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External Evaluation and Review Report

Waikato School of Hairdressing
trading as Varda

Date of report: 27 April 2021

About Waikato School of Hairdressing trading as Varda

Varda delivers service sector training in hairdressing, beauty and barbering.

Type of organisation:	Private training organisation
Location:	389 and 392 Anglesea Street, Hamilton
Code of Practice signatory:	Signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice. Varda currently has no international students.
Number of students:	Domestic: 89.478 EFTS ¹ (149 students) 83 students identify as Māori, six students identify as Pasifika (students may identify as more than one ethnicity)
Number of staff:	11 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See Waikato School of Hairdressing on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment
Scope of this evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing: Salon Support (Level 3)• New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing: Emerging Stylist (Level 4)
MoE number:	8613
NZQA reference:	C45356
Dates of EER	17-19 February 2021 (online)

¹ Equivalent full-time students

Summary of results

Varda has an effective and authentic self-assessment system which informs and guides education management, the delivery of programmes and student support. Student achievement rates are generally good, in line with industry benchmarks, and provide authentic outcomes for graduates and industry.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Effective leadership guides the organisation to meet current and future trends in industry.
- The value of outcomes is strong for students and stakeholders, and high numbers of graduates are retained in industry. Stakeholders are fully engaged in programme development and delivery.
- Students generally achieve well. Disparity in performance for priority group learners is improving in programmes with the highest participation rates.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Students and staff share well-resourced facilities; professional development of staff leads to valued gains in performance.
- Performance measures are benchmarked internally and externally, measured against organisation targets and Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) commitments. Improvements are tracked.
- Customised data collection and analysis has improved self-assessment processes and review.
- There are clear guidelines on providing support for students, with evidence of improved retention and attendance. Provision of support for priority group learners has led to improvements in inclusiveness.
- Self-assessment processes have been refined to meet the organisation's needs. Systems of reporting are well established and focus on improving performance.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement is generally good. Students acquire basic hairdressing skills and knowledge, interpersonal skills and self-management. They also improve their literacy and numeracy skills. There is some variation in performance in course completion and qualification rates across the focus area programmes by cohort and funding stream (see Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 1).</p> <p>Varda faced challenges with retaining and supporting some cohorts to complete programmes. There is thorough self-assessment of performance, and initiatives are in place to mitigate any future risk and improve achievement rates, particularly for the priority groups. In barbering, with the highest participation rates by priority learners, the disparity in achievement rates is narrowing. Overall, course completion and qualification rates across Varda compare favourably with industry benchmarks. The PTE has recorded course completion rates of between 72 and 95 per cent over three years of data gathering in the focus area programmes.</p> <p>Appropriate assessment and moderation practices and excellent ITO³ external moderation outcomes support reliable and valid results.</p> <p>Varda has in place a comprehensive self-assessment framework supported by real-time data. Individual, cohort and programme-level data is well analysed against TEC requirements and their own benchmarks to inform the organisation of educational achievement.</p>
Conclusion:	Students achieve well and gain practical and personal work-ready skills. Robust self-assessment is in place to inform ways

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

³ Industry training organisation

	to improve any disparity in achievement rates between students.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders including learners?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Focus area programmes provide high-value outcomes for students and stakeholders. Graduates pathway to other programmes and gain qualifications to work in industry (see Table 2, Appendix 1). Students value their gains in self-management, confidence and applying new knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Strong connections with industry ensure that programmes remain relevant to current industry needs and trends. Stakeholder input includes industry representatives, HITO⁴, alumni and priority learner focus groups. Varda is an active member of the New Zealand Hairdressers PTE Providers Forum and contributes to providing knowledge, sharing information and benchmarks.</p> <p>NZQA consistency reviews of the focus area programmes found Varda sufficient in meeting the graduate profile outcomes. Varda has extensive systems for collecting feedback about the value of the outcomes. Graduate destinations are tracked and retention in the industry is analysed. Surveys have been refined to elicit more useful and relevant information, and this is analysed and applied to improve programme design and delivery.</p>
Conclusion:	Varda is clearly meeting the needs of industry by supplying work-ready students with the required skills and knowledge. Stakeholder engagement is a strong and well-evidenced feature of Varda's self-assessment.

