



Report of External Evaluation and Review

TAFE College (NZ) Limited
Trading as TAFE College New
Zealand

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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.

Brief description of TEO

Location: Whangarei and Newmarket, Auckland

Type: Private Training Establishment

Size: 25-30 students in Whangarei at any one time

140 students studying in Auckland at any one time

Sites: As above

TAFE (Training and Further Education) College New Zealand first commenced operations in 1991. The Whangarei site offers courses in the National Certificates in Computing (Levels 2 and 3) approved by NZQA. These courses, funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), equip learners with computing and foundation skills that enable them to obtain employment or go on to higher levels of education.

The Auckland site of TAFE College New Zealand (TAFE) offers the Real Estate Salesperson's Course by correspondence, although information, enrolment, and materials are also online. The course has three modules: Real Estate Law, Real Estate Industry, and Agreements, which are assessed by seven unit standards for a total of 28 credits. Learners send in completed assessments for marking, but there is a final face-to-face assessment. Successful completion of the salesperson course is the minimum requirement for anyone to apply for a Real Estate Salesperson's Certificate to enable them to sell real estate in New Zealand. Graduates have three years from the completion of the course to start work in the real estate industry. Major changes in the industry, including its qualifications, courses, and modes of delivery, are to be implemented in 2010.

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **confident** in the educational performance of TAFE College New Zealand (TAFE).

Key reasons for this are:

- In real estate, over 90 per cent of learners successfully complete the course compared with over 80 per cent in 2008. In computing in 2009, consistent with previous years, learners achieve the required unit standard credits and a significant number achieve sufficient credits to gain national certificates at level 2 (43 credits) and/or level 3 (46 credits). In addition to acquiring specific computing knowledge and skills, computing learners also confirmed their evaluation feedback to TAFE that they improve significantly in such areas as self-confidence, communication skills, and numeracy. Computing learners go on to employment or further learning. Individual tutor attention, the support of other learners, and the professional approach appropriate for the workplace, including dress and behaviour, all contribute to meeting the needs of learners and the results that they achieve, and the needs of employers.
- TAFE has consolidated the achievement data for computing that it submits to TEC by focusing on the achievement of qualifications, and/or progression to further education and training, and/or success in gaining employment. The consolidated data show that the achievement of at least one of these outcomes has improved from over 70 per cent in 2007 to over 80 per cent in 2008 and over 90 per cent in 2009. This reflects impressive improvement in performance.
- Real estate learners qualify for entry into the real estate industry because successful completion of the salesperson course is the minimum requirement for anyone to apply for a Real Estate Salesperson's Certificate that enables them to sell real estate in New Zealand. Graduates are employed in the real estate industry and obtain further experience and further qualifications including their Real Estate Agent's Licence.
- TAFE has good links with industries, employers, and businesses. It uses these links effectively to ensure its courses and activities are relevant and up to date.
- Suitably qualified and experienced tutors provide effective teaching, support, and resources which enable learners to learn and achieve success when they are assessed.
- Governance and management is robust and systematic, strategic, and effective. Employer and TAFE staff feedback reflects an openness about TAFE that welcomes and encourages suggestions for ongoing improvement. This transparent environment supports impressive achievement and improvement in results.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **confident** in the capability in self-assessment of TAFE. Key reasons for this are:

- TAFE's self-assessment is genuine and builds on its previous internal audit processes which it has retained to deal mainly with compliance with its quality management system while it transitions into a different internal and external evaluative quality assurance environment. Its self-assessment is based on the six key evaluative questions and also draws on learner, employer, and staff evaluations. TAFE is developing the quality of the data that it gathers for self-assessment.
- TAFE's self-assessment provides valuable information which it uses to improve the quality of the education and training it provides. The organisation has formal and informal processes which support learner achievement and are used to meet the needs of learners and overcome potential barriers to their learning.
- TAFE is responsive to the immediate, short-term, and longer-term needs of its learners, employers, and industries. Based on learner, staff, and employer evaluations, TAFE identifies where improvements can be made and implements them. Its computing employer survey has been broadened and gave rich information which TAFE is using to modify the course for 2010 to better meet the needs of employers and learners. The student council has already improved collaboration among learners and has suggested changes to the course. The assessor identification of repeated assessment errors in real estate will complement learners' feedback and further improve resources and assessment materials.
- TAFE's own self-assessment reached similar evaluative conclusions, including ratings, to those reached by the external evaluation team. This confirms the integrity of TAFE's self-assessment.

