



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

# External Evaluation and Review Report

Skills Update Limited

Date of report: 30 January 2025

# About Skills Update Limited

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*Skills Update provides programmes with a vocational or community purpose to a wide demographic of students.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	59 Tidal Road, Mangere, Auckland
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 1842 (Pasifika 437, Māori 369, disabled 298, other 1036)  International: nil
Number of staff:	117 full-time, 24 part-time
TEO profile:	<a href="#">Skills Update - NZQA provider page</a>  In 2020, Skills Update underwent a change of ownership to The LIFE Centre Trust. In April 2024, a private training establishment, Quality Education Services – also owned by LIFE – merged with Skills Update. Quality Education Services' Youth Guarantee and Adult and Community Education programmes now supplement Skills Update's provision of a variety of level 1 and 2 programmes. This has increased the pathway opportunities for Skills Update's suite of programmes for adult students funded through the programme, Delivery at Levels 3-7 (DQ 3-7). <sup>1</sup>  Quality Education Services also provides employment-readiness training and social support services to primarily the youth undertaking training with Skills Update.
Last EER outcome:	At the last external evaluation and review (EER), held in November 2017, Skills Update was found to be Highly Confident in

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<sup>1</sup> Delivery at Levels 3-7 is a Tertiary Education Commission term which relates to funded level 3 and above programmes for adult students. Prior to 1 January 2023, it was referred to as Student Achievement Component.

educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.

Scope of evaluation:

- New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering [ID: 119585] leading to 3097 New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3)
- New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3) [ID: 120905] leading to 2677 New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3)
- Māori and Pasifika students:  
Implementation of strategy and success

MoE number:

9328

NZQA reference:

C60266

Dates of EER visit:

21-25 October 2024

# Summary of results

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*Skills Update continues to be successful in providing high quality education delivery. The organisation is in transition, and the refreshed leadership structure has introduced new strategies and processes to further improve outcomes. Capability in measuring the effectiveness of these initiatives is building across the organisation.*

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| <b>Highly Confident in educational performance</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student achievement, while variable across programmes, shows positive recent improvement.</li><li>• Māori and Pasifika achievement reflects the above recent improvement in higher course completions and qualification achievements. Withdrawals as a percentage of enrolments have also decreased. However, there is not yet parity of outcomes with all students.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Confident in capability in self-assessment</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students are moving into employment and further study. Stakeholders and communities are also experiencing positive outcomes from their engagement with Skills Update. Accurate and representative reporting of outcomes needs strengthening.</li><li>• Skills Update designs and delivers the programmes well. There is strong industry and advisory input which contributes to change and innovation in delivery.</li><li>• Student pastoral support is a highlight in some areas of provision. The PTE recently put in place strategies to extend this support and build staff capability. Outcomes are not yet evident across all the organisation.</li><li>• Leadership and governance are very strong. Skills Update is using the staff capability of both merged PTEs to inform and guide strategies.</li><li>• Skills Update has improved its data collection and access across the organisation. The PTE is also building capability in applying effective self-assessment in a new management structure.</li><li>• Management of compliance is generally strong.</li></ul> |

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement shows a recent upward trend in course and qualification completions.<sup>3</sup> Between 2019 and 2023, qualification completion rates were between 50 and 67 per cent.<sup>4</sup> These rates are comparable to other organisations with similar demographics and provision, but do not lead.</p> <p>There is variability in achievement rates by funding provision and ethnicity. Since 2018, course completion rates for the Youth Guarantee-funded students have generally sat at 50 per cent or over of the enrolled qualification cohort group for all ethnicity groups.<sup>5</sup> Qualification rates are low, and generally one-third of all students qualify. This is well below the organisation's own target. Skills Update considers that contributing factors such as the pandemic and the cost of living driving students to choose employment over study have affected success rates. Māori and Pasifika students make up most of this funding stream.</p> <p>Student cohorts funded through the DQ 3-7 programme show more favourable results. While there is some variability over time, course and qualification completions are trending up; as of 2023, both are in the upper quartile percentile. Non-Māori and non-Pasifika students make up most of the students in these cohorts.</p> <p>Māori and Pasifika achievement rates are not at parity with their non-Māori and non-Pasifika peers. Youth Guarantee students are the most impacted, with both</p>

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

<sup>3</sup> See Figure 1, Appendix 1: Course completion rates – Skills Update Ltd data.

<sup>4</sup> Data provided by Skills Update.

<sup>5</sup> TEC Nga Kete data.

	<p>ethnic groups underperforming compared with non-Māori and non-Pasifika.</p> <p>For the relatively smaller numbers of Māori and Pasifika students enrolled in the DQ 3-7 programmes, completion parity is more variable, although on average less variable than their non-Māori and non-Pasifika peers.</p> <p>Another indicator of achievement is the monitoring and reporting of withdrawals. Overall, Māori and Pasifika make up just over half of all withdrawals as a percentage. Disaggregated figures show that full-time study impacts Māori and Pasifika students more – accounting for nearly three-quarters of all withdrawals.</p> <p>Most withdrawals occur in the Youth Guarantee and full-time programmes. Skills Update introduced part-time study to improve outcomes for these students. This strategy has generally improved the position for Māori and Pasifika, with fewer as a percentage withdrawing. Some deviations still exist by programme, and Skills Update has put several measures in place to mitigate these trends (discussed further in the focus areas).</p> <p>Skills Update has adopted a detailed dashboard which gives greater visibility of performance data to all staff. Organisation reports show a more comprehensive overview of areas of strength and weakness.<sup>6</sup> Staff use and respond to data routinely. Capability in the understanding of trends and outcomes is not consistent across the organisation. Providing clarity of achievement data relative to enrolments would also offer a more effective tool to assess outcomes.</p> <p>During 2024, Skills Update has established Te Taumata advisory group and developed a Māori and a Pasifika strategy to support these priority group students and improve their outcomes. One of the focus area programmes shows the positive benefits of adopting a comprehensive learning and pastoral support system for the students, including those students who may identify as having a disability. This example of strong educational performance is not yet consistent across all departments. In addition, Skills Update needs to disaggregate and</p>
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<sup>6</sup> This includes tracked student information, including numeracy and literacy scores, disability disclosures and learning needs.

	<p>analyse achievement data for students who may have a disability. This will provide fuller performance data and inform self-assessment.</p> <p>Organisation targets have been reviewed and linked to strategies to better inform interventions and reduce rates of non-completion. Capability in predicting at-risk students and making successful interventions is evolving across the organisation.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Student achievement rates are generally improving, and there are convincing examples of positive learning experiences leading to the acquisition of knowledge and skills. There is variability in success rates by cohort. Strategies and systems to report, analyse and respond to trends are a work in progress.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Marginal</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Skills Update strives to produce graduates who have the confidence, skills and knowledge to attain meaningful employment outcomes. Skills Update uses several measures to gather information on the value of these outcomes. These include collecting destination data, connections with industry through staff and advisory boards and, more recently, alumni and whānau evenings.</p> <p>The effectiveness of these measures, and the usefulness of the reporting has been variable over time.<sup>7</sup> Response rates to graduate surveys are generally low. Since the last EER, annual programme reviews show that, historically, this has been a noted issue. Connections and feedback from representative numbers of employers are not well documented across the organisation. That said, there is convincing evidence that in both programme focus areas there is active verbal engagement with industry which supports and informs programme development. A more</p>

<sup>7</sup> Aggregated survey data from 2019-23 shows that from the sample provided (23 per cent response rate), 74 per cent of graduates who completed a qualification were employed or had gone on to further study.

	<p>consistent approach to gathering and responding to representative employer feedback to inform programme development would strengthen capability in self-assessment.</p> <p>Skills Update has a progression target of 50 per cent which had not been met by 2023. Compared with the PTE sector as a whole, the progression rates are not favourable. The PTE has introduced some strategies to improve these rates, i.e. the change from rolling start to cohort-based delivery. However, these strategies are at the early stages of delivery and therefore show no change in outcomes.</p> <p>The change of ownership to LIFE Community in 2021 and the merger of Quality Education Services at the end of 2023 marked a significant change for Skills Update's connections with the local community. As a charitable organisation, LIFE community has a history of supporting community ventures. Staff are well known and respected in delivery locations where education and welfare needs are high. Community confidence in the ability of Skills Update to improve student outcomes is high.</p> <p>After the merger, Skills Update conducted an organisation-wide survey on how well they were enabling students to meet their goals. Confidence in the student experience and programme teaching was high. Staff were less confident in the effectiveness of stakeholder relations and engagement. Management responded by developing the South Auckland strategy, refreshing the stakeholder management policy and establishing the Te Taumata advisory group.</p> <p>Organisation-wide cultural responsiveness and iwi engagement to drive<sup>8</sup> the strategies forward is at the initial stages, but is promising and is highly valued by stakeholders.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Skills Update is producing work-ready graduates for a wide range of employment. Skills Update is working on strengthening community, industry and iwi connections. Formalised reporting of these connections, analysis and response is in development.</p>

<sup>8</sup> This is an internal, staff-only advisory group; internal staff are advising Skills Update and commencing work on how to improve relationships, internally and externally, with Māori.



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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Skills Update has responded to industry and stakeholder feedback by concentrating on delivering programmes that are wanted by communities and have positive employment outcomes. In 2019, Skills Update reviewed organisational delivery, and as a result streamlined and developed programmes to better meet the Tertiary Education Strategy and local employment needs.</p> <p>Opportunities for progression have also been a focus. Local staff meet routinely with community members and industry, and report the results to the senior leadership team. There is strong evidence of staff using their industry knowledge to innovate and ensure that current workplace processes and work-readiness skills are taught.</p> <p>Annual programme reviews show robust evidence of thorough self-assessment. Regular staff meetings, use of in-house quality assurance analysts, and programme reviews report trends and outcomes and discuss strategies for students' learning. A continuous improvement process ensures any changes suggested through review are made in accordance with requirements. Programme advisory meetings are held biannually. Meeting minutes show there is active participation, with input into trends and programme development.</p> <p>Assessment and moderation is well managed and forms part of the robust system of self-assessment. There are regular and well-documented systems to verify assessor decisions and ensure that assessments are at the correct level and aligned to learning outcomes. These are verified/validated by positive external moderation results from partnerships and standard-setting bodies. Moderation results inform professional development decisions for tutoring staff and programme review.</p>

