

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Workforce Development Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 18 October 2013

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Workforce Development Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	60 Prebensen Drive, Onekawa, Napier
Delivery sites:	Level 4, 43 High Street, Auckland Level 2, 330 High Street, Lower Hutt, Wellington 1 Boston Crescent, Flaxmere, Hastings 83 Church Street, Onehunga, Auckland 6 Hagley Street, Porirua, Wellington
First registered:	23 July 1992
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Hospitality (Introductory Cookery) (Level 2)• National Certificate in Hospitality (Basic Cookery) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Hospitality (Cookery) (Level 4)• National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3)• Provider Certificate in Early Childhood Education (Level 4)• National Certificate in Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education (Level 4)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Certificate in Youth Work (Level 4) • National Diploma in Youth Work (Level 6)
Number of students:	Domestic: 340 equivalent full-time students; approximately 35 per cent Māori and 35 per cent Pasifika
Number of staff:	59.2 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	As above
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Workforce Development Ltd delivers a range of training under contract to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), in hospitality, early childhood education, youth work and Youth Guarantee programmes • Ministry of Social Development, Foundation-Focused Training Opportunities • Ministry of Education, connecting Pasifika families with early childhood centres • Department of Corrections, foundation-level life skills and vocation-focused short courses within prisons • Private companies, short training courses, e.g. barista, food safety, under a separate company brand, HMC.
Recent significant changes:	Between April 2011 and late 2012, Workforce Development underwent a significant restructure, including appointing a new chief executive officer and redeveloping regional teams. The purpose of this restructure was to build stakeholder relationships, improve programme performance and lift academic results. Key staff were not appointed and in place until late 2012.
Previous quality assurance history:	Workforce Development previously underwent an external evaluation and review in October 2009, which resulted in NZQA being Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

This external evaluation and review included the National Certificate in Hospitality (Basic Cookery) (Level 3), the National Certificate in Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education (Level 4), and the National Diploma in Youth Work (Level 6). These programmes were selected because they provided a representational spread across the organisation, by industry sector and by regional delivery site.

The mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy was also included.

Other areas of Workforce Development's training operation, such as those under contract to the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and the Department of Corrections, while not being specific areas of focus, were discussed within the governance, management and strategy focus area. Overall, this methodology provided the evaluation team with the opportunity to review in detail the range of programmes noted above, and also facilitated discussions to explore how well the organisation monitors and reviews its performance across all training areas.

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.

A team of two evaluators visited three sites (Napier, Auckland and Wellington), which included Workforce Development's head office (Napier), over a period of three days. The evaluation team met with the owner-director, the chief executive officer and senior management team, teaching staff and a sample of students at each site. The team interviewed a range of external stakeholders by phone and reviewed a range of the organisation's records and documents.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Workforce Development Limited**.

The evaluation team is confident that Workforce Development is providing education programmes that are well connected to and matching industry needs, and are meeting the needs of students.

Between 2009 and 2012, educational performance, as reported through the TEC, was trending upwards. Course completions lifted from 66 per cent to 73 per cent, and qualification completions lifted from 51 per cent to 76 per cent over these four years. While these rates are between 6 per cent and 12 per cent below the overall sector median, the trend is upwards. The majority of Workforce Development's students are enrolled in New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) programmes at level 4 and below, and their 2012 average qualification achievement rate compares well, being 1 per cent above the sector median for courses at these levels.

The organisation is currently embedding its processes to track and monitor graduate outcomes and determine the value added. Across all focus areas, Workforce Development's self-assessment indicates that a number of students move on to further training, gain employment related to the sector in which they were training, or gain employment outside of the sector. For example, the 2011 graduate data indicates that 58 per cent of students gained employment. This is not benchmarked yet to indicate whether this rate is trending up or down or how it compares externally, but it is an indication that students are gaining value through employment, and this is mostly related to their training.

The programmes offered outside of the TEC's funding are also providing value and contributing significantly to students' and communities' ongoing development. This was evidenced through Workforce Development's self-assessment and through the evaluators' discussions with external stakeholders. For example, the participation rates of Pasifika families in early childhood education centres is on track towards meeting the Ministry of Education contracted targets, and the Department of Corrections has confirmed that the life skills and vocational short courses delivered to prisoners are providing significant benefits to participants, including raising literacy levels.