TEO response

The TEO confirmed factual accuracy without any changes.

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 (IT 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).

Findings

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

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>

Outline of scope

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of TAFE College New Zealand included the two courses and the qualifications that it provides:

- National Certificates in Computing (Levels 2 and 3)
- Real Estate Salesperson's Course.

The computing course is only available in Whangarei and was chosen as a focus area because it provides important skills and national qualifications for a small number of local learners.

The Real Estate Salesperson's Course is delivered from Auckland. However, because the course is provided by correspondence with an online dimension, it is undertaken by a much larger number of learners throughout New Zealand and a few learners from overseas, mainly from Australia and the Pacific. This course was chosen as a focus area because it provides entry to the real estate industry and is undertaken by a significant number of learners. It was also noted that the real estate industry is about to undergo major changes.

The following mandatory focus area was also included:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation

This section provides a picture of the TEO's performance in terms of the outcomes achieved and the key contributing processes. Performance judgements are based on the answers to key evaluation questions across the focus areas sampled. This section also provides a judgement about the extent to which the organisation uses self-assessment information to understand its own performance and bring about improvements, i.e. capability in self-assessment.

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 **Good**.

Context

TAFE has 25-30 learners in each class, each with different tutor. Learners in each class work towards the National Certificate in Computing at both Levels 2 and 3. In addition, a small number of computing learners learn on their own for a total of at least 20 hours a week but attend TAFE one day a week for face-to-face support, which is also available to them by phone or email. Real estate learners study real estate by correspondence using mainly paper-based materials, which are also available on the TAFE website.

In both computing and real estate, learners undertake each assessment when they consider they have made sufficient progress with their learning and are ready for assessment. Computing learners are assessed under supervision. Real estate learners send in their completed assessments for marking. Their final assessment is conducted face to face.

Data provided to TEC have helped TAFE to track its own computing learner achievement over time. TAFE has also recorded its real estate completions over time and has been able to access some external benchmarking.

Explanation

In computing, TAFE learners achieve the required number of unit standards, and a significant number achieve the national certificates in computing level 2 (43 credits) and level 3 (46 credits). The successful completion of the course in real estate is well over 90 per cent. TAFE has consolidated the computing data that it submits to TEC by focusing on the achievement of qualifications and/or progression to further education and training, and/or success in gaining employment. The consolidated data show that achievement of at least one of these outcomes has improved from over 70 per cent in 2007 to over 80 per cent in 2008 and over 90 per cent in 2009 to date. Learners compared their learning experience very favourably with their experience at secondary school and other learning institutions. In several cases, learners have achieved their first formal qualifications in their lives while studying at TAFE.

Computing learners who do not succeed at the first attempt are allowed a further two opportunities to succeed. Arising from its self-assessment, TAFE is committed to developing a formative assessment tool for each unit standard. This is designed to

formalise the current formative assessment process and improve the first-attempt success rate of learners who express a genuine desire to achieve success at their first attempt. Formative assessment will add to the information TAFE obtains about assessment and contribute to further improvements in teaching, learning, and assessment. TAFE computing learners consistently achieve above the average 20 credits achievement required by TEC.

The achievement of unit standards and successful completion of the Real Estate Salesperson's Course has progressed from over 80 per cent of those who attempted the assessments in 2008 to be currently tracking at well over 90 per cent. TAFE was able to benchmark its achievement performance in 2008 against a larger organisation which offers the same course, and this shows TAFE had a success rate that was 15 per cent higher, a significant comparison that reflects well on TAFE.

TAFE real estate learners also have up to three opportunities to achieve each unit standard. Arising from its self-assessment, TAFE has identified that it will obtain formal feedback from its assessors with regard to repeated mistakes, and it expects this feedback will contribute to ongoing improvement of the quality of resources, assessments, and achievement. In addition to accessing data with regard to the success rate at the first, second, and third assessment attempts, TAFE has agreed that it would be useful to identify more clearly the number of real estate learners who begin the course but do not complete it, and the reasons why.

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 **Good**.

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

Context

TAFE monitors the value of the computing course regularly both informally and formally through conversations with learners and local employers, learner evaluations, stakeholder surveys, and work experience feedback.

