

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Feats Ltd trading as Feats

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 October 2015

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*Final Report*

# 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

Name of TEO:	Feats Ltd trading as Feats
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	20 July 1992
Location:	Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) campus, C Block, 20 Bell Street, New Plymouth
Delivery sites:	65 Juliet Street, Stratford, 6 Princes Street, Hawera
Courses currently delivered:	NCEA level 1 and 2 (Youth Guarantee), Computing and Business Administration (Level 2), Automotive level 2 (Youth Guarantee), Healthcare level 3 (Ministry of Social Development), Retail and Hospitality (Ministry of Social Development), Work on Work (Ministry of Social Development), Hospitality (STAR)
Code of Practice signatory:	No, all domestic students
Number of students:	Domestic: 209 (Ministry of Social Development 120, NCEA 52, Intensive Literacy and Numeracy 37); 59 per cent Māori learners International: nil
Number of staff:	10 full-time; six part-time (as required)
Scope of active accreditation:	As above

Distinctive characteristics:	Low learner-to-facilitator ratio, rural provider, foundation learning, responsive to industry and community
Recent significant changes:	New facilitators (tutors) have been employed. Feats' main office was relocated from 64 Centennial Drive, New Plymouth to the New Plymouth WITT campus.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the last external evaluation and review (EER) in 2011, Feats was found to be Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment. The report's recommendations were: build self-assessment capability by prioritising actions that have the most impact on learners, monitor the implementation of these actions, and determine the usefulness of the initiatives.
Other:	<p>Feats offers a diverse range of programmes for foundation learners throughout the Taranaki region.</p> <p>Feats' relocation to WITT has enabled Feats learners to access WITT facilities such as the health centre, library, counselling services and free buses. Feats pays a fee per learner for this access.</p>

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy, and the two programme focus areas of NCEA Youth Guarantee Flexi Youth which has many pathways, and the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programme.

Both these programmes are funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The NCEA programme was a focus area at the 2011 EER. It is also offered across all three sites – Stratford, Hawera and New Plymouth. The Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programme is called Key Stones. There is also a wider Feats strategy to assess and embed literacy and numeracy into all the foundation-level programmes offered.

### 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 web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. 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.*

Two evaluators conducted the EER on site at the New Plymouth WITT campus over two days. The evaluation team spoke to the full governance team of seven, the management team of three, including the director (owner), the academic mentor and the quality coordinator. They also spoke with the NCEA facilitators from Stratford, Hawera and New Plymouth, the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy teacher, and NCEA and Intensive Literacy and Numeracy learners. The evaluation team reviewed a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings by the board, management and campus facilitators, and moderation documentation and information around Feats' strategic direction. After the on-site visit, the lead evaluator spoke with a number of external stakeholders, including past learners and employers.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Feats Ltd trading as Feats**.

- In 2013 and 2014, Feats mostly met or exceeded its TEC targets for course and qualification completions for learners in NCEA levels 1 and 2. Feats has also consistently met Ministry of Social Development targets.
- Learners complete courses, gain qualifications and employment, improve their well-being, abilities and attributes and contribute positively to their whānau and local communities.
- Learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners through regional provision, providing free transport and, more recently, increasing the services available to learners through the relocation of the Feats New Plymouth campus to the WITT campus.
- Facilitators and learners relate effectively to one another. Facilitators are well supported by the experienced governance and management teams, who are committed to ensuring a positive learning experience for all learners.
- Feats uses the TEC literacy and numeracy assessment tool to assess all learners within a few weeks of enrolment and embeds literacy and numeracy into the subject matter of its vocationally focused programmes.
- The intensive literacy and numeracy programme learners showed increases in their reading and writing skills and improvements in well-being and confidence.
- The changes to TEC funding from Youth Training to Youth Guarantee affected programme structures as there were now fewer weeks to deliver the same qualification to the learners. This transition was unsettling for staff and learners as foundation learners often require longer to assimilate information.
- Feats understands and is committed to meeting the needs of foundation learners. It has been successful at aligning its programmes, resources and staffing to meet these needs.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Feats Ltd trading as Feats**.

