

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Quality Education Services Trust
Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 13 February 2013

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Purpose of this Report

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

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Quality Education Services Trust Limited (QES)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Unit 5b 9-11 Laidlaw Way, Manukau City, Auckland
Delivery sites:	10 Norman Spencer Drive, Manukau, Auckland 23 Aviemore Drive, Highland Park, East Auckland
First registered:	1 May 1993
Scope of Courses currently delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Building, Construction and Allied Trades (Levels 1 and 2)• National Certificate in Performing Arts General (Levels 1 and 2)• National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing (Levels 2 and 3)• National Certificate in Computing (Levels 2 and 3)• National Certificate in Motor Industry (Entry level skills to Level 2)• National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3)
Code of Practice signatory	N/A
Number of students:	Domestic: 191 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Guarantee – 117 students• Foundation Focused Training Opportunities

	(FFTO) – 29 students
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for Work – 17 students • Alternative Education – 28 students
Number of staff:	21 full-time
	Four part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive skills (to level 2) • Building, Construction and Allied Trades Skills (to level 2) • Music, performing arts and drama (to level 2) • Business and information technology (to level 3) • Computing (to level 3) • ESOL (to level 3) • Early Childhood Education (to level 3)
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>QES specialises in FFTO education courses for adults and Youth Guarantee courses and is committed to providing an environment that fosters holistic learning for those who have not been successful at school. The expressed aim of QES is to improve the quality of life and career prospects of learners. The senior management team have business and educational qualifications and have worked in the tertiary sector for between 12 and 18 years. QES provides a range of support mechanisms for learners, including transport to and from its campuses and, occasionally, meals. In addition, QES works with learners and their whānau to address issues that create barriers to attendance and achievement.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>In the past year QES has relocated one of its campuses, Mangere, to a more centralised and cost-effective location in Manukau, Auckland.</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>This is the first external evaluation and review (EER) for QES. QES was last quality assured by NZQA by audit in 2009. The audit report indicated that QES did not meet two requirements of the then standard. These related to local council resource consent requirements and an external moderation assessment. Records indicate that the</p>

resource consent has since been granted and the requirements for external moderation have been met. QES has also received favourable national external moderation reports for 2009-2011.

Other:

QES is privately owned. It was previously operated by a Christian organisation whose values are still very much evident in the operations of QES.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy. In addition, the following programme focus area was evaluated: all the Youth Guarantee programmes encompassing levels 1 and 2 programmes and qualifications taught by QES. The decision to combine the focus area was made because many of the QES learners are undertaking more than one programme. In addition, the level 1, 2 and 3 courses are also used as transitional programmes towards higher qualifications.

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.

The EER was conducted over two days by two evaluators who visited QES in Auckland. The evaluation involved engagement with the:

- Managing director
- Chief executive officer (CEO)
- Education manager, who is also one of two site managers
- Manukau site manager
- Liaison manager
- Accounts and marketing manager
- Nine tutors
- 13 students
- 21 stakeholders including two graduates

In addition to documents provided for the EER scoping exercise, the EER team sighted and was provided with documents of management meetings, moderation reports, self-assessment documents, annual, half-yearly, and quarterly operational reports and a variety of 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 **Quality Education Services Trust Limited**.

QES is led well and demonstrates good leadership with sound business, educational, and financial knowledge. It is a stable and secure training establishment underpinned by strong principles. Despite operating in a sometimes challenging environment, QES has shown its ability to adapt and make effective changes to enable it to operate in the education and training sector.

QES focuses on foundational courses that support and transition learners to higher levels of education, and its learners are achieving consistently good educational outcomes. Credit achievement rates for 2010 and 2011 have consistently met and exceeded the minimum Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) requirement of 20 credits, while indications for 2012 are that learners are progressing well and are expected to surpass the minimum TEC requirement of 40 credits with respect to the Youth Guarantee funding programme introduced in 2012.¹ In relation to learner occupancy rates from 2010 to 2012, the figures presented are near 100 per cent. Although credit achievement rates usually increase with increased numbers attending class, the significance of the relationship between achievement rates and learner occupancy is that many of the learners with QES are young, second-chance learners who did not succeed at school are now doing so in a positive learning environment provided by QES.

In addition, QES also meets the Tertiary Education Strategy priorities of increasing Māori, Pasifika, and under 25-year-old participation and success in educational programmes. Māori and Pasifika learners are consistently achieving positive labour market outcomes (employment and/or further training): Māori 80 per cent and Pasifika 79 per cent in 2011, which exceeded TEC expectations (60 per cent).

