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External Evaluation and Review Report



Transformation Academy Trust

Date of report: 26 April 2023

About Transformation Academy Trust

Transformation Academy engages with youth who are typically out of school, offering them pastoral support, foundation skills learning and pathways to move forward in their lives.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	88 College Street, Northcote, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 43 (41 equivalent full-time students in 2021). All students were under 20 years of age. Māori 27 (62 per cent), Pasifika 17 (40 per cent) ¹ , Disability 17 (40 per cent)
Number of staff:	Eight full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	NZQA - Transformation Academy
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Confident in the educational performance and Not Yet Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Transformation Academy Trust at the last EER conducted in December 2020.
Scope of evaluation:	Foundation Skills Level 1 and Level 2 delivery
MoE number:	9140
NZQA reference:	C50989
Dates of EER visit:	15-17 November 2022

¹ Students may identify with more than one ethnicity.

Summary of results

Transformation Academy is addressing the complex needs of its students and community and meeting most of them. Self-assessment informs many key activity areas and guides decision-making; there have been a range of significant improvements.

Confident in educational performance

- Transformation Academy's strong commitment to youth wellbeing informs its decision-making. The PTE's organisational structure, stakeholder relationships and cultural capability is generally effective in this regard.
- Transformation Academy makes a measurable difference for its vulnerable students. The PTE engages, holds, and enables most students to learn. Many students progress onto paid work and/or further training and some signs of developmental change.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Pasifika and Māori achieve similar outcomes to other groups. The PTE contributes significantly to the community network supporting at-risk youth on the Auckland North Shore.
- However, over the turbulent pandemic period, the rate of programme and qualification completions declined. Also, assessment practices have sometimes been variable. The PTE has begun to address these gaps.
- Activities and the PTE's educational approach are coherent, relevant and evolving. Tutors with an arts/creative background bring a passion to their roles. Transformation Academy provides highly effective pastoral care.
- Effective self-assessment underpins key improvements including better monitoring, external moderation support, developing an impact framework, a robust Code of Practice review and programme reviews.
- The management of compliance requirements has improved and been mostly effective.
- NZQA trusts that the PTE's recent commitment to improved management practices will continue, for the benefit of its learners.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Transformation Academy students (all under 19 years of age) are typically disengaged from mainstream education with complex needs, including behavioural challenges.³</p> <p>There is evidence of students staying engaged and learning social, behavioural and life skills, a prime focus for this student cohort. Measuring and analysing this core developmental 'transformation' (using the PTE's terminology) is still evolving.</p> <p>Completing modules and creative project activities are the next-level formal measures of achievement. The PTE has more robust tracking of completions; however, the rates are low and have declined since the last EER.⁴ Despite extensive support⁵, multiple COVID lockdowns in Auckland negatively impacted the attendance and completions of these vulnerable students. All learner groups achieve at a similar rate.⁶ Literacy and numeracy data is collected but was not analysed. The PTE has strengthened its monitoring of individual student progress, this information informs the decision-making for each student.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Recent achievement is mixed, with lockdown disruptions impacting attendance and student achievement. Transformation Academy has now strengthened its monitoring and use of achievement data, though some areas require further attention. The PTE applied to make significant programme changes to address these challenges.⁷</p>

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ Fifty per cent of the currently enrolled students identify as having a disability.

⁴ Refer to Appendix 1 for details.

⁵ Refer to 1.4 for details.

⁶ Parity for priority groups needs to be better analysed.

⁷ See 1.3 and 1.6 for details of the programme change applications.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The Transformation Academy mission is to transform the students, and through them the broader community. There is some credible evidence showing progress in fulfilling this mission. Young, vulnerable students attend and participate in activities, reducing their risk of slipping back into potential harm. The PTE's recent hauora (wellbeing) survey identified some key wellbeing and behaviour measures and the students' view of their wellbeing, but revealed little about trends over time. The survey and accounts from students interviewed indicate that students often progress or hold steady in their wellbeing. This is a high value outcome for vulnerable students.</p> <p>There is detailed evidence of important post-training impacts for previously disengaged youth. Three quarters of the students exiting for the two years up to mid-2022 were in some paid work and/or further education.⁸ There was parity of outcomes for Māori and Pasifika. This success continues a key pattern from the last EER. Research indicates that the students who participate and contribute to society, improve their wellbeing.</p> <p>Transformation Academy has gained funding to use a recognised evaluation framework⁹ to systematically demonstrate how the academy contributes to student and community change. The first stage (mapping social services for Pasifika and Māori youth in Auckland) has been completed. It shows the academy contributes to the North Shore network that supports at-risk youth. The mapping has also supported improved collaboration, including developing formal relationships. Stakeholders interviewed by NZQA endorsed this action. This project is 'good practice', particularly for a small education provider.</p>
Conclusion:	Transformation Academy contributes to improved wellbeing and other valuable outcomes for its students. The PTE is strengthening its understanding and evidence of how its mahi impacts its students and the broader community.

⁸ See Appendix 1, Table 2 for details.

