



Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Zealand Tertiary College

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 30 November 2010

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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

Location:	Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1991
Number of students:	Domestic: 551 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) International: 290 equivalent full-time students (EFTS)
Number of staff:	35 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate Diploma in Teaching (ECE) (Level 7)• Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) (Level 7)• Certificate in Early Childhood Teaching (Level 6)• Certificate in Early Childhood Education (Level 5)• Certificate in Early Childhood Education (Introduction) (Level 4)
Distinctive characteristics:	Mode of delivery (number of students): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On site (108)• Field-based (54)• Distance learning (1332)
Recent significant changes:	N/a
Previous quality assurance history:	New Zealand Tertiary College met all quality assurance requirements in 2006.
Other:	N/a

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The external evaluation and review examined the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International students.

The following focus areas were chosen because they encompass the primary mode of delivery, distance learning, and the majority of students enrolled.

- e-Learning
- Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) (Level 7).

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 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-eeer/introduction/>

Prior to the external evaluation and review visit, New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC) supplied the evaluation team with a self-assessment summary outlining the current course enrolments and processes for reviewing outcomes. The external evaluation and review team spent two days at the Auckland site, which encompasses head office and teaching classrooms.

During the visit, the evaluation team met with the steering committee team consisting of the chief executive, academic dean, academic manager, business operations manager, and IT manager. The team also met with some teaching and administration staff for the Bachelor of Teaching (ECE), the e-learning strategy team, the NZTC advisory committee, international students, distance-learning students, and graduates by telephone. While on site, the evaluation team viewed the learning management system and key documents, including student survey results and outcome data.

New Zealand Tertiary College has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **New Zealand Tertiary College Limited trading as New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC)**.

Over 90 per cent of NZTC students gain a qualification in early childhood teacher education (ECE). Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) also gain an understanding of professional practices alongside the underpinning theory required to meet the requirements that lead to teacher registration as an ECE teacher. This has led to high employment outcomes for NZTC students. International student achievement for the qualification and employment outcomes in 2009 was at 100 per cent. The student satisfaction survey shows that over 80 per cent of students are highly satisfied with the teacher education they receive, which indicates that the training is of value to students as well as employers.

Students' successful outcomes are attributed to a number of processes, including rigorous student enrolment criteria, student support provided by NZTC in the form of field practice staff visits, and guidance from associate teachers at ECE centres. Student progress is monitored by lecturers using online forums to ensure that students are completing assignments at the appropriate rate and to promote discussion on course-related topics. The organisation has implemented a team approach to internal moderation, which ensures fairness and consistency of assessment practices.

NZTC's in-house research team provides a valued source of information to assist with the development of relevant programmes and initiatives to meet stakeholders' needs, including those of students and early childhood centres. For example, the NZTC online facility was launched based on industry research to facilitate distance learning to enable learning from a pedagogical point of view using technology. The online learning management system was first piloted with students twice before its launch to identify issues with online learning. The result is a simple-to-use, responsive online learning forum for students, and the majority of students who study online are satisfied with it.

The organisation benchmarks its e-learning practices against eight universities with which it is involved in a joint research project. Early findings have identified that where students complete NZTC's induction programme to the online learning management system, they are more likely to be successful with learning online. This is just one of the best-practice tertiary e-learning principles, as identified by the e-learning research team, that the college applies.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **New Zealand Tertiary College Limited trading as New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC)**.

NZTC's governance and management team is focussed on systematically reviewing the most important aspects of the college. The college regularly collects information showing student satisfaction, course completion, and qualification achievement rates, as well as resubmission percentages for each course. The information is used to monitor student outcomes to check whether the college is meeting TEC targets. Further analysis of results and external benchmarking of results could provide information on how well students perform course to course, or against outcomes of other providers to identify where improvements could be made.

The college reviews feedback from online students to make improvements to the e-learning environment, such as increasing online support from lecturers and simplifying the online learning management system to make it easier to use by students with low technology skills or English as a second language. The lecturers are also able to monitor the time students are taking with assessments and how they are engaging with the programme, in order to provide additional support where necessary. The organisation is also responsive to students' feedback on the design of the online learning management system. Any changes are implemented by the IT design team on site to meet the students' needs, such as providing assessments in modules rather than linearly so that students can manage their own workloads. This shows a collective approach to identifying where improvements can be made, and the organisation responding as a whole.

TEO response

New Zealand Tertiary College confirmed the factual accuracy of this report, subject to minor editing suggestions.

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**.

Over 90 per cent of NZTC students complete their teacher education and gain a qualification in early childhood teacher education. The achievement figures for Māori and Pasifika are over 85 per cent. This is slightly below the success rate for the total student population but still above national averages for the whole sector. International student achievement for the qualification and employment outcomes in 2009 was at 100 per cent.

NZTC rates the professionalism demonstrated by students in the field, as well as course completion and qualification achievement rates, as important measures of success for its students. The students' feedback, as well as feedback from early childhood education centre staff and parents, provides evidence of the students' success in applying early childhood professional practices and theory in the field.

