

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 17 October 2012

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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:	Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	24 Elder Lane, Bethlehem, Tauranga
Delivery sites:	As above
First registered:	28 July 1992
Courses currently delivered	Teacher, social work, and counsellor education – diploma, degree, and graduate diploma programmes
Code of Practice signatory	Signatory (for students 18 years and upwards)
Number of students:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Domestic: 384 students</li><li>• International: two students</li></ul>
Number of staff:	18 full-time, 16 part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	BTI is accredited to deliver a variety of Bachelor's degree programmes in education, counselling, and social work; a number of allied graduate diploma and certificate programmes in these and associated disciplines; a range of diploma programmes at levels 5 and 6 in these disciplines. All of these are local programmes.
Distinctive characteristics:	BTI offers programmes at its Tauranga campus and by distance. It practises conventional teaching and online and blended teaching methods.
Previous quality assurance	This is the first external evaluation and review

history: (EER) for BTI. In the NZQA quality audit of March 2008, BTI met all but one requirement of the then standard. The requirement not met related to timeliness in depositing student fees into the trust account, and this has since been rectified.

Other: BTI is a tertiary learning institute which strongly adheres to a Christian ethos. It is one of a cluster of educational institutions on the outskirts of Tauranga which provides continuous education through all stages of life. BTI is a charitable company owned by Christian Education Trust. It is the tertiary arm of the Bethlehem Campus and is located alongside Bethlehem College and Bethlehem College Kindergarten.

The organisation was established in 1993 as Bethlehem Teachers College, and the range of diploma, degree, and graduate diploma programmes was extended in 1998 to include counselling and family studies programmes. In 2002, BTI moved into purpose-built facilities located at the eastern end of the Bethlehem Campus.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review included:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Early Childhood Education (Bachelor of Education)
- Diploma of Counselling
- Diploma of Teaching Studies (Tonga)

The first focus area is mandatory. The Bachelor of Education is representative of the three degrees offered by BTI, and of the high-level teaching programmes and graduate (degree-related) programmes. The Diploma of Counselling is representative of diploma-level programmes and of the other non-education related programmes that are offered. The Diploma of Teaching Studies provides an opportunity to look at the distance programmes that BTI provides.

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<sup>1</sup> From the BTI website: <http://www.bti.ac.nz/about-us/history/>

### 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 and an observer of the EER process visited BTI for a three-day visit. A series of interviews was held with board members, senior management, senior teachers, teaching staff, and students. Contact was made with graduates and employers of the graduates.

A number of documents and other resources was sighted and reviewed. These included graduate survey documents, the five-year review of the programme, degree monitors' reports, strategic plan, academic board minutes, moderation reports, student tracking profiles, practicum feedback, the online student database, attendance register, external moderation of assessment procedures, staff meeting minutes, internal moderation of assessment, and board of examiners' minutes and agenda.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Bethlehem Tertiary Institute**.

Completion rates of the programmes selected as focus areas for this evaluation are generally very good. Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) results for BTI in 2010 show that the rates of completion of courses and retention of students in the funded courses are above the national medians for PTEs. The rate of completion of qualifications was below the national median in 2010. There is evidence that significant numbers of students complete a diploma programme and then move on to enrol in Bachelor's degree programmes.

BTI has a policy of student entry and retention that considers both the quality and quantity of the programme outcomes. It considers that in the fields of early childhood education and counselling that the personal and character attributes of the students are at least as important as their academic performance. BTI manages this requirement through stringent and carefully controlled entry criteria and the distinctive use of a 'reselection' process after the first year of study. The reselection process centres on appraising what has been learned during the first year about the students' character, ethics, and suitability to perform the job for which they are being trained. The process is an inclusive one, with the students' views also playing a role. While this process is designed to ensure the quality of the graduates, it does not necessarily enhance the completion rates of the programme. BTI integrates a significant thread through the programmes that is dedicated to developing the personal character of the students.

