



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Westport Deep Sea Fishing School

Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 19 October 2010

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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:	16 Brougham Street, Westport
Type:	Private Training Enterprise
First registered:	1993
No. of students:	37 (all domestic)
Number of staff:	5.5 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Westport Deep Sea Fishing School (WDSFS) is accredited for a number of vocational and generic unit standards which make up the targeted training programmes on offer
Sites:	One
Distinctive characteristics:	Residential programme with students accommodated in the school's hostel All students must be alcohol and drug-free for the duration of the 20-week programme and are tested accordingly There is a strong emphasis on developing team-work The school has very strong links with the industry Students are encouraged to have high standards of self-discipline Word-of-mouth referrals are very important and strong links with families are forged
Recent significant changes:	Both tutors are relatively new and inject youth and passion into the programmes Level 3 courses are being developed

Previous quality assurance history:

At the most recent quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2007, Westport Deep Sea Fishing School met all requirements of QA Standard One, the standard then in force.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

1. Governance, management and strategy Mandatory

2. Student support This area is an integral part of WDSFS because of the following features:
 - 2.1. Trainees are taken from throughout New Zealand and have to adjust to a residential programme.
 - 2.2. Considerable emphasis is placed on health and safety issues as these are so important in this industry. WDSFS has a drug and alcohol-free policy which is backed by regular and random testing.
 - 2.3. Up to 80 per cent of trainees are of Māori or Pasifika descent.

A wide range of student support is available and community-based professionals are contacted when trainees require more specialised help than WDSFS can provide.

3. Development of level 3 courses The impetus for these courses in Seafood Processing, Fishing Technology, and Nautical Skills has been provided by the fishing industry and the students. It is envisaged that the option of level 3 qualifications will enable students to progress from semi-skilled labour to key roles within the industry.

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 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 team consisted of a lead evaluator and an external evaluator who visited the site for one and a half days. The following people were interviewed by the team: managing director, administration officer, tutors, hostel manager, hostel staff, and students. In addition, the relevant personnel in major fishing companies were contacted.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **confident** in the educational performance of **Westport Deep Sea Fishing School**.

WDSFS dismisses students who consume drugs or alcohol at any time during the 20-week programme for the reasons explained in the introduction. Such zero tolerance has a detrimental effect on positive Labour Market Outcomes which measure the percentage of students starting the course who gain employment within two months of completing the programme.

The educational performance of WDSFS is better than it might appear when such zero tolerance is taken into account. Over 70 per cent of WDSFS's students are in the Tertiary Education Commission's Training Opportunities programme. In the last complete year for which figures are available, 52 per cent of those students had positive Labour Market Outcomes. This figure should be compared with the target figure of 60 per cent. The current Labour Market Outcome figure for early 2010 is over 85 per cent. This is a marked improvement compared with last year's figures and is a praiseworthy achievement.

The fishing companies are satisfied with the educational performance of WDSFS as they find that the WDSFS students are well prepared for the industry. The companies recognise that the students have the appropriate work ethic, realistic expectations, and a good understanding of the work environment. The students recognise the relevance of the programmes to the jobs for which they are training. This satisfies one of their most important needs. The relevance is endorsed by two separate sessions on fishing vessels during the course, particularly the six or seven-week deep-sea trip. These same trips are used by WDSFS to gain feedback from the skippers and the factory managers about the relevance of the training.

The students also valued the outcomes they gained from WDSFS. They stressed the gains they had made in the areas of team-work, self-confidence and planning for the future. Of those students who were dismissed from the programme for drug and alcohol infringements, approximately 50 per cent wanted to return after a month. This is a reflection of the esteem in which the programme is held by the students.

There was evidence that WDSFS is using a high percentage of the places for which funding has been approved. In the last complete year for which figures are available, the rates ranged from 77-90 per cent and the school says they are now above the higher of the two figures. The comparative target set by the Tertiary Education Commission is 75 per cent.

The satisfaction with the educational performance of WDSFS is further reflected in the call for the level 3 courses currently being developed. Individual fishing firms in particular have shown interest in putting some of their employees through the courses. These courses could be offered in any centres where they are required.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **not yet confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Westport Deep Sea Fishing School**.

WDSFS decided to develop its level 3 courses after receiving feedback from the students and from fishing vessel skippers looking for higher skill levels. The school did not proceed until it had undertaken a check of its capacity to deliver the courses. This process reflected an informed understanding of the process of self-assessment and goes a long way towards explaining why the developments have been received so positively by the tutors and the students. The process needs to continue with an assessment of the effectiveness of the programmes and plans for further development.