These results indicate that Workforce Development is delivering programmes that meet the needs of its students, is satisfying government department contract requirements, and is, over time, lifting educational achievement and adding value.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Workforce Development Limited**.

Workforce Development has further developed its capability in organisational self-assessment since the previous external evaluation and review in 2009. The organisation uses a range of processes and data to determine how well it is meeting its students' and other stakeholders' needs. Self-assessment is systematically applied across the organisation and is being used to bring about ongoing improvements, both to educational results and contributing processes. The organisation is tracking its overall educational performance over time, and accesses publicly available data to benchmark its performance against other, similar providers.

The organisation's needs assessment processes have resulted in offering programmes that match the needs of industry and students. Programmes are linked to national certificates or diplomas on the NZQF and are at an appropriate level for the students enrolled. Workforce Development's self-assessment of its organisational structure in early 2011 led to a restructure and is resulting in closer connections with industry and local stakeholders to better meet their needs.

The organisation's student management system has recently been updated to stay current with the TEC's reporting requirements. This database provides a rich source of information for management to review and monitor programme performance. At the time of this evaluation, Workforce Development was using this data to monitor programme performance and progress at the organisational level, but is yet to use this rich data set to its fullest extent to compare, for example, achievement rates by course, programme, gender or ethnicity.

The significance of using a fuller range of data is in how the results affect the organisation's ability to respond to areas of strength or weakness. For example, Māori and Pasifika student participation rates are high, approximately twice the local demographic rate, and while management has a general understanding that Pasifika students are achieving at a similar rate to all students, and Māori achieve slightly below all students, the data is not currently interrogated or the resulting analysis used to develop strategies to lift achievement rates where this is required. This is to some extent a result of the organisation losing a key staff member with responsibility for developing the Māori and Pasifika strategy.

The organisation regularly surveys students to determine their satisfaction with the programmes and tutors, and this information is analysed and contributes to developing improvements, for example to teaching strategies to better meet students' learning styles.

While organisational self-assessment is well established and used to bring about ongoing improvements, there are, as noted, some significant gaps that need further development.

Findings¹

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 **Adequate**.

Student achievement rates overall have been increasing over the four years to 2012. In recent years, resulting from self-assessment, Workforce Development has restructured the organisation to more closely link with industry and to focus on improving learner achievement. In the main, this is working, with achievement rates improving year on year, albeit below the national medians.

Between 2009 and 2012, course completion rates overall rose (from 66 to 68, 73 and 73 per cent respectively). While these rates have been below the PTE sector medians (by -8, -13, -13 and -12 per cent), the trend is upwards. Qualification completion rates have similarly been improving over this time (51, 59, 56 and 76 per cent), but remain below sector medians (-20, -16, -24 and -6 per cent), although with a significant 20 per cent improvement between 2011 and 2012. The majority of Workforce Development's students are enrolled in NZQF programmes at level 4 and below, and their 2012 qualification average achievement rate compares well, being 1 per cent above the sector median for courses at these levels. The improvements in both course completions and qualification completions are significant, and have contributed to employment results. However, the organisation is in the early stages of collating complete employment outcomes data. Results for 2011 show approximately 58 per cent of graduates gained employment, the majority in a role related to their study, indicating that the qualifications gained match industry needs. While this is a good result, self-assessment may be strengthened by providing year-on-year employment data for internal benchmarking, or accessing external employment data for the organisation to review the value of results.

Both Māori and Pasifika student participation rates were 35 per cent in 2012, a significant factor in its own right, given that this is approximately double local demographic figures. Anecdotally, staff know that Pasifika students are achieving at approximately the same rate as all students, and Māori students are achieving at a little below this. The use and analysis of this data is not yet well developed, limiting the organisation's ability to enhance existing strategies to address the low achievement.

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

Achievement rates for the level 3 cookery programme are at a high level. Qualification achievement rates rose significantly from 2011 to 2012, from 69 per cent to 93 per cent. Graduate data for 2012 shows that two students moved on to further training, seven into related employment and one into employment not related to the course, from an intake of 16 students.