BTI has a profound understanding of the 'other' issues involved in producing good-quality early childhood teachers and counsellors. Some of the counselling students are older students who may have themselves experienced 'life issues' which must be recognised and dealt with before these students engage in counselling others. Likewise, BTI feels it is very important that its early childhood education graduates are fit and proper people to be teaching young children, and it goes to great lengths to achieve this.

BTI's teaching and delivery is of a high standard, with highly qualified and experienced teachers. There are very good resources available, and students have the advantage of being able to learn using varied delivery methods. In-house learning and distance learning are available depending on the programme selected. BTI has an emphasis on degree and associated programmes, so its teaching staff members engage in formal academic research. This research is presented in various publications and conferences and also helps inform the teaching practice.

BTI is contracted by the Free Wesleyan Church in Tonga to provide teacher training to practising teachers in the islands so that they meet newly introduced local standards. The programme met with mixed success in the early stages, and

the process of teaching the Tongans by using local intermediary teachers had some initial difficulties. Language difficulties (the programme was delivered in English), job-related issues (the students were employed at the same time), and family pressures led to relatively low rates of completions – around 50 per cent in the first intake. However, there are distinct signs that BTI is effectively using self-assessment strategies to improve the completion rate of the Tongan programme. The second cohort was managed more effectively and 84 per cent of this cohort completed the programme.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Bethlehem Tertiary Institute**.

BTI has established good self-assessment practices over the years. It collects a lot of data from a variety of sources. Feedback is collected at the end of the course, and graduate movement into the workforce is tracked three months after the students leave to establish that they have found employment. Feedback is also gained from employers. Students have practicum sessions built into their programmes of study to enable them to experience practical situations. These practicums provide an opportunity to observe the students in a workplace situation, and to gain further feedback on their progress. Some student and practicum supervisor comments indicate that they would like more practicum time. The NZQA evaluators saw that BTI uses an online database to record student entry details, programme grades, and attendance. BTI management acknowledged that BTI could make more use of the database in terms of analysis. The database is used to contribute outcomes statistics to inform future course development,

BTI responds well to make improvements to its courses in response to feedback, although some students commented that some of the changes are disruptive to the classes in progress. Feedback has been instrumental in prompting changes to the delivery of some programmes. There has been a recent switch from online learning to a more flexible approach involving mixed media and class delivery. The effects of this have been monitored and there is general satisfaction with the change.

Academic monitoring of programmes takes place in the form of internal moderation of assessment material, and by submission of material and processes for external moderation by other tertiary institutions. Internal moderation is channelled through the boards of examiners which are responsible to the academic board. Periodic external review of degree programmes is carried out by NZQA-appointed monitors. This external moderation ensures that there is a form of benchmarking with similar programmes from other institutions and that BTI's programmes continue to use current and relevant material and meet with registration body requirements. BTI engages in five-year reviews of its degree programmes, a process which has extensive external stakeholder consultation and often causes the programmes to be significantly revised. These changes are ratified and approved by NZQA and

the professional body before the revised version of the programme can be delivered.

BTI is making renewed efforts to engage with Māori (12 per cent of the student body was Māori in 2010).<sup>2</sup> The organisation has engaged a Kaumatua, who is on campus for two days a week and delivers advice on tikanga and kaupapa Māori. This is a positive step given the geographic location of the campus. Another initiative, a review of the progress of Māori students, has identified that the rate of withdrawal is higher than acceptable. In the past, this has not been monitored. Iwi-partnered scholarships and Māori academic support initiatives have been implemented to honour the historical place of local iwi.

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<sup>2</sup> From TEC Student Achievement Component report on <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Reports/2010/Bethlehem-Institute-Limited.pdf>

# Findings<sup>3</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**.

BTI training shows diversity, as graduates of the Bachelor of Education programme go on to a variety of institutions that are either Christian or secular and include local schools and early childhood centres. BTI is responsive to the needs of the educational context in which it operates. For example, the intake for the counselling courses has been decreased due to a drop in employment opportunities in this field to 60-70 per cent of previous levels. There have been good pass rates in the Bachelor of Education programme. TEC figures for 2011 show that the course completion rate for levels 7 and 8 is 91 per cent of entrants (86 per cent is the national median). TEC figures also show that qualification completion was 83 per cent (national median, 94 per cent at this level) and that 85 per cent of the students were retained in study (national median, 78 per cent). This indicates that an improvement in qualification achievement is desirable, but these statistics are an improvement on those of 2010. BTI maintains a steadily improving rate of outcomes in spite of this its adherence to assessing not only the knowledge and skills of the student, but also ensuring that the right type of person is chosen for the early childhood education role.