TAFE monitors the value of the real estate course formally through learner post-course completion evaluations and informally through the networking of the sole owner of TAFE. The owner of TAFE, who is also its sole director, has considerable personal experience in the real estate industry and is well placed to assure the value of the outcomes of the real estate course.

Explanation

Computing learners who were interviewed confirmed TAFE's learner evaluations that expressed high learner satisfaction with the computer knowledge and skills they had acquired. TAFE, its learners, and employers gave examples of how learners apply and develop their knowledge and skills, undertake work experience, complete their assessments, and obtain employment. TAFE learners also gave examples of how they used their acquired knowledge and skills in their personal lives for the benefit of themselves and their families. They also commented on other consequences of their learning such as increased

confidence, better communication skills, improved maths, and enjoying learning alongside other people of different ages, interests, and cultural backgrounds.

Employers with TAFE computing learners (either employed or on work experience) emphasised the value of a good attitude, good communication skills, and confidence in work experience and employment. They observed that some learners faced challenges in applying their computer skills in the workplace. Arising from its own self-assessment, TAFE has identified that it will develop its post-work experience employer and learner evaluations to formalise and improve the quality of the information it obtains. It expects that this will help ensure that the value of the outcomes of its courses to learners and employers, including success in further education and training and employment, is as high as it can possibly be.

Many real estate learners are referred or supported by real estate companies which are their current or prospective employers. Real estate learner evaluations and interviewed learners' comments reflected the view that learners had obtained new knowledge about buying, selling, and renting houses which was useful to them in their personal lives as well as employment.

TAFE informs successful learners when they become aware of employment opportunities. However, TAFE is not aware of how many learners who achieve the salesperson's entry requirement are successful in obtaining or maintaining employment. TAFE is aware that many learners already have or take up employment in the real estate industry on completion of the entry requirement but that the turnover rate in the industry is as high as 98 per cent over two years.

The real estate industry's high turnover rate is beyond the control of TAFE. So too are the major changes about to be implemented in the industry in qualifications, courses, and modes of delivery. TAFE has identified through its own self-assessment that it will implement a post-course learner survey to help provide information on the value and relevance of the real estate course, including destinational outcomes. TAFE is proactively engaged with the Ministry of Justice, the Real Estate Industry Training Organisation, and the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand to strive to assure the value of qualifications, courses, and modes of delivery to learners and the industry now and in the future.

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**.

Context

Computing learners are seeking knowledge and skills, formal qualifications, work experience, and employment. The needs of computing learners, including literacy and numeracy, are assessed prior to enrolment. Learners are expected to dress and behave at all times as they would in the workplace. Learners and employers are surveyed to find out how well the TAFE course is meeting their needs.

Real estate learners are motivated by a desire to obtain knowledge and understanding and to qualify to enter employment in real estate. The learning needs of real estate course applicants are not assessed formally as in computing, although the application form seeks information on physical and learning disabilities. There is no formal assessment of literacy and numeracy needs. Unsuitable learners are sometimes counselled informally against undertaking the real estate course, but entry is open with no prerequisites.

Learners in both computing and real estate complete evaluations which include how well the TAFE course is meeting their needs.

Explanation

Prospective computing learners are assessed to ensure they have every opportunity to successfully complete the courses and gain the qualifications. This assessment includes their basic literacy and numeracy needs, where in some cases they are redirected to other more appropriate specialist literacy and numeracy providers prior to or at the same time as their acceptance onto the TAFE course. This process is an important factor in enabling learners to succeed.

Learner evaluations and interviewed learners' comments show that learners are satisfied that TAFE meets their needs. This includes those computing learners who study in their own time and come into TAFE at least once a week to access face-to-face support which is also available by phone or email. Learners interviewed appreciated that they were able to progress at their own pace, had the support of all the staff and other learners, and only undertake assessment when they are ready individually. Learners said they also enjoyed group activities such as "word walls" which helped them to learn and understand technical computer vocabulary and meanings in a fun way. Learners also observed that they gained a sense of achievement they had not experienced previously and that this increased their self-confidence and motivated them to continue achieving.

TAFE identified that its previous employer computing surveys had only covered a narrow range of employers. Its most recent survey went to a broader range of employers. The survey confirmed that TAFE computer courses were mostly matching the needs of learners and employers. However, it also clearly indicated that employers rated office skills (e.g. filing, answering phones, customer service, photocopying), communication skills, time management, flexibility, a positive attitude, and workplace presentation as having higher, or at least as high, importance as keyboarding, word processing, or internet skills.

TAFE will act on this employer feedback next year and reintroduce business administration skills more explicitly as part of its programmes. Some learners who were interviewed were keen to include areas such as web design, desktop publishing, and PowerPoint skills in their programmes, but employers surveyed did not rate the value of these very highly. Individual learners did report that they developed spreadsheeting, database, and accounting skills and systems during their work experience.

The needs of real estate course applicants are not assessed as formally as in computing. TAFE considers that an IELTS score of less than 5.5 is insufficient to undertake a course that involves considerable reading and writing. However, while there is no formal assessment of literacy and numeracy needs, applicants for whom English is a second

language are asked to confirm that they have an IELTS score of 5.5. TAFE commented that they have had very few cases, if any, where literacy and numeracy have been a difficulty for their learners. This may be because learners self-select based on their research of the course on the TAFE Auckland campus website before they enrol. Unsuitable real estate learners, including those referred by government agencies such as WINZ, who for example do not have their own transport or are obviously limited in written or spoken English, are sometimes counselled informally against undertaking the real estate course, but entry is open with no prerequisites.

Real estate learners complete a post-course completion questionnaire to help inform TAFE how well its course is meeting their needs. The comments expressed a high level of satisfaction with the course, singling out its comprehensiveness, the prompt marking and return of assessments, and the level of support provided. Some responses made suggestions as to specific changes in regard to resources or assessments, and expressed a desire to be better prepared for the final assessment. The final assessment is face to face and assesses everything that learners have learned. TAFE does all it can to help learners prepare for this by providing a simulated face-to-face assessment via an online video and suggesting that learners practise with a third party before undertaking the assessment. Some real estate learners said they would have liked to have learned more about the skills of selling, but this is not part of the current entry-level qualification and the skills are usually learned on the job as part of higher real estate qualifications.

TAFE summarises real estate learner evaluation responses and rates their satisfaction. It also records all changes it makes in light of the responses, including specific amendments to resource and assessment materials. TAFE has agreed that its current real estate learner evaluation could be improved to provide better information on how well its course and activities match the needs of its learners. For example, a five or ten point scale such as TAFE uses in its own employee survey, rather than yes or no responses, would encourage more comments, give more insight into TAFE's performance, and give TAFE a clearer picture of how well it is doing and the need for improvements.

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 **Good**.

Context

In both computing and real estate, tutors are suitably qualified and experienced and undertake ongoing professional development which has to date included adult teaching learning, standards-based assessment and moderation, and the National Certificate in Adult Education. This contributes to effective teaching and learning, as reflected in learners' results and outcomes.

Explanation

The two tutors and the chief operations officer, who also tutors on occasions, are suitably qualified and experienced in computing and standards-based assessment to teach and assess

the National Certificates in Computing. Current professional development for the computing tutors is focused on the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education (Vocational).

The sole real estate tutor is in the process of completing relevant real estate qualifications including the Real Estate Agent's Licence through extramural university study. The tutor is supported by the owner and director of TAFE, who has considerable experience in real estate. A real estate employer stated that the experience that the TAFE director has in real estate benefits the resources, assessment, and support that TAFE learners experience when they study at TAFE, and that this is evident when the learners enter the real estate industry. The employer compared TAFE graduates very favourably with graduates from other institutions. Formalising this feedback process will give TAFE further information that it can act on.

The two computing tutors, the chief operations officer, and the recruitment administrator, some of whom have worked for TAFE for several years, regularly discuss all aspects of their teaching, learning, assessment, and the progress of individual learners. Staff also hold regular informal weekly meetings and formal monthly minuted meetings where any unresolved issues are discussed, and improvements agreed and made.

TAFE's computing and real estate learners alike commented positively on the approachability, knowledge, understanding, and ability of tutors to help them, Real estate learners commented on how readily and promptly their tutors returned marked assessments and helped them by phone, email, or in person. Real estate learners also commented on how the online information and materials they were able to access on the internet via TAFE's website supported the paper-based materials. These are all ingredients of the effective teaching and learning provided by TAFE.

TAFE continuously uses self-assessment based on its own internal moderation, observation of learner difficulties, and learner feedback as well as external moderation feedback, to improve its resource and assessment materials in both computing and real estate. In computing, TAFE is in the process of reformatting its resource and assessment materials to make them even more professional and learner-friendly.