	<p>Academic standards and integrity are maintained as assessments are all classroom based. Tutors use plagiarism checkers but know their students' work well.</p> <p>Skills Update provides the students with fit-for-purpose learning facilities. Resources are audited regularly for currency and safety compliance. There is some sound evidence of the use of culturally responsive resources and methodology, as well as resources that support students with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Learning is varied and appropriate to the programmes offered. There is a focus on the practical application of skills, supported by theoretical learning. Students learn through group work, research, personalisation of knowledge and practice. Tutors are suitably qualified and experienced in their fields.</p> <p>Student surveys provide clear and mostly positive ratings on tutor performance. Students give feedback through surveys at the beginning, during and on completion of the programme. This information is disaggregated by site, programme and tutor and provides a wide range of information. This information is summarised and shared with staff and students and is used to inform professional development plans and senior leadership about areas for attention.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Programmes are highly relevant to the students and their stakeholders. The learning is closely aligned with employer and industry needs. All staff contribute to programme development and review. There are robust systems in place to develop, review and respond to feedback. Academic oversight, which includes assessment and moderation, is effective and contributes to continuous improvement.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Skills Update is successful at supporting a wide demographic of students, either back into learning or in furthering their careers. Strong learning support systems and pastoral care is a highlight of the Youth Guarantee programmes. Robust systems include internal, external and whānau support throughout the learning journey.</p> <p>Orientation and onboarding to the training sites is positive and encouraging. Skills Update tracks and monitors attendance, and offers the trainees action plans and additional support if needed. Tutors access the student management dashboard regularly, which provides them with information on relevant learning needs as they emerge – including for those students who may identify as having a disability. This information identifies what additional support is available or needed to assist students who may have impairments.</p> <p>The often high social and additional learning needs of the Youth Guarantee students provide additional challenges to Skills Update. Staff are experienced in responding to these needs. Pastoral support, including from external agencies, is well managed. The continued high withdrawal rates from these programmes calls for Skills Update to re-evaluate the effectiveness of some of their intervention strategies.</p> <p>Literacy and numeracy is embedded in programmes. Mid- and end-of-course assessments using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNAAT) validate that changes to delivery have supported overall literacy and numeracy improvement. Tutors use the LNAAT to understand students' literacy and numeracy capabilities, and where changes to delivery are required to meet indicated needs.</p> <p>Support systems for the students in DQ 3-7 programmes is more variable, and inconsistent by site. The extended opening hours, while offering greater flexibility for learning part-time, means that consistent access to campus managers is not occurring, and this has led to some negative feedback from students. Likewise, designated</p>

	<p>pastoral support persons have only been trialled in two Auckland sites, with Skills Update relying on tutors and administration staff for holistic student support. The senior leadership is currently evaluating where and how best to support these students.</p> <p>Organisation documents show interesting analysis on the effectiveness of action plans disaggregated by funding, programme, ethnicity and length of programme. There is good evidence of the effectiveness of re-engagement for non-Māori and non-Pasifika students in the DQ 3-7 programmes and at the latter stages of study. Strategies to mitigate and engage students outside of these variables are still emerging.</p> <p>The high number of withdrawals attest to the need for early predictive identification of students at risk of non-completion, and more effective intervention.</p> <p>The Code of Practice self-assessment document provides a fair summary of policies and processes, but not of outcomes met and the effectiveness of processes described. This is an area for improvement. Skills Update tracks and annually publicises student complaints and critical incidents. Nearly all have been resolved.</p> <p>Staff are gaining knowledge and skills through attending workshops on supporting cultural inclusiveness and students with additional needs. This is at the emerging stages of being embedded in the organisation.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Skills Update actively supports and encourages students to be successful in their study. Students are motivated by the current practical approach to learning. Some processes and analysis are highly effective, but variability remains across programmes and staff.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Skills Update has experienced and strong leadership in the governance and leadership team. The recently reviewed governance structure has broadened representation of skills, gender and ethnic diversity.</p> <p>Skills Update has made substantial changes to the leadership, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• combining the positions of chief executive and chair of the governance board, allowing for greater leadership synergy and effectiveness in managing change</li> <li>• formation of academic manager and senior tutor roles to support greater collaboration and information flow throughout the organisation</li> <li>• development of Te Taumata advisory board and planned Tagata o Moana advisory group to support operationalisation of the Māori and Pasifika strategy.</li> </ul> <p>The aim is to support cultural integration and growth in the organisation through a staged development plan. Early indications are that the uptake is progressing well in some areas of the organisation</p> <p>The mission and values of the organisation, to transform lives through learning, are clearly reflected throughout the organisation. Skills Update has reconsidered how best to connect programmes with students, whānau, communities and industry to ensure transformative outcomes are met. Careful choices of delivery, changes to modes of delivery, and changes to the structure of management are examples of a new approach to provision based on student and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>The new management has decentralised leadership and is better connected to the students and communities. This has been the result of thorough, reflective and inclusive self-assessment. Programmes have been assessed for relevance and pathway opportunities, and modes of delivery have been changed to enable the students to</p>

