



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Academy of Diving Trust

Date of report: 17 May 2023

About Academy of Diving Trust

The Academy of Diving Trust is a charitable entity and multi-site private training establishment which provides training in diving, diving instruction, first aid and retail for the marine, aquatic, outdoors and recreational industries.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	70 Clifton Terrace, Fitzherbert, Palmerston North
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: in 2022, 408 students, 86 Māori (21 per cent), and 19 Pasifika (5 per cent); no data was available for disabled students; International: nil
Number of staff:	54 full-time and 27 part-time staff
TEO profile:	See NZQA: Academy of Diving Trust . The Academy of Diving Trust is governed by a trust board, with management and administrative support provided by a national office to the network of nine approved delivery sites around New Zealand.
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Confident in Academy of Dive Trust's educational performance and self-assessment at the last EER in 2019.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Diving (Level 3) ID: 126455-1• New Zealand Diploma in Professional Scuba Instruction (Level 5) ID: 126458-1 <p>These programmes are offered at eight of the nine approved sites, and provide a pathway for students to become professional, multi-skilled, speciality dive instructors.</p>
MoE number:	9231
NZQA reference:	C52471
Dates of EER virtual enquiry	21-24 March 2023

Summary of results

Academy of Diving Trust (AoDT) and the contracted training sites have demonstrated strong and consistent performance since the last EER. The well-prepared and confident graduates are highly valued and sought after by employers and industry, both in New Zealand and internationally. Self-assessment practices are comprehensive and leading to impactful improvements.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Achievement of qualifications has been consistently strong across the training sites. AoDT needs to continue to focus on lifting the achievement of Māori students.
- Employment and progression to further study outcomes are excellent for the well-prepared and confident graduates.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Collaboration with stakeholders is adding significant value and advancing bodies of knowledge for communities and iwi, in areas such as protecting the marine environment, water safety programmes and contemporary visual arts.
- Programmes are well aligned to industry needs and provide clear education and employment pathways.
- AoDT has structured the development of diving skills well, and provides students with ample practice opportunities.
- Learning is engaging and motivating. Students are well supported.
- The board of trustees' direction and guidance, national office administrative support, and co-operative approach across the network of sites contribute effectively to and enhance educational performance and self-assessment.
- Improvements made in the management of important compliance requirements since the last EER provide a high level of confidence that this performance will continue.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are completing courses and gaining qualifications which lead to internationally recognised diving certificates. The 2022 qualification completion rates across the academy's training sites were 87 per cent for the level 3 certificate and 76 per cent for the diploma (see Table 1 and 2, Appendix 1). This is strong performance. Benchmarking this performance against other PTEs shows that AoDT qualification completions have been over 20 percentage points above the average for the past two years (see Table 3, Appendix 1).</p> <p>Achievement data contributes to the board's annual monitoring of the training sites' performance and targets. The sites use this data effectively to monitor cohort achievement, progression rates, and to inform improvements. This has been evidenced in the implementation of improvement strategies for priority group students, particularly Māori students who made up around one-quarter of enrolments in 2020-22. Strategies have included staff professional development and close monitoring and follow-up of non-attendance. Site management has a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by individual students and reports that Covid-19 has had some personal and financial impacts, particularly on some Māori students.</p> <p>While these strategies have not eliminated the achievement gap, there have been some positive impacts, with a reduction from between 9 and 16 percentage points, as reported at the last EER, to 8 percentage points, with some variability across sites (see Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 1). It is important that AoDT continues to focus its efforts in this area.</p> <p>Students are gaining useful skills and knowledge which</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.

	increases their confidence for working in teams, communicating, public speaking, breaking tasks into manageable chunks, and instructing. Results of the 2021 diploma pre- and post-programme evaluation ratings showed that students' confidence in public speaking improved by 0.8 per cent (on a 5-point scale). These skills are transferrable to employment and to students' personal and family lives.
Conclusion:	Achievement of qualifications has been consistently strong across the training sites. AoDT needs to continue its focus on lifting the achievement of Māori students.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The academy's governance structure and support from national office are highly valued by the network of training sites and industry stakeholders such as the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). The sites can focus on providing quality learning and diving experiences for the students and maintaining high standards, in the knowledge that they are supported by the wider organisation's processes, which include the sharing of practices and resources.</p> <p>AoDT has a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes for the graduates. Destination data shows that 40-50 per cent move into relevant employment, with most of the others continuing to study with the academy or at other tertiary organisations (see Table 4, Appendix 1). Graduate employment is relevant to the training, and in varied roles including dive instructors, marine scientists, ecologists, creative industries such as film and photography, construction, deep-sea diving and tourism. In some cases, this employment is supported by other qualifications in the marine field. Graduates' skill sets are sought after in New Zealand and internationally.</p> <p>The emphasis and focus on safety in the training fosters a healthy, respectful and co-operative culture that is highly valued by the students, their future workplaces, and the dive industry. This is reinforced by the actions, attitudes and professionalism of the instructors and managers, and sets the students up for safe</p>