All assessment decisions in both computing and real estate are moderated by the other tutor. The owner/director of TAFE assesses (including most of the final face-to-face assessments), and moderates the real estate tutor's marking of all assessments. The sole real estate tutor moderates the director's marking. This ensures internal consistency in TAFE's assessment decisions and with the national standard which is also externally moderated by the Real Estate Industry Training Organisation (REINZ ITO). TAFE's internal cross-checking also quality assures TAFE's teaching and learning resources, and assessment materials and practices.

TAFE had met its external assessment moderation requirements with the current real estate standard-setting body, REINZ ITO. It has also worked promptly and cooperatively with the ITO to address and prevent plagiarism issues which the ITO's external moderation identified. Arising from its latest self-assessment, TAFE has identified that in real estate it will request formal feedback from its assessors, identifying repeated mistakes that learners make in assessment so that it can ensure that the assessment materials are as clear as possible.

TAFE is clearly committed to doing this, as it is to the other actions that it has identified and agreed to.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

Context

TAFE is a relatively small organisation, which means that learners in computing have ready access to their tutors, the recruitment administrator, and the chief operations officer at virtually any time. Learners and staff know each other well and new learners are accepted and made welcome by learners and staff when they arrive. Regular ongoing learner and staff interactions and formal feedback at the end of each month keep staff informed as to how well the current learners view the support they receive.

While the staffing numbers in real estate are also relatively low, the number of learners is relatively high in comparison with computing. The nature of the distance correspondence course in real estate does not lend itself to the same kind of learner support as face-to-face teaching and learning, but support is readily available when identified by the learners. On completion of their course, real estate learners give feedback on the support they have received.

Explanation

The needs of computing learners are carefully assessed before they enter the course. Learners are screened appropriately and fairly to ensure they have every opportunity to successfully complete the computing courses and gain the qualifications. If they are not ready, for example in terms of their basic literacy and numeracy skills, they are redirected to other, more appropriate specialist literacy and numeracy providers prior to or at the same time as their acceptance onto the TAFE course.

The small number of learners in TAFE's computing classes helps tutors provide individual as well as group support for learning. It also enables TAFE to manage ongoing enrolments without affecting learners' progress. In addition, the inclusion of learners who are studying and achieving the National Certificate in Computing at both Levels 2 and 3 in each class motivates learners to encourage and assist each other. Computing attendance is carefully monitored and absences are followed up the morning of the day that the absence occurs. Such factors as these contribute to a positive learning environment which produces results that satisfy, excite, and motivate learners to continue to succeed. TAFE's computing learners commented very positively on their achievements in relation to their own expectations, perceived abilities, and their previous performance at secondary school or other private training establishments.

Learner evaluations and comments in computing indicated a high level of satisfaction with the guidance and support received from the point of enrolment. Learners commented that they found the courses very consistent with the information provided at enrolment. They appreciated and enjoyed the availability and approachability of staff at all times, and the

open-door policy of the chief operations officer. This kind of support, individual learning plans, and monitoring of learner progress and achievement gives learners every opportunity to achieve their goals. Learners appreciated the employment advice of a Career Services person who spoke to the group. In addition, TAFE has recently established a student council which meets monthly and includes a student-elected representative and a staff-nominated representative. TAFE intends that this will further enhance learner collaboration and support. Learner comments show that learners value this recent development, participate seriously, and make formal suggestions for improvement to TAFE, which either makes the changes or, if not, responds professionally and respectfully to the learners with reasons why.

Real estate learner evaluations and comments were positive about the guidance and support they received. There is no formal needs analysis of would-be learners but some learners referred from government agencies might be counselled by the director not to proceed if they lack basic literacy and numeracy skills or transport when they enquire about the course prior to enrolment. Learners commented that information on the TAFE website gave them a good idea of what to expect before they enrolled and this was highly consistent with what they actually experienced doing the course.

Arising from its self-assessment, TAFE has identified that it will modify its learner evaluations to improve the quality of the information it receives with regard to the quality of the guidance and support that it provides. It also accepts that while it receives some useful comments from its learner evaluations, the evaluations could be improved to provide better data which could further contribute to other improvements.

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**.