	<p>achieve. The effectiveness of these changes across the organisation is still emerging.</p> <p>The visibility of student performance data has improved since the last EER. Capability in measuring performance and responding to gaps is also building across the organisation. The changes in ownership and organisation structure uncovered areas for improvement which have informed planning and strategic direction. Skills Update has a clear understanding of its organisational strengths and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Skills Update is actively seeking information and feedback from staff. The resulting improvement plan has several key deliverables set in place for 2024 and 2025. Staff attest to appreciating the more collaborative leadership style. There are clear reporting lines and regular discussions. Focussing discussion in specific areas, i.e. operations, academic and quality assurance ensures that no voices are lost. Senior academic staff have less of a teaching load, so they can support their staff. Tutor observations are regular and strategised to support professional development.</p>
Conclusion:	The change in leadership, and the merger of two entities, has improved opportunities to support educational performance. Self-assessment is comprehensive. Evidence of resulting outcomes is not yet evident across all the organisation, but initial indications are very positive.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Skills Update has appropriate systems and monitoring processes in place to manage its key compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>Academic quality and compliance are overseen by the LIFE Centre Trust Board, which convene nine times annually. A comprehensive data-gathering system supplies real-time data that informs management reports.</p> <p>Programme learning hours, and any changes in delivery are analysed by an internal quality assurance team and</p>

	<p>endorsed by the relevant advisory board, community and workforce development council before sending to NZQA for approval. Annual programme evaluation checks that programmes are being delivered consistent with their NZQA approvals.</p> <p>Internal and external moderation processes are planned, thorough and responsive to recommendations, and focus on programme improvement. In 2024, NZQA's national external moderation report acknowledged that Skills Update was meeting all their requirements.</p> <p>Compliance and relationships with external regulatory and registration bodies are positive.</p> <p>An error in administering additional financial support for students resulted in Skills Update incurring a debt to the Tertiary Education Commission, which impacted the 2024 financial position. The repayment plan is being closely monitored by Skills Update. Management is confident that with the imminent change to a fee-paying student model, any risk will be mitigated. As a result of recent financial performance, The 2024 Tertiary Education Commission desktop audit report has no compliance requirements and one recommendation</p>
Conclusion:	Skills Update has strong processes in place to manage its compliance accountabilities. An earlier error in managing financial administration has affected the rating for this key evaluation question.

# Focus areas

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

## 2.1 New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3)

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Marginal</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>This programme has variable course completion rates over time and across student priority groups.<sup>9</sup> In 2023, the successful course completion rate was 87 per cent, which is promising. The corresponding qualification rate sat at 73 per cent. Māori students are less successful at both completing the course and gaining a qualification (78 per cent and 61 per cent respectively for 2023).</p> <p>Staff attribute the gap between rates to students exiting to gain employment. The programme now offers students the post-employment option to complete through part-time study. This provides a flexible option for the students. Programme management needs to review the effectiveness of this strategy in enabling students to gain a qualification and employment.</p> <p>Enrolments have increased for Māori students, although not to the level of the Pasifika students. The latter group has increased significantly in enrolments and has parity of both course completions and qualification completions.</p> <p>Withdrawal rates are high, and very high for priority group students – 39 per cent of all withdrawals in 2023 were Māori students, and 27 per cent were Pasifika. This indicates that there is scope to improve strategies and support around student retention and achievement for this programme.</p> <p>Student outcomes are not well documented. Low response rates to graduate and employer surveys is historical and does not allow management to draw meaningful conclusions around outcomes. Tutors are well connected to industry and their students, but this speaks to individual outcomes rather than general trends.</p>

<sup>9</sup> See Table 2, Appendix 1.



