



# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Manawatu Education Academy Limited  
trading as The Hairdressing College

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 27 September 2011

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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:	103 Cuba Street, Palmerston North
Type:	Private Training Establishment
First registered:	1991
Number of students:	Domestic: 37 International: nil
Number of staff:	Nine staff, including one director, one head of school, five full-time and three part-time tutors, and one part-time administration position.
Scope of active accreditation:	Course accreditations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certificate in Hairdressing (Level 3)</li><li>• Certificate in Advanced Hairdressing (Level 4)</li></ul>
Sites:	Satellite sites:  Level 1, 12 The Square, Palmerston North 15 Courtney Place, Level 4, Wellington
Distinctive characteristics:	Manawatu Education Academy (Palmerston North) Ltd (MEA) is the only local provider offering a level 4 hairdressing qualification. MEA operates a fully functioning hairdressing salon at its Cuba Street, Palmerston North site.
Recent significant changes:	Two new tutors joined the teaching team in 2011.
Previous quality assurance history:	The organisation met all but two requirements of the relevant standard at the quality assurance audit undertaken in 2008. The requirements not met related

to personnel, and learner information, entry and support.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the external evaluation and review included the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

The following training programmes were also included as a focus area:

- Hairdressing certificates: Certificate in Hairdressing (Level 3); Certificate in Advanced Hairdressing (Level 4).

This focus area was chosen because the programmes are Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funded and represent the majority of the training activities the organisation currently delivers. The unit standards within these programmes contribute to national certificates. The majority of students are enrolled in the level 3 programme. The level 4 programme is targeted for further growth.

## 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/for-providers/docs/eer-policy-conduct.pdf>*

This external evaluation and review was undertaken by two NZQA lead evaluators over two days at MEA's Cuba Street site in Palmerston North.

The external evaluators spoke with the managing director, head of school, teaching staff (including two tutors from the Wellington site), and some of the students currently enrolled in the level 3 and level 4 certificates.

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

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Manawatu Education Academy (PN) Limited**.

MEA has a clear focus on improving student achievement. This focus is reflected in the steady improvement in the organisation's course completions over the last two years, and also in students' good level of success with achievement of formal qualifications. Course completion rates improved from 64 per cent in 2009 to 82 per cent in 2010. For the level 3 programme, the qualification completion rate was 78 per cent in 2009 and 74 per cent in 2010. In 2009, all six enrolled students achieved the level 4 qualification (100 per cent) and in 2010, eight students from ten enrolments achieved the qualification (80 per cent). Pre-enrolment guidance, attendance monitoring, ongoing monitoring of students' progress, and additional support for students with learning needs are among the strategies implemented by MEA to further enhance qualification completions, particularly in the level 3 programme.

Students benefit from the development of skills and attributes that employers seek when recruiting. Strategies to develop these skills and behaviours are deliberately designed into MEA's programmes and activities. The on-site salon in Palmerston North provides a stimulating learning environment and provides students with a wide range of learning opportunities through working with real clients.

There is good evidence that MEA's programmes are valued by the hairdressing industry and students. MEA places a strong focus on preparing students with high-level, wide-ranging skills to work as hairdressers. The organisation's strong connections with industry ensure programmes and activities continue to meet industry needs. Employment outcomes are favourable despite the current economic climate. All level 4 graduates gained employment in 2009 and five of eight graduates gained employment in 2010. In 2009, 27 students enrolled in the level 3 programme. Four of these students secured apprenticeships and 11 progressed to further training. In 2010, 35 students enrolled. Six gained an apprenticeship and 12 progressed to further training.

MEA's activities contribute to the wider community. MEA provides opportunities for individuals with special needs to experience a work-like environment in the school's salon.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Manawatu Education Academy (PN) Limited**.

MEA uses a range of processes to record the performance of its programmes and activities. These processes include teaching staff and management meeting regularly to discuss students' progress, programmes, and emerging issues. Over the years, the organisation has implemented a number of strategies to improve educational outcomes. The benefits of these initiatives have been demonstrated in the level 3 programme, particularly in the

considerable improvement in completion rates through pre-enrolment guidance, attendance monitoring, and additional learning support.