	<p>practice in their future careers and personal diving pursuits.</p> <p>Collaboration with stakeholders is adding significant value and advancing bodies of knowledge for communities and iwi, in areas such as protecting the marine environment, water safety programmes and contemporary visual arts.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>AoDT is adding significant value for employers and the wider dive and marine industries and communities. The well-prepared and confident graduates are sought after by employers in New Zealand and internationally.</p>

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:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Since the last EER, AoDT has reviewed and replaced its suite of programmes. These lead to the award of the recently approved New Zealand certificates and diplomas. The courses and learning outcomes are now directly aligned to the PADI dive standards. This alignment has enhanced the clarity and structure of the design and delivery of the programmes, and skill development is now well scaffolded and supported with underpinned knowledge.</p> <p>AoDT makes ongoing improvements to programmes and their delivery, based on changes to industry practices, safety standards and feedback from stakeholders and students. A recent example was implementing advice from WorkSafe regarding stand-down periods for diving during Covid-19.</p> <p>The academy maintains close connection and regularly engages with dive communities, industry bodies, regulatory agencies and employers. The sites are registered Adventure Activity Operators² and are members of PADI. These connections ensure programmes remain relevant, health and safety is paramount, and high standards are met.</p> <p>PADI Asia Pacific is the AoDT's moderation partner for the</p>

² WorkSafe New Zealand approved and registered the sites as Adventure Activity Operators under the Adventure Activity Regulations 2011.

	<p>diving programmes. External examiners contracted by PADI conduct the instructor examination for the level 5 diploma students. External moderation reports since the last EER have been positive. NZQA’s recent monitoring³ of the internal moderation for the level 3 certificate concluded, ‘there is evidence that pre- and post-assessment moderation is used effectively to improve and maintain fair, valid and consistent assessment practices’. These robust processes and solid results support the validity of assessment outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Programmes are well aligned with stakeholders’ and students’ needs. The industry connections and ongoing review mechanisms ensure programmes are relevant and maintain currency. The consistency and validity of assessment is supported by moderation results.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are motivated and highly engaged in their learning. They are well supported in the classroom and during dive instruction in the water. The ratio of one instructor to eight students (or in some situations, such as diving in cold water, fewer than eight students) is rigorously applied. Student interviews confirmed AoDT provides them with a safe and supportive learning environment and dive instruction.</p> <p>The high levels of professionalism and respect between the instructors and students, and among the students themselves, creates a positive and collaborative culture. Students can provide feedback informally to instructors and managers, or at some sites through student representatives, and this leads to improvements. Concerns or issues are dealt with immediately and effectively. There is a clear complaints policy and process.</p> <p>Medical certification is required to prove fitness as a diver, as well as when training. AoDT manages student health including mental health issues carefully, without creating barriers to</p>

³ NZQA’s Monitoring and Assessment unit – Programme Monitoring report of Internal Moderation for the New Zealand Certificate in Diving (Level 3) January 2023.

	<p>learning or completion. Inclusivity and accepting of differences was evidenced in interviews with the students, site managers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Students reported being provided with plenty of dive opportunities during the formal learning time, and in their own time if they choose. This ensures they meet, and in most cases exceed, the minimum requirements specified in the programme.</p> <p>AoDT conducted a comprehensive review of its student support practices against the Tertiary and International Students Code of Practice. The PTE has taken a well-considered approach in publishing a strategic statement about their approach to student support which also included a summary of two complaints that had been resolved effectively.</p>
Conclusion:	AoDT has real strengths in the quality and openness of relationships, as well as the positive and collaborative culture at the sites and across the academy network. Students are effectively supported throughout their learning and personal journeys.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The organisation has a clear purpose and direction. It is effectively governed by committed trustees with strong industry connections, a personal investment in the sites, and an interest in students achieving high levels of educational success and positive outcomes. The sites' annual business plans are approved by the board, ensuring alignment to the academy's educational purpose. The business model is sustainable and supported by the trust's positive financial position.</p> <p>National office personnel provide effective management and administrative support, guide the academic leadership, and seek input from the sites for development and review processes. Self-assessment is guided by a comprehensive mind map, and follows a plan-change-monitor cycle for all academy activities. AoDT provides performance reports to the board regularly. Communications, both informally and formally via circulars, are</p>