Following extensive research, the college launched the online programme to facilitate the distance learning and enable learning from a pedagogical point of view using technology. Significant numbers of students who initially enrolled in the paper-based distance learning programme have moved into using the e-learning programme developed by NZTC. Successful student achievement rates have been maintained during this transition, indicating that the majority of students are adapting well to the online delivery.

Achievement data is collated for the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for funding purposes and to monitor students' success. The organisation monitors these external benchmarking results, which demonstrate that students' outcomes are high in relation to other distance-learning providers.

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**.

The Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) is highly valued by students as it is a prerequisite for teacher registration with the New Zealand Teachers Council. NZTC's teacher education also provides employers with qualified staff to meet the demand for qualified ECE teachers in early childhood education centres.

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

The NZTC Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) enable students to go on to become associate teachers and some may become associate teachers on NZTC courses. NZTC sees this as adding value to its student field support as associate teachers are important contributors to successful outcomes.

NZTC has increased the number of male and international student enrolments. This initiative is based on research which concludes that teacher education of male teachers and a wide mix of nationalities as early childhood teachers are valued to match the need for more role models to reflect the increasing diversity of the New Zealand population. This is an example of the organisation contributing to the needs of the community.

Students find value in the training because the distance-learning programme enables them to study concurrently alongside their field practice to gain a qualification. While the majority of students who study with NZTC are employed in ECE centres, some students are not employed in the sector at the time of enrolment. Because the New Zealand Teachers Council requires a minimum of 16 hours a week of practical work-learning hours towards attaining the bachelor qualification, students need to find employment. Graduate information indicates that all students are employed once they complete the programme, including international students. This shows that NZTC training is leading to successful outcomes for both students and employers.

The biannual journal produced by the college offers additional value to students and graduates of the college. This publication is a research-based journal for NZTC staff and professionals in the ECE sector from New Zealand and internationally who can submit academic papers on early childhood education research for publication. Contributions from students and graduates are encouraged to help them with their own academic research. These articles are one of the sources used by the lecturers to remain current with the latest ECE theories.

The review of outcomes and feedback by the college provides assurance that its teacher education will continue to offer value to the sector. The student satisfaction survey shows that over 80 per cent of students are highly satisfied with the teacher education they receive. Overall, NZTC stakeholder feedback reinforced evidence that its students are sought after by early childhood education centre employers for work experience and employment.

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**.

NZTC has developed a range of certificates and diplomas, and a bachelor degree that meets ECE national curriculum requirements and is highly relevant to the needs of students and employers.

The NZTC advisory committee, consisting of industry representatives, other tertiary providers, current students, as well as graduate students, provides input on industry needs. Current students and staff provide additional input into programmes to ensure the activities

are engaging and meet different learning needs. The research conducted by NZTC staff has also provided wider sector information to ensure programmes are current and relevant to the sector. An example of where the college has responded to feedback is in the development of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (ECE) and Master of Education (ECE) that offer higher qualification pathways to help advance careers.

The online learning management system for the Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) was developed using input from the e-strategy team, consisting of a cross-section of the staff, and feedback from students involved in the two pilot programmes. It involves interactive, facilitated learning activities based on findings from a tertiary e-learning best principles project led by Victoria University of Wellington and involving eight other universities as well as NZTC. One of the findings from this project was that students are more successful when they complete a “How to learn online” programme. This course is mandatory for all NZTC students at the beginning of their study programme, and results show that students are more successful in the online studies after completing it.

The college closely monitors feedback on the online learning and uses the internal design and testing team to ensure that the technology is intuitive for users by using icons and a site map for easier navigation. This is beneficial in meeting the needs of older students who may not be as confident with technology, as well as ensuring that international students, who may find the web content difficult when English is their second language, are not disadvantaged.

NZTC also provides college-based courses. Many international students choose to spend their first year in college-based learning. From their second year, all students are required to work a minimum of 16 hours per week in an early childhood centre and attend a block course around every 20 weeks to meet the New Zealand Teachers Council curriculum delivery requirements for distance learning. This provides relevant field experience which helps support students’ different learning styles. For students already employed in childhood education centres, the online delivery mode for the Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) enables students to study while working, which also meets employers’ needs.

Resources are available online and the organisation has made changes to the online assessment delivery in response to student feedback so that they are better able to manage their workload around work and other commitments. Feedback from students on other programmes has led to increasing the availability of online services to all students, such as submitting assessments online, which has improved the turnaround time for submitting and marking assignments for distance learners.

The Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) contains a wide range of learning activities to cover the different learning needs of students. NZTC lecturers incorporate reflective tasks to encourage students to relate the theory learnt on block courses and the classroom-based learning to their professional practice. Activities include visual displays, reading, and group work. Online, lecturers interact with students to help them reflect for better understanding of course assignments, and the lecturers provide assistance either online or by telephone. NZTC staff also visit students in their workplace and offer assistance to students and associate teachers with any learning issues.

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**.

NZTC has provided a learning environment which encourages active participation for online students using discussion forums for each course included in the bachelor e-learning programme. Students are encouraged to use the online calendar to help them to become self-motivated in completing assessments and monitoring their own progress, which assists their own professional development. The high retention figures indicate that the students are motivated to complete their course.