Context

TAFE has a relatively small staff with a small number of learners on site at Whangarei and a much larger number of learners studying by correspondence administered from Auckland. TAFE's sole owner is also its director and is based in Auckland supported by a chief operations officer based in Whangarei, and a tutor, financial administrator, and administrator in Auckland, and two tutors and a recruitment administrator in Whangarei. An employee survey gives TAFE feedback on its governance, management, and strategy.

Explanation

The Whangarei and Auckland sites of TAFE observe the same policies and principles but practices vary. This is partly due to the different modes of delivery at each site. The chief operations officer has continued to conduct TAFE's regular quarterly internal audits to ensure consistent application of its policies, principles, and procedures at both sites. This ensures that the principles of practice and use of TAFE's quality management systems are consistent in Whangarei and Auckland, even if the detail is not exactly the same.

A comprehensive ten-point employee appraisal of TAFE has been very positive. It has reflected the view that conformity and stifling bureaucracy is not considered by staff to be characteristic of TAFE. Rather, employees take the view that there is greater emphasis on personal responsibility in TAFE, that communication is open and honest between parties, that warmth and support is very characteristic of TAFE, that staff are recognised and well rewarded for good performance, that staff feel assured that employment will be long term, resources are of high quality, a high level of support is provided, programmes are relevant, and TAFE is continually assessing performance and implementing changes for improvement.

Currently, TAFE's self-assessment is managed by the chief operations officer, who has observed that self-assessment is producing significantly better identification of the necessary improvements that are being made at TAFE. For example, the employer and learner evaluations in Whangarei are more robust than those in Auckland, but both will benefit from the processes that TAFE has identified are needed to enhance the quality of the information that the evaluations provide and the ongoing improvements to which they can contribute.

Improvements arising from TAFE's self-assessment to date have included developing the surveys that learners in Whangarei complete to improve the quality of the information obtained, implementing an employer and learner post-work experience evaluation to obtain more robust information, surveying a broader range of employers, and developing the evaluations they complete to improve the quality of the information obtained, establishing a learner council to further develop student collaboration, and developing a formative assessment tool for each unit standard to formalise formative assessment and to improve first assessment success. Improvements in Auckland include developing the learner post-course evaluation to improve the quality of the information obtained about the value of the course outcomes to learners and employers, requesting formal feedback from assessors to identify and rectify repeated mistakes in assessment, and developing learner evaluations to improve the data obtained on guidance and support.

The evaluative conclusions, including using the same ratings as used in external evaluation and review, relating to educational performance arrived at by TAFE's own independent self-assessment process, are very similar to the conclusions and ratings arrived at by the external evaluation and review team. It has also been noted that TAFE intends to involve all staff and management at both campuses even more in the self-assessment processes as they continue to develop in the future.

TAFE is faced with changes in funding for computing in 2010. The financial officer based at the Auckland site has provided the financial information necessary to enable TAFE to plan appropriate staffing and affordable upgrading of computer hardware and software. TAFE is fully participating in the consultative processes contributing to imminent major changes in real estate qualifications, courses, and accountabilities. It continues to ask questions about how everything will work within the new environment. By being proactive, TAFE is placing itself strategically and practically in a strong position to continue delivering valuable quality education and training in the future.

Part 2: Performance in focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: National Certificates in Computing (Levels 2 and 3)

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

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

Context

Learners studying for their National Certificates in Computing at both Levels 2 and 3 attend the same classes and those who study on their own for up to 20 hours per week come in for face-to-face teaching and learning for one day a week, although they can come in at other times if they wish.

Explanation

Learners enrol in order to develop their knowledge and use of computers. Several of them have never previously achieved formal qualifications of any kind. Learners were very satisfied with their achievement of individual unit standards and whole qualifications. TAFE has achieved good results in computing and has tracked improvement over the past three years. It has met TEC targets for achievement and average credits.

Many of the learners who were interviewed were impressed and excited by how much they had learned and how they were able to apply their knowledge and skills to work experience, employment, and their personal lives. They were also pleased at how much they had developed personally in their time at TAFE in terms of their personal confidence, communication skills, literacy, and numeracy.

Learners and staff put a lot of the success of the TAFE learners down to the friendly and supportive environment they enjoy at TAFE where staff and learners support and motivate each other at all times. The initial needs analysis also contributes to the academic and other related outcomes because the learners' needs are identified and addressed before and during the course. The small size of TAFE also contributes to a learning environment that is open and honest at all times.