⁴ Hairdressing Industry Training Organisation

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Programme design and delivery clearly meets the needs of students and stakeholders. Students gain relevant technical and interpersonal skills in a real-world work environment, supported by highly experienced and qualified tutors and staff.</p> <p>Students acquire knowledge and skills through theoretical and applied learning which is well structured to support student achievement. Strong connections to industry ensure the programme reflects emerging industry trends and current technology. Students benefit from attending demonstrations by visiting industry experts, and gaining skills in the different methods used by attending night classes.</p> <p>Structured feedback on assessments helps students reflect and provides useful information on progression and areas that need improvement. Assessment design options support different learner needs, with visual and oral assessment options providing opportunities for assessing performance.</p> <p>Robust internal moderation processes means Varda has a Best Practice Quality Mark rating for external moderation with HITO. Varda works closely with an external benchmarking partner, moderating assessments and evaluating programmes and the outcomes of their moderation practice. Service IQ and NZQA moderation requirements have all been met.</p> <p>Strong quality assurance processes support programme development. Annual programme reviews are informed by analysis of student achievement and feedback through ongoing surveys. Feedback from industry stakeholders, graduate outcomes, moderation reporting and tutor-led self-assessment reports contribute to authentic and easily understood self-assessment.</p>
Conclusion:	Varda provides an effective learning environment for the students and programmes that are relevant to stakeholder needs. Self-assessment is robust and ongoing, involves industry and staff, and leads to improvements in delivery and design.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Varda is dedicated to providing support that is responsive to learners' needs. Student surveys, focus groups and academic interventions capture information that is acted on and relevant to each learner's needs. Learning goals and learning agreements support students to progress and understand their areas of learning strength and weakness. Varda has made improvements to better support the achievement of priority group learners by encouraging a more inclusive learning environment, setting in place a Māori and Pasifika review and meeting with a priority learner focus group to discuss learning approaches. Students benefit from shared learning opportunities using Ako Aotearoa resources. Retention rates are improving and attendance is well monitored. Continuing to evaluate the effect of priority group initiatives at an organisational level will strengthen self-assessment.</p> <p>Programme delivery is structured to stagger enrolments, meaning that more established students share knowledge and expertise with their newly enrolled peers. A range of teaching methods are used to accommodate students' learning styles and challenges identified in induction needs analysis.</p> <p>Literacy and numeracy is embedded within the programme, using methods to ensure learning remains accessible and engaging for students who may struggle.</p> <p>Varda has been responsive to supporting students during 2020, assisting with providing extensions for practical assessments, maintaining connections through social media platforms, and maintaining high attendance rates.</p> <p>Varda has implemented initiatives to support student wellbeing and mental health, and staff have undertaken mind and wellness-building resilience training to enable ongoing support for the students.</p> <p>A system of monitoring the effectiveness of student support is embedded in programme reviews. Aggregated data, guidelines and procedures help staff with assessing their performance in supporting students through their learning journey.</p>

Conclusion:	Students attending Varda are well supported and involved in their learning journey. Effective systems ensure that student feedback is addressed and improvements are made to programme and assessment delivery.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Strong and effective leadership supports the organisation. Clear decision-making has strengthened performance in self-assessment since the last EER. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A streamlined self-assessment activity to focus on priority areas, and refined real-time data collection to inform on educational performance and drive improvements. • A comprehensive guidelines document which assists staff in measuring performance. • A reviewed annual programme review process to present fit-for-purpose information in a clear format. <p>The director is currently the educator representative on the HITO advisory group, representing industry and hairdressing education providers in developing and reviewing qualifications. Benchmarking, moderation and consultation are ongoing with key education partners.</p> <p>Effective leadership has resulted in more funding, with well-managed and strategic growth, and resources are readily updated and improved to meet the needs of vocational, practical learning. The growth in the role of the academy manager supports succession planning.</p> <p>Staff are well qualified and supported in professional development. All tutoring staff hold adult education qualifications, as well as their industry qualifications. All staff complete the required 40 hours per year of industry training. Internal professional development of staff leads to improved practice, for example improved first attempt pass rates in assessments. Rubrics are used to provide feedback to staff on the effectiveness of their performance and to prioritise responses.</p>

	Regular meetings give staff the opportunity to share best practice across the programmes, review performance, and set in place action plans.
Conclusion:	Management supports the educational performance of the organisation through strong self-assessment practice embedded throughout the organisation.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Varda effectively manages its compliance with the rules and regulations of the TEC. The 2018 TEC audit had no recommendations or requirements.</p> <p>Reporting and submitting of awarded unit standard credits to NZQA is timely and well managed. Careful monitoring of attendance with improved retention rates supports the monitoring of programme hours. Annual internal reviews ensure programmes are being delivered in accordance with NZQA programme approval and accreditation requirements.</p> <p>External moderation, as discussed in 1.3, is sound.</p> <p>Varda is an active member of ITENZ⁵, remaining up to date with current tertiary sector and government information.</p> <p>The first review of the domestic Code of Practice is complete, resulting in Varda introducing two new policies and putting in place staff training.</p> <p>Delivery sites are approved by NZQA. A risk register and sound health and safety policies are reviewed regularly.</p>
Conclusion:	Varda has clear policies and processes in place to ensure compliance is well managed. Self-assessment and review of practice leads to improvements.

⁵ Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand

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: Emerging Stylist (Level 4)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

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

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. These include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Course and qualification completions by programme

NZ 2411 Salon Support	Course completions SAC*	Course completions YG**	Total course completions	Qualification completions SAC	Qualification completions YG
2017	96.1%	80.8%	83.12%		
2018	74.9%	69.3%	71.74%		
2019	84%	69%	75.31%	73%	56%
NZ 2412 Emerging Stylist	Course completions SAC	Course completions YG	TOTAL course completions	Qualification completions SAC	Qualification completions YG
2017	83.6%	N/A	83.6%	74%	N/A
2018	79.7%		79.7%	72%	
2019	94.8%		94.8%	61.54%	

*Student Achievement Component funding

**Youth Guarantee funding

Data supplied by Varda

Course completions by ethnicity and year

Salon Support 2411	Māori%	Pasifika%	Non-M and P%
2017	65.90	80	94.10
2018	49.30	46	85.3
2019	53.20	36	87.20
Emerging Stylist 2412	Maori%	Pasifika%	Non-M and P%
2017	79.20	100	81.50
2018	69.80	100	82.50
2019	100		93.90

Data supplied by Varda

Table 2. Varda graduate destinations between programme end and 6 months as a percentage

NZ 2411 Salon Support	2017	2018	2019
Further training at Varda	70%	64%	54%
Other further training	4%	4%	
Industry employment	19%	22%	15%
Other employment	7%	9%	12%
Nil		9%	19%
Total positive outcomes	100%	91%	81% TBC
NZ 2412 Emerging Stylist	2017	2018	2019
Further training at Varda	10%	24%	
Other further training		4%	
Industry employment	50%	28%	92%
Other employment	30%	16%	
Nil	10%	28%	8%
Total positive outcomes	90%	72%	92% TBC

Data supplied by Varda

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud⁶*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

⁶ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

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

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz