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External Evaluation and Review Report

Horizon Education Limited

Date of report: 15 April 2021

About Horizon Education Limited

Horizon Education is a small tertiary education organisation delivering a Youth Guarantee programme and a Ministry of Social Development (MSD) funded Skills for Industry programme. These lead to New Zealand qualifications and prepare learners for further study and employment.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	2 Linton Street, Palmerston North
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 24 full-time students in 2020 –25 Youth Guarantee; 13 Skills for Industry Youth Guarantee, 73 per cent Māori, Skills for Industry, 23 per cent Māori
Number of staff:	Five full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See Horizon Education Ltd
Last EER outcome:	In the 2016 EER, NZQA was Highly Confident in Horizon Education’s educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of this evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Guarantee programme Future Directions leading to the award of the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1) Ref 2861, and Vocational Pathway in Social and Community Services• Skills for Industry – Introduction to Care and Support Work, an MSD-funded programme leading to the award of the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2) Ref 2469
MoE number:	8824
NZQA reference:	C39385
Dates of EER visit:	30 September – 1 October 2020

Summary of results

Horizon Education is providing high value programmes which are preparing students well for employment and further study. Comprehensive self-assessment gives confidence in the PTE's ongoing educational performance.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Horizon Education has a clear organisational direction. The PTE is well managed and there is a shared commitment to student success.
- Students achieve excellent results in the completion of qualifications, and acquire life skills and readiness for work and further study. Horizon closely monitors students' progress towards achievement.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Valued outcomes from both the Youth Guarantee and Skills for Industry programmes are high for the students, families, employers and contracted agencies.
- Well-designed and structured programmes are matched with student learning styles and needs.
- An open, respectful and supportive learning environment builds learners' confidence and fosters success.
- Horizon Education is responsive to learner and stakeholder feedback, and makes ongoing improvements to meet the needs of students and other stakeholders.
- Horizon Education meets all important compliance accountabilities in a timely manner.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement is strong in both focus areas (refer Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 1).</p> <p>Achievement has been consistently above the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) target (Youth Guarantee) and the MSD target (Skills for Industry). With the 2019 Youth Guarantee course completion rates at 82 per cent (target 60 per cent), Horizon Education was among the top performers when compared with all providers of these programmes (fourth out of 59 providers). Ongoing renewal and a recent expansion of the MSD contract indicates strong performance that satisfies the funding agency's requirements. Māori learners achieve at similar levels to overall achievement.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that Youth Guarantee students are also developing life skills and readiness for work skills. These include interview skills, preparation of CVs, interpersonal and study skills, literacy and numeracy, and confidence, assertiveness and communication skills.</p> <p>Skills for Industry students, as learners who are re-engaging with learning, gain confidence in their ability to study and apply knowledge in a workplace. The qualification provides them with foundational industry knowledge in preparation for employment in health care and support industries.</p> <p>Withdrawal and retention rates are stable and reflect student demographics and their life challenges. Horizon Education understands the reasons for withdrawals, and has effective selection processes and trial periods to minimise these.</p> <p>Horizon Education has a sound understanding of learner achievement and is focused on improvement. Individual progress is monitored and regularly reviewed, with formal reflections undertaken monthly and annually.</p>

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

Conclusion:	Student achievement of courses and qualifications is strong. Students also achieve useful life skills and are well prepared for work or further study. Horizon Education closely monitors students' academic and personal progress to support achievement and inform improvements.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Youth Guarantee students benefit from gaining three qualifications. For many, this is their first taste of success. They gain self-worth, have a more positive outlook, and realise their abilities to move into employment and/or pursue further study towards a career. Families value the positive changes in their young peoples' lives, attitudes, behaviours and their application to study and achievement.</p> <p>Students go into meaningful employment or have clear goals about their next steps in tertiary education. One example was a student working at a local supermarket who was recently promoted to supervisor of the online shopping team. She said her qualification had contributed to her getting the position with more responsibility.²</p> <p>For many Skills for Industry students this is their first formal qualification. Opportunities to gain employment in the healthcare and support industry are available through work placements arranged by Horizon Education. For example, for the current cohort, 42 per cent of students have been offered employment while still studying. Employers regularly contact Horizon Education seeking suitable employees, as they value the selection processes, quality training and the work-readiness of the students.</p> <p>Finishing the qualification gives the Skills for Industry students higher rates of pay. This value is reflected in the qualification completion and employment outcomes data (see Table 2, Appendix 1).</p> <p>Students interviewed by the evaluators said the programme had</p>

² Other examples include: a student who had a job in a pet shop, a student who had enrolled in a carpentry course, and another who was intending to study fashion design.

	<p>been transformational for them and their families. It provided economic benefits (for example higher pay, reducing reliance on benefits), increased confidence and improved wellbeing, as well as problem-solving skills and the ability to contribute to their communities.</p> <p>Programmes are designed to achieve specific outcomes, such as employment in the health and wellbeing sector for the Skills for Industry programme, and further study and/or employment for the Youth Guarantee programme. Horizon Education gathers and reports reliable data on student outcomes and the value they provide for students, families, employers and contracted agencies.</p> <p>Graduate destinations are tracked, and Skills for Industry employment outcomes are reported to MSD. Students regularly return to Horizon Education to keep in contact and share their journeys. Close connections with the health and wellbeing industry provide Horizon Education with the opportunity to keep in touch with the Skills for Industry graduates.</p>
Conclusion:	Valued outcomes from both the Youth Guarantee and Skills for Industry programmes are high for students, families, employers and contracted agencies. Horizon Education is focused on achieving valued outcomes and is being successful in this pursuit.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Horizon Education delivers a well-designed, flexible, unit standard-based programme for Youth Guarantee students. The delivery and learning environment is appropriate. Students assume some responsibility for sequencing their learning and assessment, and develop independence and study skills in a highly supportive environment.</p> <p>The programme is relevant to local stakeholders. Horizon Education's track record results in ongoing referrals from local agencies, such as the Ministry of Education truancy officer, who refers students who have not been successful in mainstream schools.</p>

	<p>The Skills for Industry programme is well structured. The knowledge and practice is consolidated in real-world environments through work placements. Horizon Education arranges the work placements, matching students with the work environments and providing oversight to ensure the best opportunity for success.</p> <p>Assessment is well managed on an individual basis for all the students. Internal moderation processes would be more robust with the involvement of another provider. This had been planned by Horizon Education, but was delayed due to impacts of the Covid-19 lockdown.</p> <p>NZQA moderation results are generally good, with improvement required in the literacy and numeracy standards in the Youth Guarantee programme. An action plan is being implemented, including staff participation in professional development. Careerforce moderation results for the Skills for Industry assessments have been consistently good.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to establishing a local advisory group, as recommended in the last EER report. However, Horizon has decided not to pursue this, which is appropriate given their context and connectiveness. Horizon Education consults experts and industry as required, and their regular presence in workplaces provides the opportunity for stakeholder feedback. Industry requests are addressed, such as the inclusion of first aid in the Skills for Industry programme and identification of students in the workplace through branded polo shirts and name badges.</p> <p>Regular monthly internal reporting, a comprehensive annual programme review, reporting to MSD, and use of the TEC template for appraisal of the Youth Guarantee programme ensures areas for improvement are identified and changes implemented.</p>
	<p>Programmes are well designed and structured to ensure a match with student learning styles and needs. Horizon Education is responsive to learner and stakeholder feedback. Internal moderation would be more robust with the involvement of another provider.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Horizon Education has robust selection processes, understands students' learning and life goals, supports students well, and engages them in their learning effectively.</p> <p>The Youth Guarantee trial period provides Horizon and students with an opportunity to assess the programme's fit with learning goals and establishes literacy and numeracy needs. Individualised support is provided by tutors experienced with youth. Tutors handle the students' increasing mental health and anxiety issues well, referring them to professionals as required.</p> <p>Youth Guarantee students interviewed during the EER expressed appreciation for the support provided, and said their tutors treated them with respect and as adults. They feel comfortable in their learning environment and are able to provide feedback and seek support. They contrasted this with their past unsuccessful experiences in high school.</p> <p>During the Covid-19 lockdown, Horizon Education kept students well connected and engaged in their learning, through the use of an iQualify platform and a Facebook page, and has since accessed TEC funding for technology for those students without ready access to these tools.</p> <p>During the Skills for Industry screening process, learner needs, further employment aspirations and life goals are established. Individualised support is provided by professional health educators in the learning environment and on work placement.</p> <p>Skills for Industry students and graduates complimented Horizon Education on the supportive learning environment and the guidance provided while on placement. The fact that graduates return to Horizon seeking advice on employment situations they encounter in their workplaces confirms the effectiveness of the support.</p> <p>Student feedback is sought through end-of-programme surveys. The recent introduction of monthly lunchtime sessions with the managing director provides Horizon Education with another opportunity for students to provide feedback. A student feedback box is provided. Students said they had used it and their</p>

	suggestions had been responded to in a timely manner.
Conclusion:	Horizon Education has robust selection and commencement processes, ensuring alignment of programmes with students' goals and needs. An open, respectful and supportive learning environment builds students' confidence and fosters success.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Horizon Education is managed by a capable and experienced director, with support from external professional services as required. The PTE is characterised by a clear organisational direction based on its history and success, effective leadership and communications, and a shared commitment to student success.</p> <p>Staff are experienced and appropriately qualified. Professional development opportunities, regular performance appraisals, acknowledgment and rewards, and low turnover show staff are valued. Horizon Education is well resourced and the recent move to new premises provides a more conducive teaching and learning environment.</p> <p>The quality management system includes a risk management plan, which has had a recent update to include shared responsibility for compliance management activities, and also provides business continuity as required.</p> <p>Horizon Education is well connected and engages with industry, social services and agencies in the Manawatu to identify opportunities to improve and add value to its training. MSD confirmed that Horizon Education is one of its preferred providers in the region.³</p> <p>A culture of continuous improvement and self-assessment permeates the organisation. Day-to-day informal engagements between the managing director and staff are complemented by more formal self-assessment activities such as monthly self-reflections and reporting, monthly lunchtime catch-ups, and an annual reflection process led by an external consultant.</p>

³ Reported by the MSD regional contracts manager

Conclusion:	Horizon Education has a clear organisational direction, is well managed, and there is a shared commitment to student success. Horizon Education makes ongoing improvements to meet the needs of students and other stakeholders.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Horizon Education is effectively managing its important compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>NZQA attestations have been submitted in a timely manner, and students' credits have been reported accurately and within the expected 90-day timeframe. Findings of the 2020 TEC audit for the Youth Guarantee programme show that Horizon Education is complying with TEC funding conditions. MSD has confirmed Horizon Education's level 4 accreditation.⁴</p> <p>Careerforce⁵ moderation requirements have been consistently met. NZQA moderation results have required some improvement in the last two years. An action plan is being implemented, and staff undertake professional development.</p> <p>The quality management system has well-documented policies and practices that meet legal and ethical standards. It is a living document understood by staff and updated regularly.</p> <p>Health and safety requirements are met. A well-worded workplace agreement setting out the roles and responsibilities of all parties is signed with placement providers.</p>
Conclusion:	Horizon Education has robust systems in place to monitor compliance responsibilities and meet deadlines. Important dates are identified in advance. Horizon Education's track record confirms that its systems for managing compliance are effective.

⁴ In 2015, government agencies jointly developed the Social Sector Accreditation Standards (SSAS). This is a core set of accreditation standards to test the capability and capacity of non-government organisations to safely deliver social services to New Zealanders.

⁵ Industry training organisation

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Youth Guarantee Programme

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Focus area: Skills for Industry Programme

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

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

Requirements

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

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Youth Guarantee actual outcome figures 2015-2019, with TEC benchmarks and New Zealand median

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Course completions (TEC benchmark)	71% (60)%	76% (60%)	80% (60%)	82% (60%)
NZ median	62%	81%	69%	46%
NZ average	-	-	65%	61%
Placement compared with other YG providers	25/80	28/80	13/65	4/59
Qualification completions (TEC benchmark)	72% (40%)	62% (40%)	59% (40%)	78% (40%)
Number of qualification completions	M	17	11	13
	F	8	16	17
NZ median	58%	63%	59%	59%
NZ average	-	-	59%	58%
Placement compared with other YG providers	21/86	32/87	35/72	23/63

Figures provided by Horizon Education, sourced from Nga Kete (2018-2109), and from documentation provided by the TEC (2016-2107)

Table 2. Skills for Industry outcome figures 2017-2019

	Qualification completions	Employment outcomes
2017	87%	75%
2018	94%	80%
2019	100%	87%

Data provided by Horizon Education

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud⁶*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

⁶ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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