QES learners acquire useful knowledge and skills which help them to gain employment or achieve qualifications that enable them to progress on to further study. In addition, learners also develop other, related abilities and personal attributes through improvement in their work-based skills, and in their literacy, numeracy, and communication skills. These skills contribute to increased self-confidence and self-esteem. The EER team's interviews with learners, tutors, and

¹ The TEC minimum credit achievement requirement is a contractual requirement that all TEOs are obliged to meet. It is acknowledged by the EER team that meeting the targets may constrain learner achievement or at least constrain the organisation from pursuing optimum targets.

other stakeholders helped confirm the success and benefits of QES's educational performance.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Quality Education Services Trust Limited**.

QES undertakes self-assessment meaningfully and purposefully with a simple yet effective system of monitoring and reviewing learner progression. The key to the system is its consistency of application by QES management which provides QES with up-to-date and valid information on the progress of all its learners relative to where they should be at a specific point in the training year. Learner data is accurately collected and analysed to enable improvements to be made efficiently and effectively. Collected data includes occupancy and retention rates, credit achievement, and outcomes results.

QES also collects good qualitative data from learner and stakeholder feedback, which it collates and analyses to help inform programme effectiveness, impact, and improvements. Stakeholders include whānau, schools, employers, local businesses, and community and agency groups. The feedback includes information about learners' progress to employment, their contribution to the community, and the impact they are having in their whānau. QES records and promulgates the analyses of the feedback in its recently implemented quarterly review process.

The self-assessment process employed by QES gives confidence that the TEO actively reflects on the information it gathers, and this is an effective quality assurance activity to inform ongoing performance. Maintaining and enhancing this system and being responsive to findings should ensure QES continues to offer good outcomes for learners.

Findings²

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**.

QES meets the Tertiary Education Strategy priorities of increasing Māori and under 25-year-old participation and success in educational programmes from levels 1-3. In 2011, the overall learner occupancy rate in both the Youth Guarantee and the Training Opportunities programmes was 100 per cent, while the labour market outcomes (LMOs) were 76 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. Of the 40 per cent Māori learners on the Youth Guarantee programmes, 80 per cent achieved positive LMOs. Of the 39 per cent Pasifika learners in the Youth Guarantee programmes, 79 per cent achieved positive LMOs.

In the Training Opportunities programme, of the 13 per cent Māori learners, 56 per cent received positive LMOs, while the 23 per cent Pasifika learners achieved 100 per cent positive LMOs. In relation to credit achievement for the current year (2012), learners on the Youth Programmes are averaging 27 credits.³ QES expects an average of not less than 43 credits from learners before year-end, as the programmes still have a number of integrated assessments to complete. In the previous year (2011), occupancy rates were between 57 per cent and 76 per cent, while in the 2010 year occupancy was at 107 per cent.⁴ Credit achievement rates for 2011 averaged 33 per cent. These figures were well above the TEC minimum requirement of 20 credits per learner.

The significance of these statistics shows clearly that learners with QES are engaged and completing their courses of study and are achieving and exceeding the requirements set by the TEC. In addition, the significance of the occupancy rates is that they indicate how learners, who typically have not had a good educational experience and have left school with little or no qualifications, are purposefully engaged in their programmes with QES.

At an individual level, learners commented that since studying with QES they had noticed positive personal growth related to their achievements. These include:

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 At week 34, total credit achievement is 26.6 credits.

⁴ In 2011, QES had a funding change, shifting the Training Opportunities programme to FFTO and Training for Work. These programmes have a focus on clients from Work and Income NZ who are usually classified as medium-to-high risk of remaining unemployed and are less inclined to be actively engaged in training compared with the learners targeted in the Training Opportunities programmes.

increased knowledge in basic industry skills, improved work practices, improved time management, increased literacy and numeracy, and a marked increase in confidence resulting in improved communication skills. Learners also commented that through their achievements they were able to work meaningfully towards their study pathways. Some learners had already begun making arrangements for further study at other tertiary institutions to enable them to complete industry apprenticeships. Parents also commented that their children appeared focused and actively engaged in learning.

QES has a very simple, effective, and robust monitoring and review system. The system is managed by the senior management team of QES, and the information is used purposefully to identify potential issues and risks for the organisation as well as opportunities. Evidence of this was seen in the weekly reporting statistics analysed by the education manager showing the credit and achievement statistics of all QES programmes, with expected targets relative to the progression of the study year. This information, together with occupancy and LMO rates, provides QES with good statistical data to assess learner progress. In addition, the two campuses operated by QES each have a site manager who conducts weekly staff meetings where learner and programme data is interrogated and where necessary actions are taken. The regularity of these meetings and the reporting data provide QES with sufficient information to make reasoned, evidence-based decisions.