MEA's capability in self-assessment is developing but does not yet demonstrate comprehensive evaluation throughout the organisation and across all programmes and activities. The quality management system has recently been redeveloped but does not seem to include evaluation of the effectiveness of the self-assessment activities themselves and whether they produce a sufficient understanding of educational performance and where it can or should be improved.

Formal, systematic analysis of quantitative and qualitative data across all programmes to identify qualification completion rates and trends is a work in progress. Ongoing comprehensive evaluation of all MEA activities will help to identify improvement opportunities to further enhance the organisation's educational performance, particularly in the areas of determining how well its activities meet student needs and the overall effectiveness of teaching.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

There is a good level of qualification achievement at MEA. For the level 3 programme, the qualification completion rate was 78 per cent in 2009 and 74 per cent in 2010. In 2009, all six enrolled students achieved the level 4 qualification (100 per cent) and in 2010, eight students from ten enrolments achieved the qualification (80 per cent). Good strategies are in place to improve students' attendance, hence retention rates and successful course completions have increased from 64 per cent in 2009 to 82 per cent in 2010. On enrolment, students are asked to provide contact details for two next of kin who are willing to be contacted if students are not attending. Staff have seen the benefits of this initiative and students interviewed confirmed that MEA's strict attendance requirements are helpful and motivating.

MEA's focus on student achievement extends beyond the achievement of formal qualifications. Learners improve their confidence, abilities, and personal attributes. This prepares them well for working with the public and employers, and often extends to relationships at home. Students spoke openly about their learning overall and described it as "challenging" but rewarding because of the hairdressing skills they learned (for example, different hairstyles and working with products) and the opportunities to work with real clients in the salon. A commendable example of learner achievement was provided in the context of a student with language and literacy challenges who completed the level 3 qualification. MEA put support mechanisms in place which included recording exam instructions on a dictaphone. This graduate is now in full-time employment in the hairdressing industry and is also a mentor for level 3 students.

MEA has developed good systems for the ongoing monitoring of learner achievement and has recently implemented an electronic database which produces useful self-assessment information such as Intake Statistics reports. Individual student progress can now be monitored on a daily basis.

Analysis of all sources of achievement information beyond the TEC measures is a work in progress. When further developed such analysis will enable conclusions to be drawn about learner achievement in terms of trends over time, individual programmes, different learning styles, teaching pedagogy, and student groupings including age, gender, and ethnicity. The information produced by this analysis is likely to become increasingly important for MEA, particularly if the level 4 programme continues to grow as planned.

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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.

## 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 value of MEA programmes and activities to the hairdressing industry and to students is an area of strength. The organisation has a long history of delivering hairdressing programmes within the Manawatu and places a strong focus on preparing students who are work-ready. The managing director attributes its industry success to the teaching of skills, knowledge, and attributes beyond the competencies required by the unit standards within the programmes. When recruiting new staff, some salons contact MEA directly in preference to advertising vacant positions. Some students interviewed confirmed that they were referred to MEA by salon staff or former students. MEA holds the Hairdressing Industry Training Organisation (HITO) off-job training contract at the Palmerston North site and has done so since 1995.

The opportunity for students to develop hair-cutting skills through MEA's programmes is highly valued by employers and students as confirmed through evaluation feedback collated by the organisation. MEA is the only local provider of the level 4 programme which teaches cutting skills. MEA's recent initiative, a three-day cutting workshop, teaches four basic haircuts. Free haircuts are offered to clients in a "free on the floor cutting day" where students practise further what they have learned under supervision. Students are also able to cut a style using their own flair. Staff spoke of the significant improvement they observe in the students' confidence in cutting hairstyles as a result of this intensive training.

The "Finishing Day" is an added-value initiative implemented this year. The managing director observes students working in the salon and provides two sources of feedback: what the student showed during assessment and what a salon would expect. This feedback helps students further develop their skills and behaviours for working in the industry.