	<p>used effectively to share information, clarify expectations and notify changes.</p> <p>The sites are well resourced, and facilities are maintained to a high standard. Recruitment and induction of new instructors, in particular those who have recently graduated from the instructor programme, is professionally and transparently managed. Staff are valued and feel part of their site's team and the wider network. Professional development is supported to grow instructors' professional, facilitation and assessment skills. While this increases their attractiveness to other employers and the global market, the academy considers this support is an investment and strengthens the dive industry.</p>
Conclusion:	The board of trustees' clear direction and guidance, national office's high-quality management and administrative support, and the co-operative approach across the network of sites effectively contribute to and enhance educational performance. Self-assessment practices are comprehensive and effective.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AoDT works closely with stakeholders and agencies, such as NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission, to ensure compliance responsibilities are understood and met in a timely fashion.</p> <p>The implementation of a new student management system has contributed to more useful and accessible data, and more efficient and accurate reporting. An error in the set-up for reporting unit standard credits to NZQA was self-identified and the late credits reported immediately. This reporting process is now being managed effectively.</p> <p>The separation of duties and formalisation of compliance responsibilities since the last EER, as for example the board of trustees chair signing off the funding returns, has provided improved oversight and assurance of compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>Annual site audits check performance and compliance against</p>

	<p>the terms and conditions of the site approval agreement, including adhering to the organisation's quality management system and the government's funding rules. An example of a site that had not met all requirements and had made the necessary improvements was recorded in the board minutes and discussed with the trustees during the evaluation. This shows that the academy has a robust process for maintaining high standards, and provided the evaluators with confidence in the effectiveness of the checking and remedial process.</p> <p>The registration of sites as Adventure Activity Operators provides the board with assurance that health and safety standards are being met. Risks are considered by the board, with the register updated at each meeting.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>The clarification and separation of duties since the last EER, reporting mechanisms through the student management system, and the annual audit process provide a high level of confidence in the management of important compliance requirements.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus Area 1: New Zealand Certificate in Diving (Level 3)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Conclusion:	<p>There has been a growing demand for this qualification, which equates to the PADI Rescue Diver certification. Enrolments have doubled from 101 students in 2020 to 212 students in 2022. Overall achievement has continued to be strong, with 87 per cent of students successfully completing this qualification in the last two years. AoDT's understanding of the reasons for non-completions is at the individual student level.</p>

2.2 Focus Area 2: New Zealand Diploma in Professional Scuba Instruction (Level 5)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Conclusion:	<p>The level 3 certificate to the level 5 diploma pathway is designed to enable students to progress to becoming professional, multi-skilled, speciality dive instructors. However, the number of students progressing to this higher-level training has been declining in recent years. The completion rates have been consistently below the level 3 certificate, with 76 per cent of students successfully completing in 2022.</p> <p>While AoDT counsels students before signing up for this pathway, and is implementing strategies to improve achievement, particularly with priority learners. The impacts of these improvements are yet to be fully realised.</p>

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 AoDT:

- Review the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented to lift the achievement of Māori students.

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. Qualification completions New Zealand Certificate in Diving (Level 3)

Student count 2020 SDR	Completion (%) 2020	Student count 2021 SDR	Completion (%) 2021	Student count 2022 SDR	Enrolments ending 2022	Completion (%) 2022 provisional
All – 101	83.1%	All – 213	86.6%	All – 319	All – 212	86.9%
Albany – 15	90.9%	Albany – 33	100%	Albany – 47	Albany – 34	81.1%
Dunedin – 30	82.5%	Dunedin – 67	95.0%	Dunedin – 137	Dunedin – 63	86.4%
Bay of Islands – 7	71.4%	Bay of Islands – 10	100%	Bay of Islands – 18	Bay of Islands – 17	94.4%
Mt.Roskill – 11	100%	Mt.Roskill – 21	78.6%	Mt.Roskill – 19	Mt.Roskill – 11	64.29%
Tauranga – 13	85.7%	Tauranga – 20	75.4%	Tauranga – 12	Tauranga – 7	100%
Wellington – 5	33.3%	Wellington – 15	61.8%	Wellington – 15	Wellington – 11	100%
Whitianga – 20	83.3%	Whitianga – 37	86.2%	Whitianga – 61	Whitianga – 61	88.5%
Christchurch – 0	-	Christchurch - 10	100%	Christchurch - 10	Christchurch - 8	100%
Māori		Māori		Māori	Māori	
All sites – 29	74.5%	All sites – 46	83.1%	All sites – 75	All sites – 59	79.0%
Albany – 2	100%	Albany – 6	100%	Albany – 14	Albany – 10	66.7%
Dunedin – 5	71.4%	Dunedin – 7	100%	Dunedin – 17	Dunedin – 11	90.1%
Bay of Islands – 5	60.0%	Bay of Islands – 5	100%	Bay of Islands – 9	Bay of Islands – 8	88.9%
Mt.Roskill – 4	100%	Mt.Roskill – 5	100%	Mt.Roskill – 2	Mt.Roskill – 1	0%
Tauranga – 5	75.0%	Tauranga – 7	71.7%	Tauranga – 7	Tauranga – 4	100%
Wellington – 2	100%	Wellington – 3	33.3%	Wellington – 3	Wellington – 3	100%
Whitianga – 6	50.0%	Whitianga – 11	80.0%	Whitianga – 20	Whitianga – 20	70.0%
Christchurch – 0	-	Christchurch – 2	100%	Christchurch – 3	Christchurch – 2	100%
Pasifika		Pasifika		Pasifika	Pasifika	
All sites – 3	100%	All sites – 15	91.8%	All sites – 13	All sites – 8	90.0%