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**.

Learners commented that they were focused on achieving a qualification from QES that would enable them to progress to a higher level where they could attain industry qualifications such as an apprenticeship or scholarship to a tertiary institution.⁵ All learners had clear pathway plans developed in consultation with their QES tutors, who assume the responsibility of providing support. These plans include drama and stage performances, industry work placements, and business and information technology-related experiences. In the early childhood education programme, a relationship between QES and a community group allows for learners to work as child minders for mothers attending programmes with the community group. This arrangement enables the learners to gain valuable practical experience, together with qualification credits from this activity, and also counts towards gaining work. The community group is able to provide this service to its own programme clients, which supports their attendance. Overall, learners commented that studying with QES enables them to focus much better on their

⁵ No data was presented indicating the progression of graduate learners from QES who have gone on to other tertiary institutions to complete further studies.

studies as class sizes were considerably smaller compared with school, enabling them to become more disciplined and take seriously the assessments and work placements being offered.

QES enjoys a healthy relationship with its community, agency providers, and parents. This was evident in the willingness of stakeholders to participate in the EER and provide their perspective on QES. A local high school representative commented that QES was used frequently by them as a pathway for students who struggled at school and had truancy issues. The school representative commented that QES provided a good learning environment, and the smaller class sizes also provided students with an improved chance of completing their studies.

Whānau interviewed for the EER commented that, overall, they were happy with their child attending courses with QES as they could see positive changes occurring. There were some concerns expressed by parents about the recent campus shift from Mangere to Manukau, but these concerns were more about communication issues than learning.

QES regularly assesses the extent to which programme outcomes meet the needs of its learners and other stakeholders. Continuous and positive engagements with key stakeholders provides opportunities for communication and prompt feedback about learner and stakeholder matters as well as programme delivery and learner progress. This engagement is carried out by way of face-to-face meetings and the completion of learner and stakeholder satisfaction surveys. The weekly, fortnightly, and monthly monitor checks carried out by QES management provide very good data to enable QES to identify quickly any issues related to learner occupancy rates, credit achievement, and ongoing administrative matters within the organisation, including issues pertaining to staff. The monitor checks include staff meetings and site visits by site managers. Staff meetings provide opportunities for the managers to speak openly with staff and to discuss analyses made from data reports. The visits also assist the site managers to identify areas for improvement, strengthening relationships with agencies and community organisations as well as allowing for random visits with learners on site.

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**.

QES has a good understanding of the characteristics of its learners based on 25 years involvement in the education sector. This understanding reflects the selection and development of programmes, relationships with tertiary providers and other stakeholders, and efforts to ensure that learners attain the required abilities and aptitudes for success. Stakeholder and learner feedback on learner achievement has also contributed to the QES learner-based approach to training. This is a contributing factor to the steady achievement rates of the learners.

The change in programme funding from Youth Training to Youth Guarantee reduced the training year for QES from 48 weeks to 40 weeks. The reduced training year better aligns with the education year and holiday breaks of polytechnics and other tertiary institutions, making planning marginally easier for QES. The reduced funding has resulted in reduced class sizes, but also an improved tutor-learner ratio and requiring a greater emphasis by tutors on planning, as well as supporting the development of learner pathways. QES now finds that it is better able to provide courses based on what learners require and then adapting the course to better accommodate learner needs. An example of this is the development of the National Certificate in Basic Residential Property Maintenance with an optional strand in Basic Construction Work. QES identified from learner and stakeholder feedback that there were learning and potential employment opportunities from being involved in maintenance and construction work in the community. They also wanted to provide learners with an opportunity to gain skills that could be utilised by the learner for their families.

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 provided by QES tutors is appropriately set to take into consideration the second-chance learning aspect of the learners. Feedback from tutors – together with learner feedback and supported by positive occupancy rates – illustrates that the environment clearly provides opportunities for learners to progress and thrive. Embedded within most of the programmes are literacy and numeracy sessions, particularly those related to industry-specific programmes such as construction and automotive engineering. Learners complete the TEC literacy and numeracy online assessment every two months. These sessions provide learners with a broader scope of education, yet still working towards their primary goal of obtaining skills to gain employment.