Bethlehem students are sometimes transferred to other degree courses, therefore not completing the initial programme they enrolled in, and this affects the completion rates. Bethlehem's policy of reselection of the students after the first year of the programmes involves the appraisal of all students to ensure they still meet the institute's requirements for suitability. This appraisal is based on observation throughout the first year by the staff, and the students also have input. Only a few students are usually affected by this; it means their course time might be extended or they may have to be held back and this will effect qualification completions in the short term. The course completion for the Diploma of Counselling is also good.

BTI measures student engagement using the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE)<sup>4</sup> system, and engagement is shown to be good. There is a

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<sup>3</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

<sup>4</sup> The AUSSE system is designed to measure and study student engagement in learning programmes. It is administered in Australasia by the Australian Council for Educational Research and is used mainly by universities and polytechnics. The scope of the surveys enables high-level data analysis and research outcomes to be compiled, and these enable participating tertiary institutions to understand and effectively manage students' engagement.

small number of student withdrawals from programmes, and these are typically for personal reasons. Some students gain confidence and move on to higher qualifications. For example, of the students on the Diploma of Counselling programme, around 50 per cent go on to the Bachelor's programme. Bethlehem is confident of the qualities of its graduates and hires some of them as teachers and staff members. One member of the board is a graduate of the institute. The Diploma of Teaching Studies course enables the Tongan students, all of whom are already practising teachers, to reach a recognised standard, gain a qualification, and meet Tongan government teacher registration requirements.

BTI engages well with other tertiary institutions for the purposes of external moderation. BTI has an arrangement with the University of Auckland for the annual monitoring of the Bachelor of Education, and there is reciprocal external moderation of some BTI programmes by Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT).

BTI collects a comprehensive amount of feedback to assist with self-assessment, improvement, and course development. Feedback is collected from the students at the end of each paper, at the end of each year of the programme, and three months after the programme ends. This feedback is generally positive and shows that students are mostly engaging with the learning. The feedback is used to inform further course development. An alumni programme is also in place and some feedback is being gained from this. A student database is used for compiling grades and student progress, and it is used for some analysis and development purposes it is acknowledged that more effective use could be made of it.

The Tongan programme has been established for nine years and has had mixed success so far, as there have been obvious learning obstacles, such as the need to deliver in English and the obligation of the students to their employment and families. However, assessment of student progress has caused changes to be made to the programme, and results are steadily improving. On the basis of this success, BTI has been offered other contracts to do work for the Tongan Ministry of Education.

## 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**.

Personal integration and professional inquiry papers are included in the programmes. These are designed to develop personal attributes required for early childhood education and counselling, and are a very valuable feature of the Bachelor of Education programme. The students in the Diploma of Counselling programme come from a mix of backgrounds, and in the initial stages of the course the student must undergo counselling to 'deal with their own demons', so as to become a good counsellor of others. The students have the opportunity to gain a

significant qualification to meet professional licensing requirements and gain employment. BTI conducts a three-month survey to determine which graduates have gained employment, and results shows that around 80 per cent of students do. Some employers said they preferred to interview BTI students ahead of others. Feedback gained by BTI from employers shows that they were generally happy with the skills imparted, but a couple of employers interviewed said that a few students were not entirely ready for the reality of the workplace. This is a concern for BTI to take note of. Students found the practicum sessions very valuable, especially as they sometimes lead to employment opportunities. While BTI manages many relationships with external bodies and gains externally oriented information and input from a variety of sources, there is no advisory committee to assist with course development.

The value of the learning is gauged by analysing the student and employer feedback. Interviews with the students indicate that they are gaining value from the learning, and are mostly finding employment. BTI is interested in retention, stair casing, and employment figures. There is added value in the strict entry interview process and the reselection process after the first year, as these processes filter out those students who are not yet ready to start or advance further in the programme. The Tongan students have the opportunity to gain training to a determined standard and a desired qualification, thereby meeting new standards of professionalism required by the Tongan government.

### 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**.

There is a system of entry criteria and reselection after the first year. Reselection is based on the student's professionalism, personal character, call to teach, or counselling ability. These attributes are judged initially through the interview process, and then over time by observation and interaction with the teaching staff. A few of the students are judged to be completely unsuitable, with most that are deficient in some areas being given extra tuition or being held back for up to a year in order to develop further.

The students on the Diploma of Counselling are older (25-50 years) and so have maturity, motivation, and life skills already embedded and they generally perform well. In terms of providing monetary assistance to students, BTI provides scholarships and works in conjunction with iwi to provide scholarships for Māori students. BTI's programmes continue to produce graduates that meet the standards of professional bodies such as the New Zealand Teachers Council and the New Zealand Association of Counsellors. The strong Christian spirit that runs through all of the processes at the institute provides another strongly motivating factor to succeed.

Flexible learning strategies have been employed to cater for the needs of the learners. There is provision for both full-time and part-time study in the courses. The modes of delivery are also able to be varied according to the students' needs, with some electronic delivery, distance learning, part-time options, and blended learning available in some programmes. The class sizes are relatively small for in-house classes, and this enables more individualised teaching. The students stated in their interviews that the responses by programme management to the issues brought up by feedback were speedy, but sometimes occurred in the middle of a course, disrupting established learning patterns.

There are clear course outlines and the handbook provides good student information. The evaluators were shown how 'BTI Online', the organisation's own electronic education tool, worked as an effective teaching tool. BTI has the effectiveness of its tuition determined by its longitudinal research.

BTI gains useful feedback from external stakeholders, which is used to develop programmes. BTI has good moderation arrangements with the University of Auckland, Manukau Institute of Technology, and CPIT. A vigorous move towards supporting Māori achievement has been initiated. Moves are also afoot for the staff to engage more in Te Reo Māori. The institute's cultural centre can be used for a variety of cultural events as well as Māori events.

#### 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 academic staff members are engaged in research, and BTI is on the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) register. PBRF is encouraged for institutions that engage in teaching degree programmes. It is noted that BTI staff have produced a significant body of meaningful research which can be incorporated into the teaching. The balance between research and teaching is generally good, with the teaching being informed by the results of the research.

The staff members are very well qualified for this level of teaching, with a significant number of doctorates in evidence. All academic staff members are experienced and qualified teachers. The staff members are engaged in professional development, which is largely related to developing teaching skills and keeping up to date in the subject being taught. The professional development activities are usually related to the annual performance appraisal and are supported by BTI. Systems of internal and external moderation work well at BTI.

BTI encourages co-teaching where appropriate; this enhances the flexibility of delivery and adds a new dimension to the learning experience. BTI has an effective system of regulating academic processes, having an academic board to guide academic policy and boards of examiners to check course-related assessment outcomes. Delivery of course material using BTI Online provides an

opportunity for further variety and diversity of delivery. Class sizes are of an appropriate size, with counselling classes of eight to 12 students and distance classes of 20-30 students. Plagiarism was not considered a concern, but online programmes are used to check assignments occasionally. The prevailing attitude is that the students' Christian ethics are relied on to ensure honesty. Teachers have annual performance reviews and are able to negotiate many of the key performance indicators of their agreements with their managers. This enables the teachers to develop the areas of their professionalism that they feel are lacking. The effectiveness of the teaching on the Tongan programme has not only heightened teaching skills but has also initiated societal changes in Tonga, for the better.

There are a few issues, gleaned from interviewing students, relating to the delivery of the programmes, which could be varied more to make the learning more interesting. A couple of students commented that they thought the teachers worked too hard. There was no evidence that class observations or peer review of teaching practice is currently taking place. The practicums offer good workplace experience but, as mentioned earlier, but they could enable better acquaintance with the realities of the workplace, according to the students interviewed. Largely, the practicums are organised by the teachers, but two students interviewed had to organise their own.

### 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Students have the opportunity to participate in Head Start and Get Set programmes to help them adjust to tertiary study. BTI offers hardship grants to needy students on application. Student support and learning support are available. Because funding constraints make it difficult to provide necessary support, severely disabled students are not taken, but there are some disabled students in the distance classes. BTI has a student support committee and a pastoral care counsellor. The student handbook provides good support information. There are more informal forms of communication for students and staff alike, such as a Facebook page, blogs, conferences, emails, alumni links, and annual dinners to bring the various groups in touch with the institution.

Generally, learning resources are presented in physical and electronic formats to suit most learning styles. The reselection process serves to help personal development at a pace that suits the students. The staff members are able to cite examples of how individual students with problems have been assisted through the process. The development of individual learning plans, and careful matching of students and workplaces for practicums, helps the students achieve their outcomes. There are good avenues of communication available to the students, and the staff members are available whenever they are not teaching. BTI provides three free

counselling sessions for the counselling students to help them adjust to the programme. Kaumatua are on site two days a week. Used textbooks are sold by graduates and students. The local doctor offers discount rates. The main guide of student contentment is student feedback, and this is generally positive. The students interviewed by the NZQA evaluators are mainly very happy.

## 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 **Good**.

The evaluators found that governance and management react comprehensively to remedy adverse situations as they arise. An example of this was the way they reacted to the Tonga programme by making it full-time, to allow the students to fulfil their work obligations. The management fosters a strong research culture and is aware of its responsibilities under the PBRF scheme. It responds well to the professional development requirements of the staff to help improve the level of teaching. There is a robust management structure and an involved and focussed directorate. There is a strong emphasis on self-improvement. Management uses the student database to store student grades and attendance figures, although this facility is not being used to provide data for course development, and is still a work in progress.

Management supports a strong Christian ethos which prevails throughout the organisation. The board of directors is responsible to the overarching Christian Education Trust (CET) which governs BTI and Bethlehem College, Bethlehem Early Learning Centres, Bay of Plenty English Language School, and Bethlehem Trading Company. Some directors sit on other Bethlehem boards or on the CET board. The members of the board of directors have identified that legal skills are missing from the board and indicate that this could be addressed in the future. There is currently no Māori membership of the board, but there is awareness that more Māori governance input is desirable. The board realises the value of having 'independent' members as it currently has two members that are not part of the CET conglomerate and are able to give an external opinion on governance matters.

Management recognises that the student selection and reselection policy could be restricting the rate of student entrance and continuance, but the quality of the completions is improving. As a result of self-assessment, the board and management have their own form of professional development. The quality management system document is online for all staff to refer to and is a 'living' force in the operation of the institute. Academic administration works well and is overseen by the academic board which sets the policies and procedures and has some student members on it. It oversees the variety of programmes that are individually scrutinised by boards of examiners.

## 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: Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Early Childhood Education

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: Diploma of Counselling

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: Diploma of Teaching Studies (Tonga)

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

To assist Bethlehem to add further value to its programmes the evaluators recommend that:

1. The composition of governance bodies includes appropriate Māori representation, and also any skills sets identified as being lacking in those bodies.
2. Optimum use is made of student tracking data to inform future policy and programme development.
3. BTI enhances the quality of programme delivery and ensure consistency, by implementing a formal system of teaching observation.
4. Reasonable attempts are made to secure employer feedback as to the value of the programme skills in the workplace.
5. Continued reflection is practised leading to improvements in administration and delivery of programmes in Tonga, leading to better outcomes.
6. Continued development is pursued of support facilities on campus to facilitate improved outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.*

*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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.*

*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 EER process approved by the NZQA Board.*

*The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.*

*External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.*

*External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>*

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