Note: Completion percentages calculated on enrolments ending in the SDR year; source: AoDT data

Table 2. Qualification completions New Zealand Diploma in Professional Scuba Instruction (Level 5)

Student count 2020 SDR	Completion (%) 2020	Student count 2021 SDR	Completion (%) 2021	Student count 2022 SDR	Enrolments ending 2022	Completion (%) 2022 provisional
All – 204	74.0%	All – 166	78.7%	All – 126	All – 74	75.5%
Albany - 31	72.1%	Albany - 17	68.0%	Albany – 47	Albany – 5	65.8%
Dunedin – 40	76.9%	Dunedin – 31	74.2%	Dunedin – 35	Dunedin – 19	74.4%
Bay of Islands – 12	85.0%	Bay of Islands – 7	100%	Bay of Islands – 9	Bay of Islands – 6	47.4%
Mt.Roskill – 17	80.0%	Mt.Roskill – 17	61.4%	Mt.Roskill – 17	Mt.Roskill – 13	73.1%
Tauranga – 23	49.9%	Tauranga – 21	71.7%	Tauranga – 12	Tauranga – 5	63.7%
Wellington – 15	49.5%	Wellington – 17	78.9%	Wellington – 10	Wellington – 6	100%
Whitianga – 40	76.0%	Whitianga – 41	90.0%	Whitianga – 24	Whitianga – 17	89.0%
Christchurch – 26	84.5%	Christchurch – 15	85.7%	Christchurch – 4	Christchurch – 3	75.0%
Māori		Māori		Māori	Māori	
All sites – 63	52.9%	All sites – 41	61.3%	All sites – 36	All sites – 21	68.0%
Albany – 13	55.4%	Albany – 5	40.0%	Albany – 6	Albany – 1	0%
Dunedin – 5	30.6%	Dunedin – 4	66.7%	Dunedin – 7	Dunedin – 3	75.0%
Bay of Islands – 3	100%	Bay of Islands – 3	100%	Bay of Islands – 4	Bay of Islands – 2	40.4%
Mt.Roskill – 5	50.5%	Mt.Roskill – 7	50.0%	Mt.Roskill – 4	Mt.Roskill – 3	75.0%
Tauranga – 13	14.5%	Tauranga – 8	42.8%	Tauranga – 5	Tauranga – 4	80%
Wellington – 8	24.6%	Wellington – 5	80.9%	Wellington – 2	Wellington – 1	100%
Whitianga – 12	67.6%	Whitianga – 6	79.5%	Whitianga – 5	Whitianga – 5	80.0%
Christchurch – 4	100%	Christchurch – 3	50%	Christchurch – 3	Christchurch – 2	66.7%
Pasifika		Pasifika		Pasifika	Pasifika	
All sites – 14	62.0%	All sites – 18	83.46%	All sites – 10	All sites – 8	76.4%

Note: Completion percentages calculated on enrolments ending in the SDR year; source: AoDT data

Table 3. AoDT course and qualification completions 2019-22 (%) compared with PTE average

Data (%)	Year	Course completions		Qualification completions	
		AoDT	PTE average	AoDT	PTE average
	2019	82.9	82.0	84.7	64.6
	2020	83.9	80.7	88.4	64.3
	2021	84.1	81.5	84.7	69.3
Provisional	2022	86.5	TBA	TBA	TBA

Source: TEC Ngā Kete data

Table 4. Student destinations for all students 2020-22

Data (%)	2020 Mostly AoDT and National qualifications	2021 Mostly NZ qualifications	2022 Entirely NZ qualifications provisional
Employment	43.7	50.1	41.2
Further training at AoDT	38.3	33.5	30.9
Further training All	52.5	44.0	52.6
No positive destination	3.7	5.8	6.0

Source: AoDT data – 2021 Alumni Report

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 fraud⁴*
- *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.*

⁴ 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 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 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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