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# External Evaluation and Review Report

R & R Associates Limited trading as  
Service Skills Centre

Date of report: 28 July 2021

# About R & R Associates Limited trading as Service Skills Centre

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*Service Skills Centre supports young people to transition to further study or employment. The programmes offered are in retail, salon skills and foundation skills.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	Level 1, 1109 Tutanekai Street, Rotorua, Bay of Plenty
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	50 domestic learners; all female; all between the ages of 16 and 19 80 per cent Māori, 20 per cent Pākehā
Number of staff:	Five full-time, one part-time
TEO profile:	See: <a href="#">NZQA – Skills Service Centre</a>
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Not Yet Confident in the educational performance and Not Yet Confident in the capability in self-assessment of the PTE at the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in October 2018.
Scope of evaluation:	New Zealand Certificates in Retail, Salon Skills (Level 2), and Foundation Skills (Level 1)
MoE number:	8637
NZQA reference:	C45804
Dates of EER visit:	15-17 March 2021

# Summary of Results

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*Service Skills Centre improves outcomes for young adult learners, who gain qualifications and employment. The programmes meet the important needs of learners.*

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## **Confident in educational performance**

- Learners are achieving qualifications. Reasons for non-completions are well understood on an individual basis. The understanding of trends and an aggregate understanding of outcomes could be strengthened.
- Graduates gain employment and continue to further study, which aligns with the purpose of Skills Service Centre.
- Stakeholder engagement and input into programmes could be strengthened and is a work in progress with the stakeholder strategy.

## **Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- Learning environments are inclusive and well planned for the learners. The use of real-world examples and simulations helps keep learners engaged.
- Learner support is strong, and the needs of each learner are well considered. Trends in support and intervention mechanisms could be further considered to anticipate the needs of future learners.
- The purpose and niche of the organisation could be further strengthened. The intention to improve the lives of young people, and to give them skills in the service sector, is evident.
- Compliance accountabilities are mostly well managed. Monitoring and tracking of compliance responsibilities has been strengthened since the last EER.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Marginal</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are gaining useful skills and knowledge in salon skills, customer service and general employment skills.</p> <p>The average completion rate between 2017 and 2020 for the New Zealand Certificate in Salon Skills (Level 2) was 55 per cent, 60 per cent for the New Zealand Certificate in Retail (Level 2), and 57 per cent for NCEA Service Skills. These rates are slightly lower than the Tertiary Education Commission benchmark for Youth Guarantee providers.</p> <p>The New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Level 3) has had a low completion rate over the same period (45 per cent). It has been taught out, with the intention to change focus and pivot to delivery of the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1) based on stakeholder feedback and analysis.</p> <p>Part of the reason for the low completion rates in the retail and salon skills programmes is the concurrent enrolment in programmes and rolling enrolments. Skills Service Centre is considering how to manage the enrolment process to reduce the impact of concurrent enrolment, and how it can be mitigated, or whether learners can be enrolled in one programme at a time. That said, in 2019 and 2020, all learners who completed, completed both programmes and achieved two qualifications. Rolling enrolments mean learners can start a programme at any time within the year and may not complete within a calendar year to count towards that year's completions.</p> <p>Most learners who do not complete a programme withdraw from the programme for personal reasons, rather than failing or not passing the assessments. Skills Service Centre understands the reasons why individual learners withdraw.</p>

<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.