Lecturers review students' progress weekly using information gathered on the amount of time each student spends online, the number of assignments completed, achievement scores, and how often the student has engaged with their lecturer or peers via email. Lecturers use this information to facilitate learning opportunities. The students interviewed on site and feedback from the student survey confirmed that the majority of learners preferred online learning as it meant they could organise their study around work and other commitments.

The 2009 student survey shows that the organisation needs to focus on increasing the consistency of lecturer feedback response times and assessment marking. The organisation has already addressed the issues raised by increasing lecturer online availability and introducing moderation activities to include more peer review feedback opportunities internally. However, confirmation that internal processes are valid is dependent on results from the external moderation process.

International students interviewed reported that they valued learning about New Zealand's biculturalism and other cultures in New Zealand because it provides them with an understanding of New Zealand's cultural environment when on work experience in different childhood education centres.

However, a small number of international students noted that it was harder for some students to understand the learning outcomes and lecture content because they speak English as a second language. This issue has not been identified through the formal feedback channels and it is recommended that further analysis of teaching effectiveness for international students would be beneficial, particularly as the college intends to increase the number of international students enrolled in online learning alongside its college-based, field-based, and distance-learning programmes.

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**.

NZTC offers excellent support and guidance to students at enrolment. For international students this means they must have the appropriate International English Language Test Score (IELTS). They are then interviewed to ensure they will be suitable as ECE teachers to meet the personal and professional standards set by the New Zealand Teachers Council for registration.

The international student support staff provide a comprehensive induction, including field visits around Auckland to assist students to settle into living in New Zealand. NZTC also provides budgeting advice and brings in guest speakers to help international students understand about living in New Zealand. This has contributed to the high satisfaction rate by international students for the support they receive from NZTC staff.

To assist students' success, NZTC requires that all students must have good computer skills and access to a computer, even for paper-based delivery modes, because some resources are only available online. The college also provides access to its computers on site six days a week.

NZTC has a wide range of support structures in place to help student learning in both the college and in the field. Guidance and support is provided by course lecturers, field practice staff, and the international student support team. Students reported to the evaluation team that they valued the visits from visiting lecturers and the support they received from associate teachers. The visiting lecturers talk to employers to identify whether the education is relevant and is being effectively applied in the workplace. Associate teachers are appointed at each centre to guide and support students. NZTC provides mentoring for associate teachers so that they are able to assist students' learning and help motivate them to complete their study.

Students access additional learning support through online discussion forums or by making an appointment with their lecturer. Student feedback also shows high satisfaction with the lecturers' support as well as the assistance they receive from the IT help desk with problems using the online technology.

The lecturers and the academic manager identify any problems students may have with their course using the online discussion forums, at block courses, during formal student course evaluations, and through the annual student survey. The increase in the level of international student support and the number of lecturers to monitor students' queries online is a recent example of how the organisation has improved its learner guidance and support in response to student feedback.

The international students reported that a high level of staff support was available to answer questions and help them find employment. The international student support team also ensures that students celebrate their own cultures and provides assistance in ensuring that visas are renewed in time. The organisation has also provided additional evening classes to help students improve their English language abilities.

Overall, the survey results provide evidence that students are receiving appropriate support and guidance to help them to achieve qualifications.

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**.

NZTC has an external governance team which reviews course outcomes and allocates resources based on the information received from the senior management team. The senior management team, known as the steering committee, consists of the chief executive, the business operations manager, IT manager, academic dean, academic manager, administration manager, and project manager, and it carries out ongoing review and analysis of outcomes. The steering committee uses research provided by an in-house research team on student and industry needs for future programme planning. This structure and evidence of planning documents shows that the organisation is capable of responding to stakeholder needs and developing new initiatives.

NZTC provides a student-centred learning environment, both online and face to face, which is effective in producing excellent outcomes. This was demonstrated by the responsiveness to student feedback on the online learning system by the research team and the in-house IT development team to ensure both the programme content and delivery are conducive to the success of learners.

Ongoing review of student achievement as well as responses from student surveys leads to improvements to delivery and student support. Input from an advisory committee group provides information on the needs of childhood centres and students. One initiative introduced by the college in response to input from the group was for NZTC to offer scholarships to provide financial support to students. The organisation also gained approval from its students to apply to the New Zealand Teachers Council for scholarships, including a scholarship for Māori students, which has provided more opportunities for people wanting to study ECE.

The organisation has recently undergone an NZQA degree monitor's review of the Bachelor of Teaching (ECE) and the outcome of this shows that NZTC is meeting compliance requirements. These requirements include providing research opportunities for lecturers and having appropriately qualified and experienced staff to meet the New Zealand Teachers Council requirements to deliver degree-level programmes in ECE.

Overall, the governance and management team structure provides good governance to enable the organisation to respond to learners' needs and to provide relevant programmes for the ECE sector.

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: 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**.

2.3 Focus area: e-Learning

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: Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education) (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**.

Recommendations

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

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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