Students enrol in MEA's programmes because of their strong desire to work in the hairdressing industry. Despite the current economic climate, MEA's employment outcomes are good. In 2009, all six level 4 graduates gained employment in hairdressing salons and in 2010, five of eight graduates gained employment. Of 27 students who enrolled in the level 3 programme in 2009, four secured apprenticeships and 11 went on to further training. In 2010, six of 35 enrolled students secured apprenticeships and 12 progressed to further training. This is a significant and worthwhile outcome for students, industry and the Manawatu community and wider regions.

Self-assessment information includes employer surveys, graduate destinations, and graduate feedback which are used to monitor employer satisfaction, how well the course has prepared graduates for work in industry, and actual employment outcomes for students. Examples of salon owner surveys showed a high level of satisfaction with MEA and the calibre of students. A graduate speaks to students in each intake and shares their learning and working experiences. Graduate feedback is used to improve programmes and activities from the learner's perspective. For example, changes were made to the booking system based on feedback that it needed to be more relevant to industry practices.



### 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 **Good**.

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

MEA staff have strong connections with industry through owning or working in salons, regular contact through students' work experience and apprenticeships, and through professional affiliations. These connections enable staff to determine industry needs and ensure that programme content and delivery continue to align with these needs. MEA also has an established advisory committee.

The Certificate in Advanced Hairdressing was developed as a result of MEA's market research undertaken in 2007 and first delivered in 2008. The programme's cutting component aligns especially well with a clear industry need. Industry requires employees who can cut and these skills are not easily taught in a busy salon setting. The level 4 programme provides a niche for MEA as no other Manawatu provider offers a hairdressing programme at this level. Students are attracted by the ability for students to "fast track" their apprenticeship. This attraction was confirmed by the level 4 students interviewed. Growth of this programme is encouraged by the TEC and aligns with the Tertiary Education Strategy to increase achievement of qualifications at level 4 and above.

MEA's activities have relevance to the wider community. Advertisements are placed in local newspapers offering haircuts and treatments at reduced prices which not only provides clients for students but also makes hair treatments affordable for many. MEA provides opportunities for individuals with special needs to experience a work-like environment in the school's salon.

### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Teaching staff are experienced hairdressers. Working in and owning salons keep their skills and knowledge current. Staff work alongside students in the salon and are able to role-model attributes that are highly desired by the hairdressing industry. Staff actively observe student-client interactions in the salon and provide feedback on areas to improve. Students highly value these activities and the in-salon support that staff provide, particularly when they encounter difficulties with clients.

Theory and practical exercises, group activities, working on mannequins, and working with real clients in the salon provide an effective combination of teaching strategies to facilitate learning. Students interviewed enjoyed the theory components. Despite feeling "thrown in the deep end" with practical work, they acknowledged how much they had learned.

The head of school and the teaching staff described professional development activities aimed at improving teaching effectiveness. Some staff recently completed the National Certificate in Adult Education and Literacy (NCALE). Staff confirmed that their teaching

practices and ability to identify and support students with learning difficulties have improved as a result of their NCALE learning and that they have received favourable feedback in this regard from the head of school.

Assessment practices are sound. Discussion with HITO at the time of the EER visit confirmed that MEA continues to maintain HITO Developing Best Practice Moderation Status for 2011. Documentary evidence to support this conclusion was provided by HITO. Level 3 students confirmed that assessment requirements are clear and they receive good feedback about their learning progress from their tutors. Level 4 students interviewed were concerned about their ability to complete the qualification this year because they had not been assessed and may not have sufficient clients to demonstrate all competencies. Staff explained the assessment strategies to the evaluators, including how students are provided with access to clients. The evidence file is collected throughout the year and all students who have met the requirements will complete the programme successfully. However, students' understanding of this process was not reflected in discussions with students at the time of the visit.