	A learner support and wellbeing approach has been taken to understanding the achievement rate, although Skills Service Centre should start building a greater understanding of Māori achievement (the main demographic cohort).
Conclusion:	Completion rates are generally below the Tertiary Education Commission benchmark. The reasons for non-completions are understood by Skills Service Centre through processes of self-assessment. A greater focus is being put on understanding Māori achievement.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Destination data for 2020 shows that most graduates of the level 2 programmes are in employment or undertaking further study. This is a valued outcome for this context, where students come to Skills Service Centre with no or low qualifications. Around 50 per cent of graduates of the level 3 hairdressing programme are studying at Toi Ohomai. While this shows graduates are progressing to something further, evidence of how well graduates are prepared to enter the workforce, or how prepared they are to undertake further study, was not presented.</p> <p>The PTE has implemented a stakeholder strategy to strengthen their understanding of the key value of outcomes for stakeholders. The effectiveness of this strategy is still to be determined.</p> <p>Feedback is gathered from stakeholders, including employers and industry experts. Most of this is gathered anecdotally and documentation is limited, although surveys do capture some of the evidence, and stakeholder meetings are held ad hoc to gather information. Employers commented on the importance of transferable skills related to employability as being the most important outcome for graduates. The student employability survey in 2020 collected information from current students and their progress towards employability skills. The survey results indicate a mostly positive outcome and match the attributes employers have indicated that are important.</p>

	Graduates and other stakeholders that Skills Service Centre has surveyed, and stakeholders that NZQA spoke to, commented on the growth in confidence and professionalism of the graduates, and their increased transferable skills to support employment.
Conclusion:	Graduate outcomes are generally positive. Further evidence could be gathered by Skills Service Centre to measure how effective the programmes have been in aiding future employment or study.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Programme delivery mostly meets the important needs of learners and stakeholders. A strategic review of the programme offering to better align to organisational purpose and stakeholder need has led to the New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Level 3) being taught out, and the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1) being introduced in 2021.</p> <p>Learners are enrolled concurrently in the level 2 programmes. This could have some impact on learner completion rates if learners do not complete both programmes. Skills Service Centre is considering how the enrolments are processed in future to support learner achievement.</p> <p>NZQA national external moderation results have been variable for literacy and numeracy standards. Skills Service Centre is working to improve staff capability to assess and gather evidence that meets the requirements of these unit standards – including partnering with another provider who delivers the same standards – to reflect on good assessment practice. An action plan has been developed and accepted by NZQA which focuses more on learner support and preparing learners adequately for assessment, rather than building good practice assessment for assessors.</p> <p>Other standard-setting body national external moderation results have been positive.</p>

	<p>Internal moderation processes are generally sound. Assessments that are developed in-house are pre-assessment moderated before use by the relevant standard-setting body. Assessments that are purchased are pre-assessment moderated by the vendor before they are purchased. It would be beneficial for Skills Service Centre to check that the requirements of the unit standards have been met for purchased materials. Moderation tracking for 2021 shows a high proportion of internal moderation scheduled, with coverage of each programme.</p> <p>Learning activities engage the students. ‘Real-life’ scenarios are used for teaching. Learners that NZQA spoke to felt engaged with these kinds of activities and the overall learning environment. Skills Service Centre gathers student feedback from feedback forms – although much of the feedback tends to be informal.</p> <p>There are policies, such as academic misconduct, highlighted in the student handbook. However, assessments are open book; therefore, the risk of cheating and academic misconduct is low in this context.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Programme design and delivery meets the important needs of learners and stakeholders. Learning environments and activities are planned to engage the learners. Moderation results are generally positive, although where improvements in assessment are required, the focus is on learner support and capability rather than assessment practice.</p>

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

<p>Performance:</p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>Self-assessment:</p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>Findings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Skills Service Centre has strong support systems to provide an inclusive learning environment. Tutors are involved with the interview process to build a relationship with learners and to aid them in understanding the individual needs of the prospective learners. Once new learners start, there is a shared breakfast with all learners to help support networks and inclusiveness.</p> <p>Motivation forms are completed by the students to understand their goals and aspirations, and are monitored throughout the</p>