⁹ www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/providers/results-based-accountability/ ('RBA')

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Transformation Academy provides its students (for whom mainstream education has not been effective) with an environment to engage, belong, learn and develop. A strong philosophical and pragmatic approach underpins the PTE's project-based learning, with an enhanced arts focus for expressing student identity. Low tutor/student ratios, tutors with creative arts capability, and multiple equipped learning spaces support individualised student engagement.</p> <p>NZQA monitoring (2021) identified that programme review processes were adequate, although national external moderation results have been variable. External expertise has contributed to some improved assessment practice. However, a subsequent draft NZQA monitoring report identified further assessment weaknesses. Some newer tutors are building their adult education capability. The PTE has identified through its programme review, that unit standard-based assessment given rolling enrolments inhibits project-based learning and contributes to low completions for its students. The PTE has made approved changes to both programmes replacing unit standards with more flexible assessments modules.¹⁰</p> <p>Given the complex needs of its students, there is an opportunity to strengthen the individual needs assessment process ['student profile'] to better inform programme delivery and measure the progress and value for individual students.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Programme delivery, in a challenging operating environment, matches many but not all of the key needs of its students. Despite support and effort, assessment practice remains mixed. The PTE has thoughtfully reviewed its delivery which has led to a revised programme to better meet the needs of its students.</p>

¹⁰ See also 1.6.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Transformation Academy students are typically 16-19-year-olds, predominately Māori and Pasifika, with often complex needs. Their health-related challenges/behaviours are well identified in the student hauora survey¹¹, informing its holistic pastoral care responses. The academy addresses the basic needs of the students, such as offering transport daily to and from the site and healthy meals. Community partners provide medical care, counselling, and food parcels. The facilities (particularly the 'whānau' room) offer students a supportive place to belong.</p> <p>Strong Christian service principles underpin pastoral care that is inclusive and culturally responsive. Dedicated staff take on a 'navigator' responsibility for the students: to hold, guide and enable 'transformation' for each student. Student wellbeing, attendance and progress are carefully monitored. Despite Transformation Academy's extensive level of support, the multiple COVID pandemic disruptions still negatively impacted the learning and wellbeing of its vulnerable students, already facing existing social disadvantage.</p> <p>The approach to pastoral care is considered and reflective. The Transformation Navigator (a Diploma in Christian Ministry graduate) provides professional oversight of pastoral care, including developing pastoral plans, debriefing tutors¹² and facilitating a systematic Code of Practice gap analysis and action plan. Staff undertake relevant professional development to enhance their pastoral capability. The previously noted RBA framework is being developed to better identify and capture the personal transformation taking place.</p>
Conclusion:	Transformation Academy's care of its young students is extensive, committed and considered. The PTE actively reflects on its pastoral practice, evolving more effective ways to support and guide the students on their transformational journey.

¹¹ Te Whare Tapa Whā model is the approach used.

¹² See the report recommendations.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The purpose and direction of Transformation Academy is clear. The management committee, bringing together a range of important internal and external expertise and perspectives, is effectively implementing the PTE's transformational purpose. The PTE has developed relationships with key community stakeholders. Reporting on key performance measures is sound.</p> <p>Through reviewing its experience, the management committee has identified the core tutor capabilities required to fulfil the PTE's purpose. Management has coherently recruited personnel and developing them to ensure academic quality is maintained. However, the leadership faces challenges to sufficiently resource the staff and key activities and manage key risks.¹³</p> <p>Transformation Academy has strengthened its self-assessment capability. The PTE uses different management approaches to review its key goals. Various examples have been noted in this report, including systematic measuring of student progress and a recognised community impact framework. The effectiveness of the recent review of educational delivery is a key factor for supporting its overall performance in 2023.</p>
Conclusion:	The leadership is effective in supporting the organisation to fulfil its transformation purpose, despite facing some significant challenges. Transformation Academy has an improved and mostly sound self-assessment capability that informs much of its decision making and led to a range of improvements.

¹³ At the time of the EER visit, a few staff were in dispute regarding their working conditions. Enrolments being below projections has added pressure.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Transformation Academy has staff and stakeholders with a range of capabilities to help meet its compliance accountabilities. The management committee takes a coherent risk mitigation approach to all key activities, including managing its key regulatory requirements. An important systematic audit approach is progressively being implemented to ensure key requirements are met. Quality assurance and other business systems are improving. Key points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear evidence of methodical police vetting of all staff who engage with vulnerable youth. • NZQA attestations were provided on time (except for one governing member declaration not submitted). • Some late reporting of unit standards has occurred, but this has significantly declined to low levels. • The EER improvement plan objectives were actioned. • The recommendations of the NZQA monitoring report (October 2021) were addressed and brought some improved practices. However, the draft 2022 national moderation summary report identifies variable results and some ongoing concerns. External professional support, professional development of staff and NZQA-approved programme changes, indicate these issues are being addressed.¹⁴ • The review of the Code of Practice was coherent and considered, based on a robust gap analysis, arriving at credible outcome ratings. The review identified a range of relevant actions for improving its practice.
Conclusion:	The management and review of regulatory requirements has been strengthened and brought mostly improved compliance. The one significant gap is being addressed and progress has been made.

¹⁴ See 1.3 for further details.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Foundation Skills Level 1 and Level 2 delivery

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

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.

NZQA recommends that Transformation Academy Trust:

- Strengthen the analysis of the literacy and numeracy data collected and the achievement of key priority groups.
- Enhance the current needs assessment of enrolling students ['student profiles'], informed by good practice resources.
- Consider how the navigator may provide tutors with more regular debriefs.

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. 2020 and 2021 course and qualification completion rates for the New Zealand Certification in Foundation Skills Level 1 and Level 2 (%)

Students	2020		2021	
	Course	Qualification	Course	Qualification
All	23	32	23	16
Māori	24	32	24	16
Pasifika	-	42	-	18

Source: Tertiary Education Commission published data

Table 2. Destination outcomes of exiting students (2021-July 22)¹⁵

Completed enrolments	100% (42)
Employment	57% (24)
Education	26% (11)
Unengaged	7% (3)
No response	14% (6)
Positive destination outcomes	76% (32)

Source: Transformation Academy data

¹⁵ Three students were in both further education and employment.

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 fraud¹⁶*
- *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.*

¹⁶ 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 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

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 TITOs 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 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

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 2021. 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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