- Feats has effective leadership, well-defined purpose and direction and dedicated staff who share the Feats core value of respect for all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds.
- Feats has an open and inclusive workplace environment where staff are valued, consulted and included in decision-making, both informally on a day-to-day basis and formally through a range of meetings, including strategy meetings.
- Feats is an integral and important part of its community, with ongoing close working relationships with stakeholders which have led to collaborative ventures with local schools and businesses.
- When TEC targets are not met, Feats undertakes comprehensive needs analysis to understand the underlying reasons and to guide future remedial actions.
- The changes in TEC funding from Youth Training to Youth Guarantee were not well understood by Feats. Governance and management struggled to relate to the need to deliver 120 credits per year to priority learners. This lack of clarity meant that it was difficult to deliver a clear message to staff, resulting in Feats continuing to operate, in 2013, in a Youth Training manner.
- In 2014, Feats enrolled learners in all the qualifications (up to five) that made up the overall programme of study. Learners did not always complete all the qualifications they enrolled in. This had a negative impact on Feats' rates of completion. In 2015, this has been remedied by enrolling learners in the first qualification only.
- Feats' self-assessment is authentic and ongoing. It clearly identifies gaps in educational performance. Through commitment and perseverance, Feats' governance, management and staff are now better informed and adjusting well to working within the current funding environment.

# 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**.

Feats uses the TEC literacy and numeracy assessment tool to assess all learners within a few weeks of enrolment, and embeds literacy and numeracy into the subject matter of its vocationally focused programmes. The Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programme learners show increases in their reading and writing skills and even greater improvements in well-being and confidence.

In 2013 and 2014, Feats mostly met or exceeded its TEC targets for course and qualification completions for learners in NCEA levels 1 and 2 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Youth Guarantee data for all learners and Māori learners, NCEA levels 1 and 2, 2013-2014**

	Course completion 2013		Qualification completion 2013		Course completion 2014		Qualification completion 2014	
	TEC target 2013	Actual 2013	TEC target 2013	Actual 2013	TEC target 2014	Actual 2014	TEC target 2014	Actual 2014
All learners level 1	55%	62.51%	40%	82.12%	55%	56.57%	40%	56.89%
All learners level 2	60%	72.68%	40%	82.12%	60%	62.42%	40%	87.79%
Māori learners level 1	55%	42.07%	40%	93.86%	55%	55.96%	40%	27.79%
Māori learners level 2	60%	64.15%	40%	93.86%	60%	54.21%	40%	20.09%

In 2013, NCEA level 1 learners were 8 percentage points above the TEC course completion target of 55 per cent, and NCEA level 2 learners were 13 percentage points above the TEC course completion target of 60 per cent. In the same year, NCEA learners exceeded by 42 percentage points the TEC qualification completion rate target of 40 per cent. The results in Table 1 indicate that Feats was generally performing well against agreed TEC measures of achievement.

Māori learner results in 2014 were 1 percentage point above the TEC course completion target for NCEA level 1 of 55 per cent, and 6 percentage points below

<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.

the course completion rate target for NCEA level 2 of 60 per cent. In the same year, NCEA level 1 Māori learners were 12 percentage points below the level 1 qualification completion target of 40 per cent, and 20 percentage points below the level 2 qualification completion rate of 40 per cent.

These results illustrate the impact of the transition from Youth Training to Youth Guarantee funding, the misunderstandings around the implementation of these changes, and the impact of the staff time required to complete programme applications. During 2015, Feats is increasing its monitoring of the database monthly reports on individual learner progress and putting in place strategies to ensure that poor results are addressed more immediately.

## 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**.

Learners complete courses and gain useful qualifications that are used in the local community. Youth Guarantee is qualifications-focused and learners can select from a range of vocationally focused programmes such as computing and business administration. Links with stakeholders are strong and have led to collaborative ventures such as that with a local food distribution company which has shared the Feats premises. Also, in response to a local council by-law change in 2014, requiring 50 per cent of employees to have a food safety qualification, Feats was able to assist by offering training to an appropriate unit standard.

Feats has maintained relevance within the employment and tertiary sector over many years. Its close links to its communities makes the probability of finding work for graduates greater. Employers noted that Feats' courses give learners a fresh start in a practical learning environment. Employers consistently described Feats as proactive and collaborative, with excellent networks.

### 1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

Many learners are referred to Feats from the Ministry of Social Development and have little or no academic success and low self-esteem and confidence. Feats addresses this by fostering a relaxed but focused family environment where all learners are valued and respected, irrespective of their background or academic ability. This unconditional positive regard from Feats staff encourages learners to develop their own self-respect.

The new-found respect for self is translated into positive behaviours to others, including other learners and Feats staff. Learners described this process as the reason they were now able to learn and achieve a qualification. The acquisition of a qualification and relevant practical skills, a more positive outlook, and a nurturing but firm environment in which to develop skills and knowledge enables learners to contemplate a more fulfilling life for themselves and their whānau.

Feats has a range of informal and formal ways to monitor programme relevance and satisfaction, including regular stakeholder engagement across a number of regional forums where the director is actively involved.

### 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**.

The Feats learning environment is maintained by staff who have had long association with, and are able to relate well to, foundation learners. The facilitators are supported by an approachable and experienced management team with a wealth of teaching and practical knowledge. Facilitators develop individual learning plans in conjunction with the learner. The learning plans cover skills and knowledge and personal goals that are tracked over time. Classes are of a size where the facilitator can provide individual attention to each learner. However, learners are also actively encouraged to help each other and share ideas. The evaluation team noted the strong class bonds and genuine personal regard the learners showed for each other.

Facilitators are well qualified, well supported by professional development opportunities, meet regularly and are appropriately resourced. There has been some turnover of facilitators over time and one facilitator was replaced recently due to a mismatch between teaching style and learner fit. Management dealt with the situation legally and tactfully.

Teaching staff say they have been negatively affected over the last few years by the time required to align programmes to funding requirements. The impact of this process has been less time and energy for core teaching functions. However, these issues are now being effectively resolved.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Feats is motivated by a genuine and compelling wish to provide accessible educational opportunities for foundation-level learners in the Taranaki region. This goal is realised as a result of Feats' commitment to providing wrap-around care for all learners. An example of this is the Feats van that collects learners each day, to encourage regular attendance.

The recent relocation of Feats New Plymouth to the WITT campus has enhanced learner access to more facilities such as the WITT health centre, library services and the free bus. Feats learners also have the opportunity to mix with WITT students on campus. Another benefit is the ability to join a WITT class. For example, one Feats learner has enrolled in a WITT science class to gain subject knowledge missed at school.

Learner guidance and support at Feats is exemplary. It is immediate, appropriate, reduces barriers to learning and is motivated by genuine concern and regard for all learners. The inclusive learning environment, in combination with dedicated facilitators, supports learners as they attempt to overcome highly challenging learning deficits, such as literacy and numeracy. It does this by valuing the whole person, and by getting learners to contract into standards of behaviour such as no 'put downs' of others. In addition, Feats staff treat learners as adults and model healthy adult relationships.

## 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 **Good**.

Feats has a dedicated, competency-based board with expertise across a range of areas, such as human resources, finance and farm management. The board members all share the owner's passion for meeting the educational needs of the Taranaki region and have strong professional affiliations with, for example, Taranaki Futures, Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, and the TEC's Māori and Pasifika Trades Training initiative. Several members of the board are close relations of the

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owner, which adds value as it increases their support and passion for Feats' success. It also gives them insight into the owner's strengths and weaknesses and vice versa, so they can provide mutual support and challenge when required.

The owner won a local Chamber of Commerce business competition in 2012. The prize allowed Feats to rebrand and access human resources, information technology and financial expertise. This external input provided 'fresh eyes' and has added to the professionalism of Feats. Board members provide financial support, either directly or through access to resources to assist with establishing new educational sites or for moving sites. Learners willingly participated in the task of physically moving to the WITT campus and were reimbursed for this.

The board and owner are currently developing an effective succession plan to ensure a smooth transition as the owner moves to future projects. The plan is to include greater Māori participation in decision-making through the involvement of appropriate key people and organisations and a phased transition over several years where the owner can provide guidance and advice.

As noted earlier in this report, the shift in funding from Youth Training to Youth Guarantee affected Feats significantly. Some of the responsibility for the impact of these changes lies with Feats' governance and management's ability to understand the changes, despite considerable time and effort. However, some responsibility also lies with the TEC's short lead-in time for these changes and lack of clear information provided to the sector. These factors, while now largely resolved, have had the unintended consequence of impacting negatively on the high-needs learners they were intended to benefit.

## 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: NCEA Youth Guarantee Flexi Youth

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

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

### 2.3 Focus area: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy

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

NZQA recommends that Feats Ltd:

- Continue to implement and consolidate changes to the structure and delivery of the education it provides to foundation learners.
- Continue to investigate meaningful and creative ways to represent the educational and personal journey of a typical Feats learner.
- Continue to investigate how increased access to the WITT campus, facilities and educational opportunities can be of mutual benefit to Feats and WITT.
- Continue to engage with the Taranaki community, including Māori networks, to facilitate the future direction and growth of Feats.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are 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.*

*Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which 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.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 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 and/or 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.*

*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)).*

*The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.*

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