	<p>year. It is not evident how information gathered through these forms is used to inform improvements.</p> <p>Learners are given extra support when required. For example, food is provided during the day, and transport vouchers can be supplied if required.</p> <p>A collaborative teaching and learning environment has also been introduced, with learners from level 1 and 2 programmes coming together for practical activities in the afternoon. Students monitor their own achievement of unit standards and credits which assists them to be engaged and involved in their learning. Tutors have a good understanding of individual learner progress, which is discussed with the team.</p> <p>Tutors are experienced in their fields and are working towards gaining adult education qualifications. Learners gain from the experience of their tutors and are able to apply their newly gained skills in a working salon.</p> <p>Some outcomes of the interim domestic Code of Practice are still a work in progress – although generally, learner support is strong. Skills Service Centre is intending to build in-house capability to upskill tutors to provide health and wellbeing support to the learners. Skills Service Centre engages with external agencies to provide some services – such as counselling services and other youth-based organisations.</p> <p>Analysis of data and trends could be strengthened through formally monitoring learner progress and tracking trends, or by working with the external agencies to identify trends in learner needs.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Skills Service Centre provides strong support mechanisms for learners, as well as providing one-on-one support. Understanding the impact of support interventions on learner engagement and involvement in their learning could be strengthened.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The purpose of Skills Service Centre is to re-engage young people who have had poor educational experiences and outcomes back into education and transition them to a more positive pathway, including further study, training and/or employment. For some learners, however, achieving credits, completing their NCEA and/or a vocational qualification is an achievement in itself. The organisation mostly does this well – particularly with the decision to focus on foundation skills and to create work-ready graduates. The organisational purpose still needs to be unpacked to understand the PTE’s niche in the industry.</p> <p>The appointment of an academic manager gave focus to improving systems and processes, including student and stakeholder feedback, assessment and moderation. This is to support future growth objectives, which is an important focus for the business going forward.</p> <p>Skills Service Centre is well resourced in personnel (for example, appointment of the academic manager), as well as physically with a functioning salon and resources for learners.</p> <p>Learners and staff were supported effectively during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Resources were provided to learners where required, and tutor responsiveness meant that learners remained engaged with their learning.</p> <p>Data analysis and tracking of key metrics (such as learner goal attainment) could be better tracked and monitored to understand overall trends. That said, monitoring is currently occurring on an individual basis.</p>
Conclusion:	Skills Service Centre has a clear purpose of improving the lives of young people, although this position within the industry is still to be solidified. Data analysis to identify trends could be strengthened. Overall, the organisation is well resourced to support educational achievement.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance accountabilities are mostly well managed. The director manages the business and compliance; the newly appointed academic manager manages NZQA and academic requirements.</p> <p>Tracking of compliance responsibilities has improved since the last EER – a quality management system checklist outlines the key requirements to be met, and whose responsibility it is to ensure they are met. This is used effectively to track and monitor the progress of meeting compliance responsibilities.</p> <p>Some compliance responsibilities have not been met, such as submitting required NZQA attestations. These were rectified by the time the EER was completed, and they have not had a significant impact.</p> <p>NZQA national external moderation results did not meet moderation requirements for 2020, and an action plan was submitted to NZQA, which was accepted. Other standard-setting body national external moderation requirements have been met.</p>
Conclusion:	Compliance accountabilities are mostly managed well. There is a demonstrated improvement since the last EER in identifying and monitoring compliance requirements.

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: Certificates in Retail, Salon Skills (Level 2), and Foundation Skills (Level 1)

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>

# 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.*

NZQA recommends that R & R Associates Limited:

- Strengthen their understanding of how well learners achieve and why (specifically Māori learner achievement), to inform improvements to improve achievement.
- Solidify its niche in the tertiary training sector by ensuring its purpose and programme offerings going forward are based on good self-assessment of stakeholder need (students, community, graduates).
- Check that assessment materials purchased from external providers meet unit standard requirements.

# Requirements

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

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

# Appendix

## 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 fraud<sup>2</sup>*
- *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.*

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<sup>2</sup> 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 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.*

*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. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.*

*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. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, 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](http://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/>.*

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