TAFE has identified through its own broadened survey of employers that TAFE computing courses were mostly matching the needs of learners and employers. However, the survey also clearly indicated that employers rated office skills (e.g. filing, answering phones, customer service, photocopying), communication skills, time management, flexibility, a positive attitude, and workplace presentation as having higher, or at least as high, importance as keyboarding, word processing, or internet skills. TAFE already has wide accreditation and is going to act on this feedback next year to reintroduce such skills more explicitly as part of their programmes. This will increase the value of the courses to learners and employers by ensuring that programmes and activities match the needs of learners and employers.

In addition, employer interviews identified that learners and employers alike would benefit from a more robust process of selection of the readiness of learners to go on work experience placement. Their performance on work experience would also be enhanced by over-viewing all their knowledge and skills so that they could more readily apply them in the workplace. Carrying out the assessment unit standard by unit standard contributes to this situation arising in the workplace. TAFE already intends to formalise its post-work experience feedback by using improved learner and employer evaluations to provide more robust information as to how it can improve this aspect of its training. Employers have expressed a keenness to continue working with TAFE because they find the organisation is open, easy to communicate with, and responsive to making changes. Recent TAFE graduates have gained permanent employment and would have done so with another employer arising from work experience.

2.2 Focus area: Real Estate Salesperson's Course (Correspondence)

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

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

Context

Learners enrol on this course because successful completion is the minimum requirement to sell real estate in New Zealand. Graduates have three years from the successful completion of the course to start work in the real estate industry. The course is delivered by correspondence and paper-based materials, although all information and materials are also available online. About 140 learners are enrolled at any one time. The course can take up to three months to complete. Major changes in the industry, including qualifications and courses to achieve them, are to be implemented in 2009 and 2010.

Explanation

There is no formal needs analysis prior to enrolment, although learners who show obvious signs of literacy or numeracy difficulties or who lack basic tools like a car may be dissuaded from enrolling by the director. TAFE reports that it is not aware of any significant problems arising from open entry and the lack of formal needs analysis.

Learning and being assessed by correspondence using paper-based materials suits learners who wish to study in their own time and around their own commitments. Many learners are already employed in administrative or supporting roles or are supported if not sponsored by real estate agencies when they enrol. Learners are self-motivated to succeed. The achievement of unit standards and successful completion of the real estate qualification has progressed from over 80 per cent of those who attempt the assessments in 2008 to currently tracking at well over 90 per cent; in fact, 97.3 per cent at the time of the external evaluation and review. There is, however, no clear information about withdrawals or non-completions of those who start the course, although TAFE is able to access the relevant information.

The director is involved in every aspect of the real estate course and in particular the marking and checking of the assessment decisions made by the sole other tutor who in turn

marks the director's assessment decisions. The director does most of the face-to-face assessing of learners for their final assessment; some learners commented they find this assessment difficult. Learners consider the content of the face-to-face assessment by viewing an online video simulating face-to-face assessment. They can also rehearse the face-to-face assessment beforehand with a third party. Nevertheless, learners reported that they found pulling together their entire learning assessed unit standard by unit standard for the final assessment much more challenging than the other paper-based assessments which are easier and much less interesting. TAFE has met all its external moderation requirements with REINZ ITO and has worked quickly with the ITO to resolve and prevent the plagiarism that the ITO's external moderation identified.

While the post-course completion survey yields some useful information about support, the quality of the information could be enhanced if it was on a five or ten point scale like the TAFE employee survey. This would give TAFE a clearer picture as to its performance in real estate education and training and encourage more suggestions for ongoing improvements. It could also obtain post-course information on the value of the outcomes for learners. TAFE intends to do this arising from its self-assessment and linked to destinational outcomes.

It is difficult for TAFE to be confident about destinational outcomes in terms of employment. Many learners are already working for a real estate company when they enrol or are supported or sponsored by a company with the prospect of employment after completion of the qualification. However, it is difficult for TAFE to be confident about longer term outcomes given that TAFE reported that the real estate industry itself has stated that 98 per cent of salespersons who enter the industry have left again after two years. This and imminent major changes in the real estate industry are outside the control of TAFE, but its continued involvement in the changes, and obtaining further information about destinational outcomes, would place it in a better-informed position on the value of the course it is delivering in real estate. Learners noted that the current course does not deal with the skills of selling, but this is outside the scope of the course and the current minimum requirements for entry into real estate.

Mandatory focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The overall rating for performance in governance, management, and strategy is **Excellent**.

