

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

National Council of YMCAs of New  
Zealand

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 10 May 2016

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# Purpose of this Report

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

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	National Council of YMCAs of New Zealand
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	18 November 1991
Location:	National Office: 415 Cuba Street, Alicetown, Lower Hutt
Delivery sites:	Twelve schools throughout New Zealand are delivering Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)-funded programmes. These schools are situated in: Tauranga, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Wanganui/Palmerston North, New Plymouth, Wellington/Masterton, Porirua, Nelson, Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru and Invercargill.
Courses currently delivered:	YMCA provides the following programmes of learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Certificate in Educational Achievement (Level 1)</li><li>• National Certificate in Educational Achievement (Level 2)</li><li>• National Certificate in Computing (Level 2)</li><li>• National Certificate in Business, Administration and Computing (Level 2)</li><li>• National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1)</li></ul>

- Manufacturing and Technology Non-Trade (Level 2)
- Primary Industries Non-Trade (Level 2)
- Services Industries Non-Trade (Level 2)
- Social and Community Services Non-Trade (Level 2)
- Primary Industries Trade (Level 2)
- Manufacturing and Technology Trade (Level 2)
- Mechanical Engineering (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 3)
- National Certificate in Recreation and Sport (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Primary Sector (Level 2)
- National Certificate in Motor Industry (Entry Skills) (Level 2)

(Not all programmes are offered at each site.)

Code of Practice signatory: No

Number of students: Domestic: currently 394 students, 98 per cent of whom are aged 15 to 24.

In 2015 the ethnic demographic is:

- Pakeha – 44.5 per cent
- Māori – 44.3 per cent
- Pasifika – 5 per cent
- Other – 6.2 per cent

Number of staff: Youth Guarantee teaching and Intensive Literacy and Numeracy staff total 60 full-time equivalents across all sites.

Scope of active accreditation: Please use the following link:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=938804001>

Distinctive characteristics: For 2015 YMCA lost its Student Achievement Component-funded capability and so Youth Guarantee programmes provide a relevant pathway for youth to transition to National Certificate in Employment Skills, or to achievement of the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) Levels 1 and 2, at the present time.

A distinguishing feature of educational provision at YMCA is the inclusion of recreational elements in programmes. This gives substance to the PTE's holistic approach to personal development. The PTE ensures the basic needs of learners are met, keeping to their strength area of foundation-level education and by responding to the wider needs of learners to achieve the goal of building strong individuals, strong families and strong communities.

Currently, most of the funded programmes run by YMCA are Youth Guarantee programmes and so consist of 120 credits, and are one academic year in length. The programmes generally contain NCEA content combined with some unit standards. The programmes are individualised and designed to meet the needs of specific students. YMCA runs a 'rolling enrolment' scheme to capture prospective students when they arrive, which means that the students will complete the programmes at varying times throughout the year. YMCA captures course and qualification achievement data and collates it for analysis and reporting purposes.

Recent significant changes: The YMCA national board commissioned a review of the YMCA education function in 2014. A decision was made to strengthen the PTE national office team. A general manager of the PTE was appointed in July 2015. He works from the national PTE office in Lower Hutt. The regional sites are independently registered as not-for-profit organisations and each is managed by an education manager who reports to their respective regional chief executive. Many of the education

team are new since 2014, from the general manager to some tutors.

Previous quality assurance history:

At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2011, NZQA was Highly Confident in YMCA's educational performance and Confident in the PTE's capability in self-assessment.

Tertiary assessment and moderation conducted by NZQA has shown generally good results, with only a few areas for modification in the period 2012 to 2014.

YMCA uses unit standards administered by a variety of industry training organisations. Checks of recent moderation results from Service IQ and The Skills Organisation showed consistently good results.

Other:

YMCA organises a number of activities for young people in New Zealand, of which education is one. The national council of YMCAs consists of 12 independent member associations linked by a federal structure with a national board and national office providing strategic focus along with operational management of national contracts. Of the 12 YMCAs, 10 offer education programmes that are government funded. In addition, YMCA provides youth leadership and development programmes that are non-government funded activities.