As part of tutor professional development, QES provides coaching sessions on literacy implementation which are showing good results in the industry courses. Tutors have found the sessions beneficial and have requested more resources, and also support each other to implement some of the strategies. Additionally, tutors are able to complete training for the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education as well as training in assessment and moderation. Staff appraisals are conducted annually by management and are informed by data reviews, learner and stakeholder feedback, and regular feedback meetings between staff and site managers.

The monitoring of each tutor is enhanced through random formal and informal observations carried out by the education manager. The observations are designed to complement staff performance appraisals. This allows for QES

management to be very much involved in the monitoring of learner outputs and achievements as well as maintaining communication with staff.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

QES's 25-year commitment to education, particularly towards community and second-chance learners, ensures that a high level of guidance and support is provided to the learners. This level of quality is maintained throughout the teaching and learning process: from marketing strategies, through application and acceptance of students onto courses and programmes, to teaching that is learner-focused. In addition, learners can gain work experience, and in many cases progression to higher learning and qualification completion. QES management ensures that support is appropriately resourced and is considered useful. This reflects both the challenging nature of individual learners and the importance of ensuring that learner outcomes have value for the learner and other stakeholders such as whānau and employers. Consistent levels of learner occupancy rates and credit achievements, and positive feedback from learners and stakeholders, confirm the effectiveness of the guidance and support provided by QES. Examples of support include transport to and from the campus sites and pathway planning for every enrolled learner, which includes a student handbook. Depending on circumstances, QES also offers one-to-one tutoring. Learners are also provided with a range of services, such as counselling, as well as opportunities to use the information technology services provided by QES.

Learners commented that their tutors took extra time to support them through difficult periods, not only in relation to the programmes but also with personal problems. One tutor explained that because they were from the same community as the learners, they were very much aware of the everyday issues faced by the learners and therefore were able to show empathy towards the young person as well as have insight into how to best offer support. For the learners, the level of support provided evidence that their tutors cared about them and were interested in their success.

QES's self-assessment of how well learners are guided and supported is ongoing and continuous and is very much driven by the strong Christian values that are a part of the organisation, and are a strong reminder of the legacy left by the Shiloh Church, the former owners of QES. Values expressed by the managing director, including honesty and respect and caring for people, were very much evident in the way QES staff; including tutors, spoke of the way in which they provide support for the learners. The EER team sighted a range of sources including annual reviews, data analysis, and feedback from current and past learners, tutors, whānau, and

other stakeholders, confirming the quality of guidance and support provided by QES and the way in which issues are analysed to inform changes.

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

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

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

QES is ably led by its managing director and the CEO. Operating with a flat structure with no governing board provides the managing director with opportunities to play an active role in the operations of the organisation. As an experienced financial adviser, the managing director keeps a very close monitoring brief over the financial viability of QES, operating as the chief financial officer in addition to his managing director role.⁶

The management of QES is very effective in supporting educational performance in the organisation. There is good evidence of strong leadership, and this is reflected in the respect that senior management have for the managing director and CEO and how this is reciprocated. The leadership style is clear and focused; to quote the managing director, 'having a genuine interest in people is the foundational tenet of QES'. QES follows a five-year strategic plan, enabling QES to maintain its clarity of direction through annual review and planning activities.

Although QES has a small management team, evidence gathered shows that team members are very astute in analysing current issues in the education sector and adjusting their operations to quickly adapt to change. An example of this was the deliberate decision to embrace the reduction of the length of its youth training courses from 48 weeks to 40 weeks. QES was able to restructure the length of the courses into quarterly semesters to enable a constant review period, providing consistent information over standard reporting times.

Annual reviews of staff performance and programme reviews were sighted during the EER visit. These show that the organisation has a clear focus on its business and is able to adequately identify areas for improvement and future learning. Regular employer and learner feedback is obtained and used effectively to enable staff to identify and address issues.

⁶ It was revealed to the EER team that QES has a very generous credit line provided by its bank, indicating that the organisation is financially stable and secure.

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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: Youth Guarantee programmes

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

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

Recommendations

QES may wish to consider the possibility of establishing a separate governing body to mitigate any potential risk where the governance and management roles are carried out by the same person. The EER team accepts that there is no compulsion on QES to establish a separate governing body. The roles of governance and management are separate and, irrespective of who fulfils these roles, they are required to be carried out.

One of the benefits of having different people (or groups of people) carry out the functions of governance separate to management is that they act as a check and balance to each other and help prevent individuals from making risky or poor decisions, either wilfully or in good faith. As experienced by other TEOs, where the CEO was incapacitated, the chair of the board was able to assume the role of interim CEO and make decisions.

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).

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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