The overall rating for capability in self-assessment in governance, management, and strategy is **Excellent**.

Context

TAFE is a relatively small organisation where all staff at each site are involved with each other on a day-to-day basis, and in Whangarei, with their learners. TAFE's sole owner, who is also the director, delegates the operational management to a chief operations officer based in Whangarei. The financial officer is based in Auckland.

Explanation

The spread of governance and management functions over both sites helps give TAFE some consistency in its policies and principles of operation, if not all its procedures and processes in detail. The transition from internal audit to self-assessment has been managed by the chief operations officer. TAFE itself has identified that self-assessment will offer more opportunity for ongoing improvement than internal audit did and still intends to ensure that its quality management systems are being observed. The employee survey confirms that TAFE gives its staff a fair degree of autonomy, which is appreciated, but at the same time all staff are committed to, and take responsibility for, the achievements of the learners. TAFE has a low staff turnover and some learners compare TAFE very favourably with other education and training they have experienced.

Learners and employers appreciate that the organisation fully supports learners in providing every opportunity for them to achieve unit standards and qualifications and then employment and/or going on to higher levels of tertiary education. TAFE has positive interactions with employers in Whangarei and Auckland who are happy to continue the relationship whereby they provide work experience and employment to TAFE trainees and graduates.

TAFE's own independent self-assessment processes have arrived at very similar ratings to those arrived at by the external evaluation and review team. It has also been noted that TAFE intends to involve all staff and management at both campuses even more in its self-assessment processes as they continue to develop in the future.

TAFE governance and management is faced with the knowledge of reduced funding for its computing courses and major changes in real estate courses, qualifications, and requirements. It has kept itself fully informed, contributed to developments, and has explored the likely financial impact on the organisation and its learners. It will provide new flat screens for the computing courses by relocating them from its Auckland office rather than buying new ones in the meantime, and to organise their existing computers so that their hardware and software is more reliable. This arrangement has also enabled TAFE to give itself every opportunity to continue to provide real estate education and training based on the real estate experience of its owner and his involvement with the TAFE real estate course and imminent changes in courses, qualifications, and requirements.

TAFE is taking a soundly based strategic view of the future to ensure that it continues to provide relevant courses and qualifications that are valued by its learners and employers.

Statements of Confidence

The statements of confidence are derived from the findings within and across the focus areas. A four-step scale is used: highly confident, confident, not yet confident, not confident.

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **confident** in the educational performance of TAFE College New Zealand (TAFE). Key reasons for this are:

- TAFE learners achieve very good results in unit standards and qualifications in both computing and real estate. Work experience supports their training and leads to employment or further education and training. Computing learners also improve their self-confidence, communication skills, numeracy, time management, positive attitudes, and professional appearance in addition to specific computing knowledge and skills.
- Real estate learners qualify for entry into the real estate industry because successful completion of the salesperson course is the minimum requirement for anyone to apply for a Real Estate Salesperson's Certificate that enables them to sell real estate in New Zealand. TAFE maintains links with employers and the businesses and industries its education and training support. It enables its learners to achieve employment in business, computing-related work, and real estate, or undertake further study by providing education and training that is relevant and up to date.
- The teaching in computing at TAFE meets the needs of individuals through individual and group activities, and learners are able to progress at their own pace and undertake assessment when they are ready. The resources for real estate are well supported by tutors, and are the basis of very good achievement when learners undertake assessment when they consider they are ready.
- Learner evaluations and comments confirm staff and management observations that learners in computing and real estate are well supported by TAFE.
- Governance, management, and strategy are effective and well considered. They support impressive achievement and improvement in results.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **confident** in the capability in self-assessment of TAFE.

- TAFE's self-assessment is genuine and builds on its previous internal audit processes.
- TAFE's self-assessment is focused on identifying areas for ongoing improvement and the implementation of changes. Changes include developing existing data gathering so as to obtain more and better data to show how well TAFE is doing and where ongoing improvements can be made.

- TAFE is responsive to the ongoing needs of its learners, employers, and industries. Based on learner, staff, and employer evaluations, TAFE has identified where improvements can be made.
- The ratings arrived at by TAFE's own independent self-assessment processes are very similar to those arrived at by the external evaluation and review team. TAFE intends to involve all staff and management at both campuses even more in the self-assessment processes in the future.

Actions Required and Recommendations

Future actions

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

Recommendations

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

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