sit the initial test but less inclined to sit the final test, and so have ensured that this occurs well before the end of training as it is helpful to show students any learning gains made. More students are completing the final test and Varda is able to report improvements in literacy and numeracy more accurately.

Hairdressing clients and models include whānau and friends. This provides students with the opportunity to practise, demonstrate their learning, and build confidence. Barber students begin haircuts from day two, and haircuts and assessments require clients. Clients in turn appreciate the free or reduced costs for haircuts and treatment.

Student meetings take place weekly, and a tutor is rostered to take issues back to fortnightly staff meetings. These meetings and student evaluations provide ample opportunities to provide feedback to staff. Students report that Varda is very responsive to matters raised.

## 1.5 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**.

The director has provided education and training for more than two decades and has demonstrated effective shared leadership and management, evidenced through previous EER outcomes and HITO Best Practice moderation status. The director seeks advice about business and strategic planning and is currently the chair of the HITO provider advisory group, and was actively involved as the PTE representative throughout the TRoQ process. This shows the commitment and access to processes to stay current with educational trends and changes.

The director and academy manager share the management role and are responsive to student, stakeholder and client needs and feedback as shown in this report. This includes the addition of two new barber employers to the Varda advisory group to reflect the addition of barber training. Staff are valued, with well-resourced programmes, and are actively encouraged to attend professional development opportunities, hairdressing conferences, competitions and expos both here and in Australia. The professional development is useful for teaching and assessment

practice, and fortnightly meetings provide opportunities to reflect on the training and share practice.

Achievement is monitored throughout the year and discussed with staff at fortnightly meetings. Prior to each holiday break and at the end of the year, a more thorough review is conducted which includes benchmarking against other PTEs.

A new student management system has been installed with links to the tutor management system to include attendance which is also monitored. Staff have already identified that collating and reporting priority groups achievement would be useful, and is in discussion with the software managers to progress this. The quality management system is regularly reviewed and updated and remains fit for purpose.

Varda has implemented a 'what's good' matrix to plan, review and measure the effectiveness of a number of self-assessment reviews, including course and qualification completions, Māori achievement, effective teaching, professional development, student support, resources and client satisfaction. This matrix is supplemented by management and tutor self-assessment tables.

HITO advised Varda in December 2016 that the final two capstone assessments, based on two unit standards, can now be assessed by PTEs. Varda intends applying to NZQA for consent to assess these standards and will then work with all graduates to achieve these. Previously this assessment was only available to employees for assessment in a commercial salon. Graduates did not readily pursue this pathway to complete the level 4 qualification.

Achievement is celebrated and, as seen with the annual graduation, excellent and merit achievement are rewarded with incentives like hair straighteners, clippers and products which graduates and their families appreciate.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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**.

Varda has policies and processes in place – and there is evidence to show these are effectively applied – to assure the organisation that it is compliant with NZQA rules and regulations and its practices are legal and ethical. In addition, the organisation's accountant reviews Varda policies and procedures to also assure compliance. This includes regular reviews of its strategic, business and risk management plans.

The organisation anticipates and is responsive to changes (TRoQ and new New Zealand qualifications, barbering, two capstone unit standards). It keeps updated by participation as PTE representative on the TRoQ working party, chair of the HITO

provider advisory group, membership of the ITENZ peak body, the Varda advisory group, and use of NZQA information sources.

Although there are no international students enrolled, Varda wants to retain signatory status and annually reviews its Code of Practice policies and procedures.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing: Salon Support (Level 3)

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: New Zealand Certificate in Barber Skills (Level 3)

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

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

# 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](http://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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