The distinctive contribution of New Zealand YMCAs is as a not-for-profit, community-based organisation in the education, voluntary and community sectors. The organisation aims to enable individuals to develop physically, mentally, spiritually and enjoy a healthy quality of life.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the EER of YMCA included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management and strategy

This focus area involved interviews with national management and directors centred on the YMCA PTE's national office in Alicetown, Lower Hutt.

The other focus areas were:

- NCEA Level 2 pathway at Invercargill

This focus area was suggested by YMCA management as being one where changes had been made to remedy educational under-performance against TEC requirements. Management said they would welcome constructive feedback on this situation.

- Y's Mums programme at New Plymouth

This programme is an example of a solid-performing, long-standing Youth Guarantee programme that has been run in New Plymouth for many years.

- Youth Guarantee 3 programme at Whanganui

This programme was selected as a focus area to allow the NZQA evaluators to look at the effectiveness of systems that have been developed to manage programmes in Whanganui, and that are consequently often adapted as systems at other sites.

These focus areas were selected in collaboration with YMCA management and are a good representation of the distinct types of programmes that YMCA provides.

## 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.*

The EER consisted of a team of two NZQA evaluators, who visited the YMCA PTE national office at 415 Cuba Street, Alicetown, Lower Hutt over two days. The team also visited teaching sites in Invercargill and New Plymouth. Interviews with management, teaching staff and students at Whanganui were conducted by a telephone conference from New Plymouth. Prior to the EER, a lead evaluator met with the general manager of YMCA PTE in Lower Hutt to discuss possible focus areas and EER procedures. Before the scoping meeting, YMCA supplied the lead evaluator with descriptive information about the organisation and a summary of its

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self-assessment activities, including the changes that have occurred since the previous EER. This assisted the lead evaluator in developing the scope of the EER, in collaboration with the general manager of YMCA PTE.

During the visit to the national office, the evaluation team interviewed the chief executive officer, the general manager, and senior management of YMCA PTE. During the visits to the teaching sites, the evaluators interviewed students, teachers, programme managers and some stakeholders. Many of these were able to be interviewed directly, and some were interviewed on the telephone. A range of documents was examined to clarify items that arose from these discussions.

# Summary of Results

## Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of **National Council of YMCAs of New Zealand**.

The evaluators are confident that YMCA has maintained good levels of educational performance and self-assessment of its activities. YMCA shows this by:

- Meeting funding agencies' targets consistently over the last few years.
- Being focused on, and acting to meet the needs of stakeholders, particularly the learners/students.
- The wrap-around support provided to the individual student to nurture their development and progress through the programmes.
- The high standard of committed teaching bolstered by good professional development strategies implemented to upskill staff members.
- The intense effort that has gone into centralising systems and processes to help consistency and coherency and to enhance professional practice. While this process of centralisation is underway, and there are still some areas that need work, the evaluators saw that a good basis has been established.

Self-assessment information is generally good and findings are being used to make useful improvements. However, as the redevelopment of self-assessment systems is an ongoing endeavour, it is too soon to see the benefits of this work so far. Some key areas for improvement have been identified but still need to be developed. Of these, the following have been recognised:

- The results of data analysis still need to be distributed systematically to staff at all sites to inform their practice.
- While some sites do collect destination data, this is not yet being done consistently or in a coordinated manner.
- More national focus is required to understand the value of the learning to the stakeholders.
- The value of an independent representative on the board to counter the predominant YMCA presence.

The evaluators saw that YMCA has a generally strong educational performance, and it was noted that self-assessment has played an important part in advancing recent changes, although it is too soon to measure the effectiveness of these changes.

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# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

The evaluators found that YMCA PTE generally provides programmes in which the learners achieve appropriately. There is good data collation of course and qualification achievement rates which is disaggregated into ethnic groupings. While there is room for improvement in student achievement (in areas identified below), improved results in 2014 mostly meet the minimum targets of funding agencies. YMCA identifies that this trend has continued in 2015.