Achievement rates for the Pacific Islands early childhood education level 4 programme have also risen strongly between 2011 and 2012, with the qualification completion rate lifting from 64 to 87 per cent, and one student moving into further training and five gaining employment.

There are as yet no qualification or employment results for the level 6 diploma in youth work because the programme is relatively new.

While not a focus area of this evaluation, data was presented for the Department of Corrections Foundation Programme showing 40-60 per cent of participants have made significant literacy gains, as measured on the TEC literacy tool. These are significant gains given that many participants in this programme have low literacy levels. Further, in the past three years, under the Literacy and Numeracy Programme Services Contract, 82 per cent of all participants have achieved some level of gain.

The organisation's capability in self-assessment of learner achievement is currently conducted at an overall organisational level, resulting in a good level of knowledge across staff of achievement rates as a whole. However, while management is aware of overall achievement and is establishing processes and tools to review learner achievement, there is currently little fine-grained analysis of data, for example to determine areas of high or low achievement, or to compare relative performance across regional sites, programmes, ethnicity or gender. This is significant because this information would provide the organisation with an improved ability to build on strengths and address areas of low achievement.

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 **Good**.

Students are gaining significant value from studying at Workforce Development, with many graduates moving on to higher-level programmes and to study at undergraduate degree level with other tertiary institutions. However, the organisation does not have precise figures for these outcomes. In 2011, approximately 69 per cent of graduates gained employment overall.

Students are also making gains in literacy as well as in 'soft skills' such as confidence, work-readiness, timeliness and personal presentation. Students are

making literacy gains as measured using the TEC online assessment tool and, as is common across the sector, soft skill gains are monitored anecdotally and via tutor observations and student surveys.

External stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation commented on how well the students are prepared for the workplace, and that they add value during work experience or as an employee.

The high participation rates of Māori and Pasifika students are an indicator that these programmes are meeting their needs in terms of location, cultural sensitivity, teaching style and the engaging rapport developed between tutors and students. Many anecdotes were heard at this evaluation about these factors.

Workforce Development's tutors have well-developed networks and relationships within their industry sector and employers in their regions, resulting in the organisation's capability in self-assessment about the value added being strong, if largely informal. This gap in documentation could leave the organisation vulnerable given the current tutor turnover and the risk of losing organisational knowledge.

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**.

Programme design and timetabling match well the students' requirements for study, family and childcare needs and work experience. As noted, employers interviewed confirmed that the skills and knowledge gained by the students match workplace needs as well as industry requirements.

All programmes offered are designed to meet the requirements of NZQF national certificates or diplomas, and therefore had been specifically written to meet the needs of the industry sectors they address.

There were some indications that the younger student group enrolled in the level 3 cookery programme may benefit from closer supervision than the current timetable allows for (one day in class for theory, two days in the kitchen for practical, one day self-directed study and one day in work experience).

Workforce Development has recently established supplementary readings and study support available online. This was valued by the students, who noted that these supports helped match their needs for accessing extra learning materials to complete their studies, while balancing their work and community commitments.

Workforce Development has worked with the Department of Corrections to redevelop the Literacy and Numeracy, Life Skills and Vocational Skills services to be more learner-focused, resulting in learner needs being more closely matched.

The organisation's capability in self-assessment of how well its programmes are matching needs is effective. Evidence was sighted of one programme no longer being offered because it no longer matched employer needs. Student evaluations at the start and end of the course are reviewed, analysed and discussed by staff. However, this information is not yet fully utilised to make changes leading to improvements. Tutor networking and anecdotal feedback, as noted, also contributes in this area at an informal level.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

While many teaching staff are relatively new to the organisation, the systems and processes in place to support new staff, combined with course and qualification achievement rates and positive student survey results, suggests that teaching is effective.

On the whole, students enjoy small classes with a high level of tutor-to-student interaction. The evaluators observed that learners were highly engaged in the learning with a positive rapport clearly evident between learners and tutors.

Some students and staff expressed concern about learning resources. In some cases, new tutors found some learning modules did not have complete learning resources, requiring extra tutor time to prepare them. Some students noted that learning resources were not written at an appropriate level for them. The organisational self-assessment around teaching quality is light on detail and analysis of contributing factors to high or low student engagement or success.