Course reviews, weekly team meetings, student surveys, interviews with individual students, teaching observations, and individual records of learning are among the self-assessment activities used to determine teaching effectiveness. Examples of course reviews and teaching observations provided at the EER visit did not demonstrate effective self-assessment in terms of the identification of improvement opportunities and the extent to which improvement initiatives have been worthwhile. Teaching observations were strong in identifying positive aspects but did not identify areas for improvement. At the time of the visit, the head of school agreed that this was an activity that could be strengthened.

Teaching staff interviewed described a positive student-tutor relationship, while students interviewed were less positive. Students raised a number of concerns, some of which were historical. While staff felt that these had been resolved to a level of satisfaction, students clearly did not. Students spoke of difficulties they encountered with teaching inconsistencies and with some personalities. Students said they were comfortable with raising some concerns directly with some tutors, but they now "hold back" on some matters because of a previous experience. This feedback was a surprise to management and may be an indication that current feedback mechanisms do not always accurately reflect student opinion.

## 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 **Good**.

Pre-enrolment guidance and ongoing student support are areas of strength. Interviews are held with potential students and their whānau. This provides staff with an opportunity to discuss the programme and learning expectations in detail. An eighth-day interview is held with each student to provide further assurance that the programme is "right for them" before they pay fees. Both interviews enable staff to pre-empt any learning or personal challenges students may face during their studies and to identify where additional support

may be needed. Diagnostic testing is undertaken to determine literacy, language, and numeracy needs and additional learning support requirements. Discussions with students confirmed that MEA's interview processes were very useful in helping them make informed decisions about their study.

Post-enrolment guidance and support to ensure students' chances of success are also strong. Staff have regular meetings to collectively discuss students' progress and identify where additional support is needed. The "Who am I" exercise helps identify students' strengths and weaknesses. The managing director takes an active role in matching students with work experience placements and closely monitors these placements to ensure students are learning and not being exploited. Students do not undertake work experience until they have completed at least 50 per cent of the programme. This provides students with an incentive to progress and also enhances their success with work experience.

A "buddy system" is a recent initiative whereby the level 4 students take on the role of a senior stylist and work alongside level 3 students. This is designed to develop the skills of both learner groups. Students interviewed were concerned that they do not have the same access to clients when they buddy up because for some treatments only one student can work on the client at any one time or the other student may not yet have developed the appropriate skill set. The head of school explained that this is a new, still in the early stages of implementation is in its infancy and effectiveness is being monitored

Student surveys, staff meetings, and meetings with individual students are included in the self-assessment activities MEA uses to identify student concerns, support needs, and areas for improvement. Some students felt that student meetings were ineffective because they did not always see any change, where change was expected as a result of their feedback. This concern, and those previously noted, indicates that not all self-assessment activities are working as well as they could for all students. The organisation may benefit by improving processes that gain feedback from students so they view the process as safe and effective, and thus ensuring these mechanisms yield more full and accurate information on students' overall well-being.

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

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

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

MEA is owned and managed by the managing director who is fully engaged with students and in all aspects of the programme delivery. This provides strong leadership to staff and clear expectations to students. Staff interviewed confirmed that they are well supported by the management team and this support extended to the staff at the Wellington site.

Educational facilities are well resourced. The evaluators observed a vibrant learning environment in the salon located at the main Palmerston North site. This fully equipped salon enables students to learn and practise a wide range of skills directly related to the hairdressing industry.

MEA also supports educational achievement through the provision of grants to assist selected students to further their study and enhance their success in gaining employment.

MEA's quality management system was significantly redeveloped following the organisation's external audit undertaken in November 2008. The managing director described the revised quality management system as a best practice model for all processes and systems which has become the benchmark for all staff to aspire to. MEA is clearly collecting a significant amount of qualitative and quantitative data, but it is less clear how this data is systematically analysed to draw robust conclusions about educational performance or how well quality processes are working.

Continuing self-assessment at all levels of the organisation will assist MEA's management confirm that improvement strategies implemented have actually achieved the intended outcomes and will also provide for better identification of improvement opportunities.

## 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 **Good**.

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

### 2.2 Focus area: Hairdressing certificates level 3 and level 4

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

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

# Recommendations

There are no recommendations other than those implied or expressed within 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](http://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/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>*

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