	<p>There is evidence from advisory board minutes that they discuss the relevance and sufficiency of the skills gained for the employability of the graduates. Industry stakeholders have contributed to the design and delivery of the programme, ensuring that the programme is current and relevant. The base knowledge gained supports students who may want to specialise, and this was the case for the students interviewed during the EER.</p> <p>Workshop facilities are fully equipped and are regularly upgraded. Hands-on training provides students with practical skills and the opportunity to put literacy and numeracy knowledge into practice.</p> <p>Students who drop behind are supported by an action plan; in two sites they are given the option to catch up at another delivery site. While this has not occurred often, data indicates that it has been effective in getting students back on track. Management and tutorial staff could gain some understanding around the impacts of this support measure. The results may support further decisions involving other support mechanisms.</p> <p>One of the first priorities for the Māori and Pasifika strategy is to improve cultural understanding and competency across all staff. The staff of this programme had not accessed the online cultural competency training made available to them. Skills Update needs to ensure that staff are aware of and involved in strategies and practical applications to improve retention and achievement rates.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Overall achievement rates are generally strong but are not at parity for all priority groups of students. Strategies introduced to improve completion rates and achievement are at the development stage and not yet showing outcomes. The programme delivered is fit for purpose and relevant to industry needs.</p>

## 2.2 New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3)

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture programme is an example of exemplary programme management leading to highly valued outcomes for students.</p> <p>Course completions sit in the upper quartile for all students.<sup>10</sup> Māori and Pasifika students have parity in qualification completions. Enrolment numbers for Māori students are on the rise.</p> <p>The programme meets the goals and needs of the students. Students gain highly valued outcomes. Those who enter seeking sector-related employment generally get such employment. Others gain the skills and knowledge to provide sustainable, good quality produce to support their family. Students gain transferable skills in the use of technology and assessment writing, improve their literacy and numeracy, and develop personal confidence. Attendance and retention rates are high.</p> <p>The design and delivery of the programme allows students to connect with local growing communities, who in turn benefit from the student's practicum being on their site. Friendships and connections extend beyond the programme.</p> <p>Students value learning about native plants, their use and propagation. Tutors are proactive in embedding te ao Māori in the programme and engage in their own self-development of culturally inclusive teaching and learning practice.</p> <p>Tutors have both undertaken professional development in supporting those students who may identify as having a disability, and successfully adopted alternative approaches to learning used by their students.</p> <p>Tutors are experienced teachers and have relevant industry knowledge. Innovation and improvement to delivery is ongoing. Programme management regularly</p>

<sup>10</sup> See Table 1, Appendix 1.

	<p>consults with industry leaders and uses their input to make changes to the programme.</p> <p>Tutors and management meet across sites to review student feedback and student achievement every fortnight. They are a highly reflective team, capable of self-evaluating areas of excellence (teaching practice) and areas to improve (knowledge and accessibility for students who may have a disability).</p> <p>Internal and external moderation results confirm assessing decisions. The regular moderation of assessor practice informs assessment design; this has led to improved clarity of questions and marking rubrics and consistency of responses.</p> <p>The new management structure has been well received by staff who feel they are better supported, have greater oversight and understanding of the programme, and are included in discussions.</p>
Conclusion:	The New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture programme is being well managed, taught and supported, resulting in excellent outcomes for students and stakeholders.

### 2.3 Māori and Pasifika students: Implementation of strategy and success

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Māori and Pasifika students are not achieving at parity (though the distance between their course completion rates and those of non-Māori and non-Pasifika students decreased in 2023). The number of withdrawals in some programmes continues to be of concern. Previous and current management are aware of this persistent gap and have come up with strategies to improve success for these students, with a measure of success. The effectiveness of the measures and the sustainability of this success is still to be determined.</p> <p>Skills Update restructured organisationally with the merger with Quality Education Services in early 2024 and the turnover in chief executive. The predominance of Māori and Pasifika staff in Quality Education Services supports a</p>

	<p>more balanced spread of ethnicity in the organisation. Existing staff were able to use their cultural competency during the restructure to strengthen organisational knowledge. The formation of the internal staff committee, Te Taumata advisory board, and the planned formation of Tagata o Moana advisory board supports and is building on that competency. There is strong support for the new Māori and Pasifika strategy. Skills Update has formed a collaborative culture through a clear hierarchy and regular meetings which support the staff in their cultural growth and feeling of inclusion and contribution.</p> <p>The Māori and Pasifika strategy is divided into actions that will be undertaken over the next four years. The first year focusses on increasing the presence of Skills Update in their local communities and building cultural competency internally before focussing on creating an environment for Māori and Pasifika students to flourish. Regular staff meetings have indicated that building internal fluency of knowledge requires more time with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engagement needing to be more consistent throughout the departments and campuses</li> <li>• the need to use the culturally based pedagogy from level 2 programmes for the teaching of level 3 and above programmes.</li> </ul> <p>Regular contact with community stakeholders, students and cultural experts attests that Skills Update is aware of and responding to their guidance and aspirations. Review of the strategic steps and the progress of Skills Update becoming a Māori/Pasifika-led organisation will occur. The effectiveness of the change is still to be determined, but the initial impact is positive.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Despite increasing participation and achievement rates for Māori and Pasifika students, Skills Update is committed to understanding and doing more. Skills Update is building on their internal knowledge and relationships toward their strategic goals of becoming a centre of excellence for Māori and Pasifika-led training and development.</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 Skills Update Limited:

- Prioritise how best to gather and report on a representative set of student outcomes. This data will provide the leadership with a more robust set of data to evaluate and respond to.
- Consider providing data that gives education outcomes relative to enrolments. There is an opportunity to evaluate what data will provide the most information and value to the organisation.
- Strengthen oversight and support of where there is a need for growth in staff capability. Utilise staff with high quality strengths to lead and inform others.

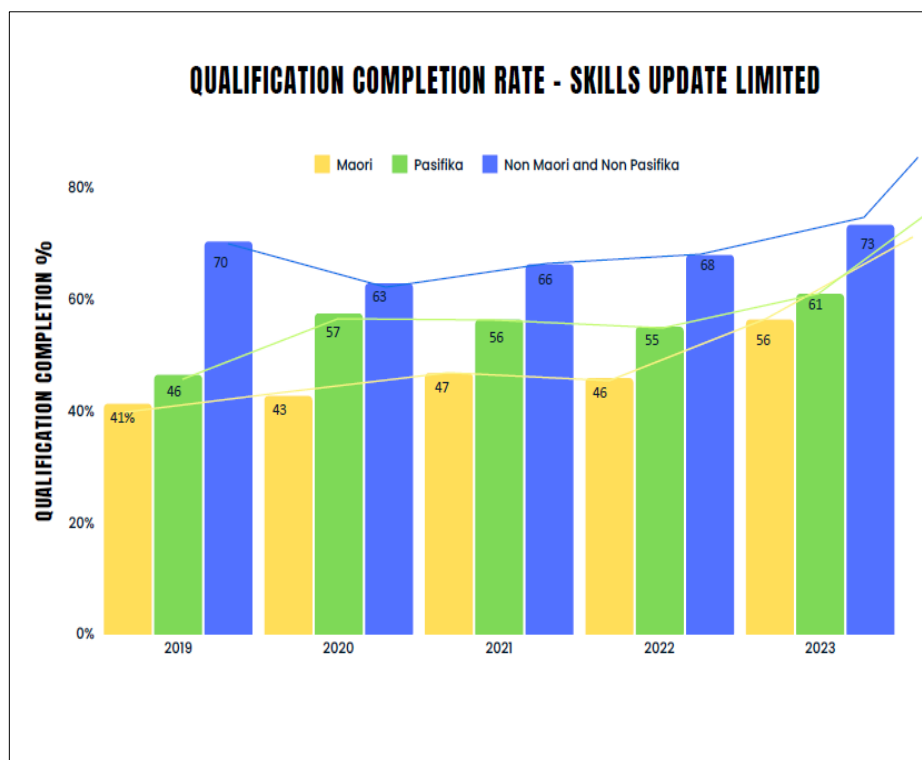
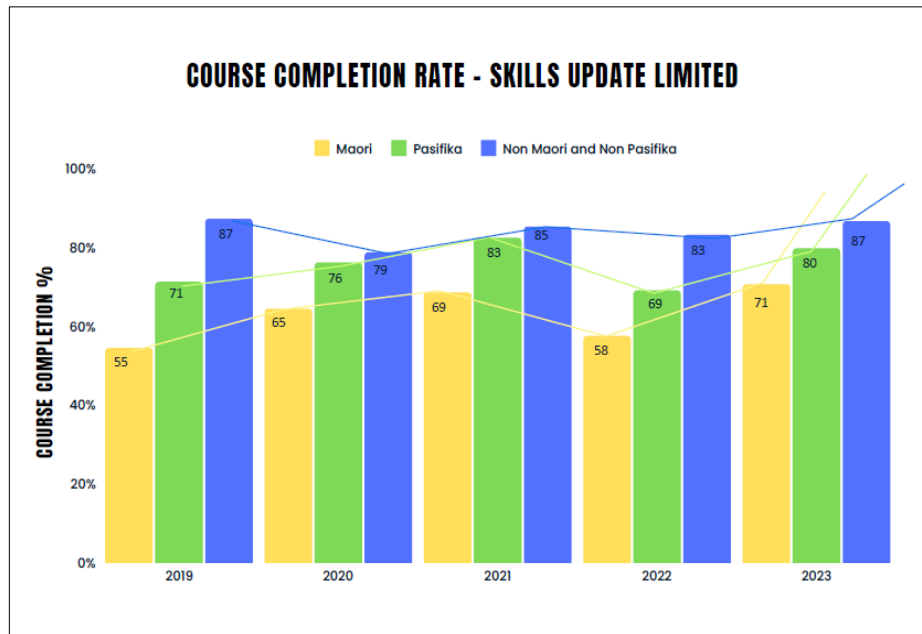
# Requirements

*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

Figures 1,2,3. Course and qualification completion rates – Skills Update Ltd<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Skills Update provided data used in appendices.

## Completion statistics for Focus Areas – 2019-23

**Table 1. New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) (NZ2677)**

<b>Overall</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Number of enrolments	79	220	286	345	395
Course completions %	80.7	85.77	88.58	86.81	86.21
Qualification completions %	69.62	72.22	84.65	81.64	78.28
Withdrawals	24	25	44	75	94
<b>Māori</b>					
Number of enrolments	7	20	27	25	51
Course completions %	77.4	84.75	89.74	86.56	84.54
Qualification completions %	71.4	80.00	81.35	78.13	78.02
Withdrawals	2	4	5	9	16
<b>Pasifika</b>					
Number of enrolments	4	14	19	15	18
Course completions %	77	78.35	56.22	79.93	93.51
Qualification completions %	75	71.42	42.33	68.57	74.65
Withdrawals	1	4	9	6	5

**Table 2. New Zealand Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3) (NZ 3097)**

Overall	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of enrolments	88	155	204	279	310
Course completions	69.81	80.19	80.69	66.44	87.74
Qualification completions	59.09	65.16	65.17	60.2	73.04
Withdrawals	36	54	84	88	65
<b>Māori</b>					
Number of enrolments	9	23	27	39	48
Course completions	43.11	68.13	82.98	42.96	78.2
Qualification completions	18.18	47.82	59.9	35.44	61.17
Withdrawals	7	12	16	20	19
<b>Pasifika</b>					
Number of enrolments	43	77	105	133	121
Course completions	72.76	79.59	88.22	66.32	85.11
Qualification completions	40.90	69.23	74.47	61.85	70.86
Withdrawals	16	24	37	43	33



# 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 fraud<sup>12</sup>*
- *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.*

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<sup>12</sup> 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 2022, 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 excluding universities, and*
- maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

*The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 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, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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](http://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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