Assessment materials are appropriately checked prior to use, and the organisation's post-assessment moderation is well planned and implemented, providing appropriate checks on assessor decisions. However, national external moderation by standard-setting bodies, including NZQA and ServiceIQ, has identified some areas requiring improvements to assessment tools and assessor decisions. Workforce Development has submitted action plans that have been accepted by the standard-setting bodies.

Staff are supported to access appropriate professional development, with a range of options being taken up by staff, such as attending conferences and study towards higher teaching qualifications, among other professional development opportunities. During the past 16 months the organisational restructure has interrupted the performance appraisal process and many staff interviewed had not yet had an appraisal. This may make the organisation vulnerable to overlooking potential teaching quality issues.

There are some gaps in self-assessment in this area, as already noted. However, student surveys are regularly conducted and this information is collated, reviewed and discussed by staff.

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 **Adequate**.

Students are well supported by management and directly by the tutors. As already noted, tutors and students enjoy a very positive rapport and level of engagement. Physical resources are well supplied and replenished, as confirmed by staff, students and management.

Students interviewed at this evaluation said Workforce Development provided a very welcoming learning environment, noting that it, 'felt like a family'. Students and staff work together in the main to find work placements, although staff noted that where students found their own work placements they gained more from the experience and were more dedicated to turning up on time and to be well presented.

The students receive appropriate and sufficient information at the time of enrolment, including a student handbook and information via the organisation's website and enrolment pack.

The organisation's capability in self-assessment in this area, while providing a level of analysis and informing ongoing improvements, had some areas that may be strengthened. For example, as noted, the analysis and use of student survey information could be more complete and lead more directly to addressing any areas of concern.

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

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

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

The organisation has a clear purpose and direction: 'To change communities ... to understand stakeholders' needs ... to grow horizontally and vertically ... and to service the needs of the community'. The company shares are owned by a trust, which is governed by a board of two and a senior management team. While the organisation has a focus on business growth, there is also a clear focus on appointing appropriately qualified teaching and support staff. While physical

resources are well supplied and maintained, there are some gaps in the completeness of teaching resources to support learner achievement.

Workforce Development has conducted two organisational restructures since 2007. The first was to build business strength, business processes and the integrity of the programmes' content. The second restructure, beginning in April 2011, was to develop the strength of the regional sites, build regional stakeholder relationships, and address the lower-than-anticipated academic results. These processes have built a well-coordinated regional network of sites, and staff comments during this evaluation noted effective communication processes and resourcing as being two areas of strength. The evaluators concur with this view. The improvements in student achievement rates over the last four years are also an indicator of the success of these processes.

The organisation has recently upgraded the student management system to maintain compliance with the TEC reporting requirements, as well as improving its functionality for the analysis of student achievement data. At the time of this evaluation, the use of the data, as noted, was not yet being used to its full extent. Academic achievement is monitored at the overall organisational level and is yet to include more fine-grained analysis. However, management is aware of this and is developing processes and staff capability in this area.

The governance and management group has taken appropriate care in considering the suite of programmes offered, including no longer offering one identified as not meeting current industry needs.

The organisation's capability in self-assessment has some strengths, such as in the analysis of business operations and opportunities for growth, and the organisation-wide student achievement rates. Overall, there is a reasonably sound level of knowledge of how well the programmes match students' and other stakeholders' needs. However, the interrogation of educational performance data at a fine level, the use of this information to identify strengths, to address areas of weakness or low performance, and to monitor changes to determine their effectiveness, are areas for further development.

Māori and Pasifika achievement data is not currently being interrogated or the resulting analysis used to enhance strategies to lift achievement rates. This is to some extent a result of the organisational restructures and losing a key staff member with responsibility for developing the Māori and Pasifika strategy.

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 **Adequate**.

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Hospitality (Basic Cookery) (Level 3)

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: National Certificate in Pacific Island Early Childhood Education (Level 4)

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

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

2.4 Focus area: National Diploma in Youth Work (Level 6)

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Workforce Development Ltd:

- Further develop and implement its plans to analyse educational performance data and use findings to identify improvements
- Ensure that the established organisational processes for regular staff performance appraisals are re-implemented
- Ensure staff are provided with ongoing teaching resource support
- Continue to explore processes to gather more complete graduate destination data to determine value added.

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).

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz