

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Maniapoto Training Agency

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 16 May 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

Location:	Maniapoto House, 51 Taupiri Street, Te Kuiti
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	18 December 1990
Number of students:	218
Number of staff:	11 full-time Three part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Forestry (Foundation Skills) (Level 2)• National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1)• National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 2)
Sites:	The main site is based in Te Kuiti with a satellite site in Taumarunui.
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Maniapoto Training Agency (MTA) is a training provider of government-funded and locally focused life skills and vocational training courses. MTA was established through the Ngāti Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust, a formalised legal entity established by local marae within the Ngāti Maniapoto iwi boundary to address the cultural, economic, educational, and social aspirations of Maniapoto iwi.</p> <p>MTA currently has a particular focus on young learners between the ages of 16 and 18. In some cases and under special circumstances, MTA accepts learners as young as 15 years. The programmes offered by MTA include: forestry,</p>

agriculture, and farming (some of which are work-based programmes for both youth and mature learners), and New Start programmes for new mothers and youth.

Recent significant changes: MTA's funding from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has changed for the 2012 academic year as a consequence of moving from Youth Training funds to Youth Guarantee. Under the Youth Guarantee fund and within the 12-month funded period, TEC require MTA to achieve a minimum qualification pass rate of 55 per cent. For learners who do not achieve the full qualification, MTA must achieve a minimum of 40 credits for all students on Youth Guarantee-funded courses. Until 2011 the focus for MTA was on achieving employment outcomes. The major implication of the change to qualification outcomes for MTA is the perceived risk that learners may not adjust well to the programme now that there is a greater emphasis on paper-based assignments. MTA could potentially be negatively assessed against the new funding criteria. In addition, as young learners who were failed by the current education system, the students require greater pastoral care and would accept a job if offered rather than remain on a course.

Previous quality assurance history: MTA was previously quality assured by NZQA by audit in 2009 and met all but one requirement of the then standard. The unmet requirement related to notification and reporting, specifically the non-reporting of learner credits within required timeframes. MTA has amended its policy on reporting credit achievement to better reflect what occurs operationally.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review (EER) included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy. In addition, the following programme focus areas were evaluated:

- National Certificate in Forestry (Foundation Skills) (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1).

These focus areas were selected to provide a comprehensive view of MTA and the achievements of its learners. One focus area was industry based (forestry), while the other focus area provided observations around developing employment skills leading to employment opportunities as well as a range of numeracy and literacy skills for learners.

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-eeer/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.

The EER was conducted over two days by two evaluators who visited MTA in Te Kuiti. The evaluation involved engagement with:

- Students from the focus areas selected
- Tutoring staff (five)
- General manager
- Education and training manager
- Representatives from the Ngāti Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust Board (eight)
- Stakeholders (eight) from representatives of central and local government agencies, local schools, the community (including business and farming communities), and the police.
- Separate phone interviews with identified stakeholders (three).

In addition to documents provided for the EER scoping exercise, the EER team was provided with a range of operational documents (including current self-assessment materials, management and operational policies, and planning documents), letters of support from community stakeholders, a variety of quantitative data relating to student achievement and satisfaction, and related analysis.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Maniapoto Training Agency**.

In recent years and in line with funding criteria set by the TEC, MTA has recorded average labour market outcomes of 56 per cent, while occupancy rates have been between 98 per cent and 109 per cent over the same period. These figures are good relative to MTA's previous priorities, as they indicate the effort by MTA to focus on employment outcomes given that most of the learners are young and are recognised as second-chance learners.

In 2012, however, new funding criteria for MTA changed the focus from employment outcomes to qualification pass rates. The TEC now requires MTA to achieve a minimum qualification pass rate of 55 per cent. For learners who do not achieve the full qualification, MTA must achieve a minimum of 40 credits for all students on Youth Guarantee-funded courses. It is acknowledged by the EER team that it is too early to expect definitive achievement outcomes but, based on previous years' results and an improved monitoring system by senior management, there is sufficient evidence to have confidence that MTA will exceed these targets as well as maintain a focus on employment outcomes.

Learners described their training at MTA as empowering and upskilling, as they were able to realistically think about becoming skilled enough to seek employment in the two major industries in the region: farming and forestry. Learners also said that with their new-found skills their confidence and self-worth had increased dramatically and they could see a much better outlook for their lives.

Within six weeks of commencing their programme of study, each learner and their tutor collaboratively develop individual pathway plans which help identify the learner's goals, aspirations, and learning needs. These are actively monitored throughout the programme to ensure that the learner's needs are being met, and they form the basis of progression reports between the learner and the tutor, as well as providing monitoring data for the MTA education manager.

It is too early to ascertain the extent of outcomes delivered by MTA under the new funding regime. MTA has a lengthy history of good performance with learners that were failed by the education system. If MTA maintains its current processes, particularly its pastoral care support and active monitoring of learner progression, NZQA is confident that the current level of confidence can be maintained.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Maniapoto Training Agency**.

MTA carries out self-assessment meaningfully and reflectively to the extent that an effective system of monitoring and reviewing of learner progression and improvement is evident and effective. A simple, cost-effective, computer-based monitoring system designed and developed by MTA provides clear and valid information which ensures learner data is accurately collected and analysed to enable improvements to be made efficiently and effectively. Collected data includes attendance and retention rates and achievement and outcomes results.

In addition to learner feedback, MTA collates and analyses feedback from a number of stakeholders. These stakeholders include whānau, schools, employers, local businesses, community groups, and the local council. The feedback includes information regarding learners' progress to employment, their contribution in the community, and the impact they are having in their whānau. This feedback is used to inform the review of programmes and how best all stakeholder needs can be met.

The self-assessment process employed by MTA gives confidence that it is highly reflective and is being used as an effective quality assurance activity to inform ongoing performance. Maintaining this system and being responsiveness to the findings of assessments should enable better outcomes for learners.

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 **Good**.

MTA labour market outcome statistics for previous years indicated positive results, averaging 56 per cent since 2009 while occupancy rates for the same period were averaging between 98 per cent and 109 per cent. Although credit achievements do appear low, MTA's primary criterion for funding was to achieve employment outcomes, which for MTA have been positive.

In 2012, the TEC changed MTA's funding criteria so that within a 12-month funding period MTA is now required to achieve a 55 per cent pass rate in its qualifications, and every learner registered with MTA must achieve a minimum of 40 credits. This has resulted in a complete change of focus for MTA, requiring a greater emphasis on qualification attainment and monitoring of achievement data. Although the focus on employment outcomes is now no longer required by the TEC, MTA management stated during the EER that they will still have a focus on employment for learners, which is keeping in line with the organisation's strategic goals.

At the time of the EER, it was unrealistic to expect MTA to show achievement data under the new funding criteria. MTA management and the tutoring staff were confident that the minimum requirements were achievable because they were implementing closer monitoring of the unit and credit completions rates of each learner. This area is being overseen by the education manager. In addition, MTA is also increasing its learner pastoral care support which again is being closely monitored by management.

Learners described their studies at MTA as a chance to upskill themselves so that they could have greater employment opportunities. They commented that their primary aim for being at MTA was to secure work. Very few of the learners indicated a desire to seek higher education. This can be attributed to the relatively young age of the group and also to the fact that many of the learners had previously had negative experiences of the education system. Most learners said they were confident that the qualifications earned while at MTA would lead to employment.

Learners from both programmes commented that they had seen an increase in their commitment to study and subsequently an increase in their confidence and self-worth, which have in turn led them to actively focus on their future, including

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

seeking better employment opportunities and greater participation in whānau and extended whānau activities, including marae events.

In the forestry programme, where learners are required to live 'in-camp' for three days and two nights every week for the duration of the education calendar, tutors commented that they were able to provide increased pastoral support to learners who were struggling with course content. The learners in camp experienced few distractions and plenty of down-time. Learners were also able to enjoy additional activities provided by the tutors such as fishing and hunting while in-camp. The tutors explained that these extra activities enabled them to form stronger relationships with their learners, making it easier to work closely with learners' issues.

Other skills identified and gained by the learners were: increased knowledge in safe work practices, improved time management, improved communication skills, and improved marketing skills. Many of the skills attained by learners were learnt in realistic work environments which they commented provided them with invaluable work experience, enabling them to transfer some of those skills to other employment areas.

The EER team sighted a new electronic learner achievement monitoring system developed by MTA management. The system has been designed to monitor attendance and progress against units and credits as well as to detail learners' issues and suggested strategies to support the learner.

Although the system was implemented in 2011, its true value is only being realised now as a result of the change in funding criteria by the TEC. While it is too early in the academic year to expect achievement data to be available, the evidence of regular monitoring by tutors and the education manager to assure that the system is being applied correctly (in addition to historical evidence showing MTA actively monitoring its learner achievements and its programmes), indicates a more than reasonable level of self-assessment capability in relation to this key evaluation question.

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 **Excellent**.

At an organisational level, the governance group of MTA was happy that MTA was still maintaining a positive profile within Te Kuiti and its surrounding communities. This was important to the governance group because it indicated a continued commitment to uphold the original core values upon which MTA, and more specifically the Ngāti Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust, was established. This was further endorsed by other community stakeholders, who together with MTA are

currently piloting an agency and community initiative, driven by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), which is looking at the way social services are delivered in communities by MSD and other agencies such as justice, education, health, and the police. One of these stakeholders commented that:

'MTA provides opportunities for the most vulnerable people in the community, they have a critical role (in the community) as the primary organisation that has programmes specific to (youth) and their families.'

The MTA general manager is a key member on the governance body of this initiative, which helps maintain MTA's presence and influence in the community.

Employers commented that over the years they have been more than satisfied with learners trained through MTA. One forestry employer said that when he is informed that a possible employee has been trained by the head forestry tutor at MTA, he is confident that that person is trained to a reasonable standard for his operations. He added that he would only need to orientate the new recruit to his operational context as the foundation skills of the recruit had already been established. Similar comments were made of MTA graduates by business owners within the retail sector of Te Kuiti, particularly the positive attitudes of the employees and their willingness to work. This feedback helped maintain the reputation of MTA as a credible training agency among a broad range of employers within the community.

Learners commented that the value to them of the skills being taught at MTA was that the training was the best way for them to have the chance of securing employment in the two biggest industries in the region: agriculture and forestry. They also commented that they knew their skills could be utilised in other industries, thus providing them with an added incentive to continue training and also the flexibility to seek employment outside of agriculture and forestry.

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**.

The primary aim of MTA, as stated through its mission statement, is to provide a structured learning environment for those wanting to further develop their knowledge and skills.² The programmes offered by MTA are targeted primarily at young people with little or no formal qualifications.

MTA governance and management are heavily involved in their communities and more so within the Māori communities through their marae. It is through this level of engagement that MTA is aware of community needs and therefore able to

² Taken from the MTA Charter dated 2002.

instigate programmes to address those identified needs. An example is the development of the forestry and farming programmes. Given that these industries are two of the major employers in the region, many in the community have chosen to pursue employment in these sectors. The forestry programme is set at a basic foundational level which is suited to the learning levels of most of the trainees and sufficient enough to enable forestry employers to easily induct new employees into their specific operations. Employers spoken to commented that MTA's training reduces their own training costs.

Although it is not in receipt of tertiary funding and therefore outside the scope of the EER, the Alternative Education programme run by MTA in conjunction with the local high schools in the region is a good example of MTA programmes matching the needs of stakeholders. The Alternative Education programme is for identified high school students who are not adjusting and coping with their school environment. The programme provides them with opportunities for work experience. The importance of this for MTA is that it is able to support the community at high school level as well as provide a possible pathway into further education with MTA for these students.

MTA has instigated a policy where each learner at the commencement of their programme has a comprehensive individual pathway plan of their goals and aspirations. The plan is actively monitored by the tutors and the education manager who supplements the data with unit and credit achievements as well as occupancy (attendance) rates. This forms part of the regular monitoring and self-assessment system implemented by management.

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 teaching and training by MTA tutors is appropriately set at levels that take into account the second-chance learning aspect of most of the learners. According to MTA staff, and backed up by positive occupancy rates and feedback from learners and employers, this provides a good opportunity for learners to progress and thrive. The inclusion of numeracy and literacy sessions with the industry-specific sessions provides learners with a much broader scope of education, yet still working towards the primary goal of learners obtaining skills to gain employment. In addition the in-camp component of the forestry course also enables tutors and learners to take advantage of any down-time to include extra tuition if required. As mentioned previously, relationships between learners and students are further cemented during these sessions.

MTA tutors all possess the relevant qualifications and skills and bring a wealth of real-world contexts to their programmes. The forest industry tutors have all spent most of their careers in the industry. Tutors in the Employment Skills programme have all had experience either in the education sector or in the business sector.

The feedback from learners was that they were very happy with their tutors, and for some this was the first time they had ever had a proper student-teacher relationship with their tutors. This promotes a safe environment for learners where open and frank discussions can occur, enabling knowledge to be freely shared by tutors and easily absorbed by learners.

MTA management, through the education manager, is very much involved in the monitoring of learner outputs and achievements. This includes regular weekly meetings with teaching staff to discuss learner progress against monitoring data and any other matters related to the programmes. As a part of MTA's commitment to professional development for its tutors, staff are able to complete training in adult teaching, which includes the Certificate in Adult Teaching as well as training in assessment and moderation. Staff appraisals are conducted annually by management and are overseen by the general manager and the governing body.

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**.

Learner guidance and support is taken very seriously and is an area of strength for MTA. The obligations MTA has to its learners and the wider community as part of the Ngāti Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust have created a learning environment that encourages and promotes good learning. Kaumatua presence and involvement is very much evident at MTA, particularly at governance level where many of the board members³ are able to mingle with learners and share some of their experiences. This provides learners with opportunities to freely mix with their rangatira and use this association as a source of motivation, pride, and role modelling.

Learners commented that all the tutors took extra time to support learners through difficult periods, not only those related to programmes but also when some of the learners had personal problems. One tutor explained that because they knew the community well, they had no problems going direct to whānau homes to ask why a learner was absent from the programme and how best they could support the learner to return. For the learners, this attention provided evidence that their tutors were serious and cared about them, and it gave them an incentive to return and take their studies seriously.

The level of learning and support is determined at times by the circumstances of the learner. The regular monitoring of programmes has enabled MTA to consider a diverse range of supports. These include extra one-to-one tuition, encouraging whānau to become involved in the learner's work at home so that the learner is not

³ The board includes a former Cabinet minister, teachers with senior management experience, and successful business owners.

isolated and can feel supported, and offering extra activities such as hunting and fishing to foster stronger relationships between tutor and learner.

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

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

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

The governance board comprises members chosen by their individual marae. The composition of the current board is made up of highly skilled people who have extensive knowledge in tikanga Māori, and over many years have developed networks in business, governance, the community, and whānau. This collective experience provides strong leadership and credibility for MTA. A government agency representative commented that MTA's activities within the community were crucial in helping to address the educational issues facing Te Kuiti.

The governance of MTA is kept very much up to date with activities at MTA and is well aware of the overall progress of the learners. The strategy of ensuring that Ngāti Maniapoto iwi are gaining quality education and skills, enabling the iwi to grow and improve, is wholly supported by the governing board. Many of the board have been elected members for some time, while the chairman and general manager have been in those positions for over 20 years. This provides MTA with established and effective governance and management relationships, as well as a consistent and transparent approach to how it operates.

The management of MTA appears sound and this is evidenced by the good working relationship with the board. This was further evidenced when board members commented to the EER team that management had their full support. In addition, the working relationship between the general manager, the education manager, and the teaching staff of MTA appears strong, with tutors commenting that they felt well supported by senior management. The regular monitoring of learner progression and programme effectiveness by management leaves staff in no doubt that there is clear oversight of programmes by MTA management.

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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Forestry (Foundation Skills) (Level 2)

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 Employment Skills (Level 1)

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

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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

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

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

*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-eeer/introduction/>*

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