Unfortunately, other forms of self-assessment did not follow this pattern. A greater attempt could have been made to benchmark the school's achievement figures and to capture the information available in different parts of the school's operations but not currently recorded. Similar gaps were observed in student evaluations of their tutors. Both management and the tutors receive written feedback from the students but the last instance of this was over 12 months ago. A more regular pattern would pay dividends.

WDSFS uses some of the feedback from the fishing companies and the students, but evidence of use was sparse. Feedback relating to outcomes was largely informal and the lack of written records of feedback meant that this aspect of self-assessment depended on the managing director. A schedule for obtaining feedback could be established and shared with other members of staff so they are aware of the strategic decisions being considered by management. While the informality is understandable in an organisation of this size, there is an inherent risk of excessive dependence on one person.

No evidence could be found of any review of the effectiveness of the different forms of support. The strong contacts between the two tutors and the students provide many opportunities for informal checks, although tutors cannot cater for all eventualities. The dismissal rate from the course for infringement of the strict rules surrounding alcohol and drugs can be as high as 30 per cent. A more formalised system for assessing the well-being of students might lead to a drop in this rate.

An end-of-course survey of the effectiveness of the support on offer would reveal both strengths and weaknesses. The findings could be used to validate what is already taking place and to make improvements. This support is an essential feature of a course that places high demands on the students.

TEO response

Westport Deep Sea Fishing School has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

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 **Adequate**.

WDSFS makes very clear from the outset that all students must abstain completely from drugs and alcohol for the whole of the 20-week programme. The programme includes a one to two-week sea trial on an inshore fishing vessel and an extended voyage of up to seven weeks aboard a factory trawler. These vessels are completely free of drugs and alcohol and consequently WDSFS insists that the same rules apply from the first day of its course. Random testing takes place and there are no exceptions for weekends or special activities. If the rules are broken, the student concerned is dismissed from the programme. Such a strong stance is understandable in light of health and safety issues but some students find it difficult to follow and consequently up to 30 per cent of them are dismissed each year.

This has a marked detrimental impact on Labour Market Outcomes which is one of the main indicators of educational performance for private training enterprises. Positive Labour Market Outcomes require students to gain employment within two months of completing the programme. The outcome itself is based on the number of students who start the course. Consequently the Labour Market Outcome figure is adversely affected by a large percentage being dismissed.

Over 70 per cent of WDSFS's students are in the Tertiary Education Commission's Training Opportunities programme. In the last complete year for which figures are available, 52 per cent of these students had positive Labour Market Outcomes. This figure should be compared with the target figure of 60 per cent. In light of the above comments, a 52 per cent rate is better than it might appear. The current figure for early 2010 is over 85 per cent. This is a marked improvement compared with last year's figures and is a praiseworthy achievement.

Apart from employment, the students gain the skills they require for the fishing industry as well as the soft skills for a variety of jobs outside the industry. Evidence of the acquisition of these skills was gained from interviews with the students and the tutors as well as comments from industry feedback. Most of the feedback was verbal and difficult to verify. A greater attempt could have been made to capture the feedback in written form as well as the achievement information available in different parts of the school's operations but not currently recorded.

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 **Adequate**.

The key stakeholders, apart from the students, are fishing companies, the Waitangi Fisheries Commission, the Seafood Industry Training Organisation, the Tertiary Education Commission, the Fishing Industry Guild, Nelson/Marlborough Technical Institute, the Inshore Fishermen's Association, and Work and Income New Zealand.

Fishing companies reinforce the impression that the WDSFS students are well prepared for the industry. They recognise that the students have the appropriate work ethic, realistic expectations, and a good understanding of the work environment. One of the largest companies stated a preference for cadets from WDSFS and maintained that over 50 per cent of its cadets come from the school. The companies acknowledged the experience and expertise of the managing director.

The students themselves also valued the outcomes they gained from WDSFS. They stressed the gains they had made in the areas of team-work, self-confidence, and planning for the future. Of those students who were dismissed from the programme for drug and alcohol infringements, approximately 50 per cent wanted to return after a month. This is a reflection of the esteem in which the programme is held by the students.

There was evidence that WDSFS is using a high percentage of the places for which funding has been approved. In the last complete year for which figures are available, the rates ranged from 77-90 per cent and the school says they are now above the higher of the two figures. The comparative target set by the Tertiary Education Commission is 75 per cent.

WDSFS uses some of the feedback from the fishing companies and the students but evidence of use was sparse. The feedback relating to the outcomes was largely informal and the lack of written feedback records meant that this aspect of self-assessment depends on the memory of the managing director.

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 **Adequate**.

The students recognise the relevance of the programmes to the jobs for which they are training. This satisfies one of their most important needs. The relevance is endorsed by the two separate sessions students have on fishing vessels during their course, particularly the six or seven-week deep-sea trip. These same trips are used by WDSFS to gain feedback from the skippers and the factory managers about the relevance of the training being provided. The needs of both the learners and the future employers for practical courses adapted for the fishing industry are therefore satisfied.

Such relevance also means that students are easily engaged in learning. Management continually stresses to the team and the tutors that the learning activities should be meaningful and practical. The students provided ringing endorsement of the value of those activities.

There was a widespread acceptance of the need for a drug and alcohol-free environment. The school emphasises rigid adherence to safety and legal requirements in order to protect the safety of vessels and the people working on them. The fishing industry recognises that substance abusers are significantly more likely to have accidents than other workers and have asked training providers to reserve the right to carry out substance abuse testing on trainees. Students at WDSFS know that any positive test or refusal to be tested will result in an instant rejection from the course. This approach to testing is a form of self-assessment as it ensures the school is very aware of the suitability of each student for the drug and alcohol-free environment aboard the vessels.

Although the induction process allows some analysis of the students' individual learning needs, some of these needs seem to be submerged by the drive to strengthen team solidarity.

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 **Adequate**.

WDSFS ensures that its tutors have the necessary knowledge, skills, attitude, and values required to provide effective learning and assessment programmes. An ideal person specification is available for their positions as maritime tutors. It was clear from interviews with them and the managing director that the former possessed the requisite skills and experience. Further interviews with the students confirmed that both tutors can motivate, encourage participation from all group members, and relate to participants from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds.

Very good interaction between the two tutors and the students was observed. The latter appreciated the practical activities and the group tasks where they learnt new skills. The tutors conduct regular physical activities with the students after lunch to improve learning receptiveness and physical and mental well-being. These activities also strengthen the relationship between the students and between the student group and the tutors. Feedback to the students is frequent and informal but some of the students would appreciate more frequent formal feedback.

The managing director is aware of the effectiveness of the teaching through informal checks that inevitably occur in a relatively small organisation. The tutors expressed confidence in the value of the feedback they receive through interaction with the students, particularly in the form of questions when any student does not understand some of the material. Both management and the tutors receive written feedback from the students but the last instance of this was over 12 months ago. A more regular pattern would pay dividends.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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 **Adequate**.

The students are very appreciative of the excellent support provided by the tutors. Both of them are valued for their practical approach and the way in which they relate to the students. Although the tutors are regarded as the main people who provide assistance if any learning problems are encountered, the students also recognise the contribution of the “study-buddy” system. If any further assistance is required for literacy or numeracy issues, outside help is made available.

Group solidarity is evident, supporting the students on an individual basis and helping them to succeed in their training. Study information and advice are included in the induction programme and provided throughout the course. Additional pastoral support is provided on an informal basis by hostel staff. A visit to the hostel confirmed the impression of a family atmosphere. During subsequent interviews the students demonstrated the strong group bonds they have developed. The mission statement of WDSFS includes the statement: “We come as a team. We come to learn”. Team-work and self-discipline are identified as two of the guiding principles.

Team-work is clearly an important attribute for gaining positions aboard deep-sea fishing vessels. WDSFS plays its part in developing team-work and supplements it with direct assistance through strong industry contacts. One of the main fishing companies reinforced this when it stressed that the school’s managing director knew where the most suitable placement was for each student. The students recognise the contribution of WDSFS and are confident of gaining employment.

There are therefore many forms of support available for the students. However, no evidence could be found of any review of the effectiveness of the different forms of support or of the need for any other forms. The strong contacts between the two tutors and the students provide many opportunities for informal checks but they cannot cater for all eventualities. The dismissal rate from the course for infringement of the strict rules surrounding alcohol and drugs can be as high as 30 per cent. A more formalised system for assessing the well-being of students might lead to a drop in this rate.

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 **Adequate**.

Leadership at WDSFS is characterised by a strong and informed but largely informal model. The managing director is very experienced and has excellent contacts in the industry. Membership of the Seafood Industry Training Organisation’s Vessel Operations Advisory Group allows him to have input into the fishing industry and to keep up with industry practices and training needs. Responsibility for strategy rests with the managing

director and he provides it, preferring to rely largely on his personal experience, contacts, and intuition. He is conscious of the school's strengths and liaises with external organisations in an effort to identify strategic opportunities and threats.

When the fish-handling component of the course was increased, the school purchased the ex-Westport United Dairy Company factory and converted part of it into a replica trawler processing factory. This is an example of management responding to industry needs and being prepared to invest approximately \$150,000 in order to provide first-class training facilities.

Further feedback received by the managing director provided the impetus for the addition of a net-making course this year and this has been positively received. The managing director consults with members of staff and outside specialists but no formal systems exist. A schedule for obtaining feedback could be established and shared with other members of staff so they are aware of the strategic decisions being considered by management. While the informality is understandable in an organisation of this size, there is an inherent risk of excessive dependence on one person. However, the small size and the shared responsibilities of the staff mean there is effective communication at all levels in a direct and informal manner. Once again, although the informal nature is understandable, a more formal system need not be onerous and would ensure that all important information is captured.

The managing director is very supportive of professional development of his tutors and frequently suggests courses they could attend. He supplements this with a formal evaluation once a year during which performance is reviewed and goals are set.

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

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

See section 1.6 for relevant comments.

2.2 Focus area: Student support

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 **Adequate**.

The importance of this area is explained in the introduction. WDSFS effectively integrates its residential programme into the framework of student support. Any residential programme will pose challenges and these are intensified when no tolerance is shown of alcohol or drugs for the duration of the 20 weeks. The students are supported by the full-time supervision of the hostel managers and the tutors. All students stay at the hostel and emphasis is placed on developing a family atmosphere. Duty groups are established and these allow the hostel staff to stay in even closer contact with the students. Students work together on a variety of domestic tasks and talk freely about issues. The effectiveness of the support network is strengthened by the hostel staff making the tutors aware of any problems so they can be dealt with at an early stage.

The administration officer further strengthens the network by supporting the students in their financial affairs, making sure that the relevant financial benefits are in place and that the hostel rent is paid. She is also the contact for Work and Income New Zealand and keeps the managing director informed of relevant information.

It is a credit to the school and its commitment to team-work that such a strong, tight-knit, and mutually supportive group of students has been created. Students appreciate the support of tutors and hostel staff and know they can have access to external agencies and facilities. They are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of personal responsibility and evidence was seen of this.

2.3 Focus area: Development of level 3 courses

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 way in which the level 3 courses have been developed provides a model that could be extended to other parts of WDSFS. The school decided to develop its level 3 courses after receiving feedback from industry (in the form of skippers looking for higher skill levels) and from the students and following a check of the school's capacity to deliver the courses. One of the major fishing companies expressed confidence in the school's ability to produce the necessary outcomes.

Management is convinced that students will benefit as the courses will enable them to move from semi-skilled roles to key roles within the industry. The industry will benefit as the individual firms will be able to tailor some of the training to suit their particular procedures and employees will be more skilful.

There is potential for the level 3 courses to become increasingly important to WDSFS. The school would like the students to arrive with reasonable expectations of moving on to level 3 courses. Individual fishing firms have shown interest in putting some of their employees through the courses. These courses could be offered in any centres where they are required. Another Training Opportunities programme course is also being considered. If the potential is developed, the staff would be supplemented with part-time tutors.

The two tutors recognise that the development of the level 3 courses means that WDSFS cadets will have a head start on employees currently in the industry and, for example, will be able to move into quality control more easily.

This process reflected an informed understanding of the process of self-assessment and perhaps this explains why the developments have been received so positively by the tutors and the students. The process needs to continue with an assessment of the effectiveness of the programmes and plans for further development.

Recommendations

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

Further actions

Because NZQA is Not Yet Confident in Westport Deep Sea Fishing School's capability in self-assessment, NZQA will contact the organisation to agree appropriate actions aimed at Westport Deep Sea Fishing School achieving a level of at least Confident in capability in self-assessment.

Progress toward improvement will be monitored by NZQA and a further EER scheduled at an appropriate time.

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 TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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-eer/introduction/>

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