Youth Guarantee course completion figures for the year ending 31 December 2014 for all branches are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. YMCA Youth Guarantee results levels 1 and 2, 2014-2014**

Year	Level 1 or 2	Course completions		Qualification completions		Retained in study	
		YMCA	Median*	YMCA	Median*	YMCA	Median*
2013	1	8%	55%	20%	47%	NA	NA
	2	42%	54%	9%	43%	NA	NA
2014	1	54%	61%	61%	54%	16%	48%
	2	61%	62%	78%	56%	45%	54%
EPIs**	1	55%		40% overall		50%	
	2	60%				45%	

\*Median = sector median of the EPIs for all TEOs.

\*\*EPIs are educational performance indicators which show the minimum performance expectations of the TEC

Figures taken from TEC website reports and Youth Guarantee EPIs

The figures in Table 1 show that YMCA is making progress in improving its achievement figures for course and qualification completions at this time, which is shown by comparing YMCA performance with that of the sector median and the EPI targets. Student retention at level 1 is an area of concern for YMCA, as shown in the TEC figures, which is an area of focus for improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

An area that has lower achievement is the number of students progressing to higher study after level 2, but YMCA does not generally offer training at higher levels. The student progression figures (for those who progress to higher-level training) for Youth Guarantee students show that YMCA has 18 per cent progression at the end of level 2 compared with the 35 per cent EPI target. While there has been an improvement in these areas, YMCA realises that they still need work and has plans underway to facilitate this.

YMCA did not receive Student Achievement Component funding for 2015, and so its activities have been centred on Youth Guarantee programmes for this year. The emphasis in the Youth Guarantee programmes is for the students to gain their NCEA levels 1 and 2, gain generic life skills and, in some cases, get an introduction to a vocational area of the student's preference within the programme. At national level, YMCA is achieving an approximately 53 per cent pass rate at NCEA level 1 as at November 2015, and so looks like it will meet its end target of 55 per cent. Pass rates for NCEA level 2 were 48.4 per cent at the time of the EER visit. The target is 60 per cent. The national office keeps a record of achievement through the year for each YMCA site. Based on previous years, YMCA is of the view that the current figures for 2015 indicate that course and qualification completions should surpass current TEC targets for the year. The YMCA achievement figures show some regional variations, and a national focus on consistency of practice across the sites should remedy this in future. The national YMCA management is aware of these areas of deficiency in its performance and is taking appropriate steps to counter them, but it is too soon to determine the effectiveness of these actions.

The other forms of achievement at YMCA are also generally consistent with overall results. Māori and Pasifika students' achievement results are monitored separately and are generally on a par with the YMCA national figures. The exception is NCEA level 2, in which Māori students achieve at a rate of 70 per cent compared with non-Maori achievement of 91 per cent, due to a lower retention rate. Literacy and numeracy gains are generally one step upwards for most students, with a few gaining two steps during the programme.

The lower achievement results for 2013, and the loss of Student Achievement Component funding has spurred the desire for improvements and a number of developments that have taken place at YMCA. One of these developments is the engagement of a part-time business analyst to collate and analyse the data from the sites to ensure there is close ongoing monitoring. Improved achievement results in 2014, and seemingly maintained in 2015, is one key indicator that actions taken to strengthen performance are on the right track.

Although currently YMCA is not formally tracking the destinations of students, some thought is being given to how this could be done in the future. Work is currently being done to understand the low retention rates for some students. Some student drop-off is compensated for when the students return to resume their studies, but this is not currently being captured by the data.

YMCA is engaged in benchmarking achievement results across the education sites to compare standings. Nationally there is good individual tracking of unit standard achievement for learners/students. The provider has started planning for more intensive analysis and sharing of data outcomes throughout the consortium. There continues to be some inconsistencies in achievement across the sites, with a couple of sites below the targets. YMCA has an in-depth understanding of the areas where it needs to improve performance and is actively focused on addressing these areas. It is expected that new systems implemented will allow for the sharing of good practice to counter these inconsistencies. YMCA benchmarks its results against other providers by using the TEC comparisons.

## 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**.

YMCA is able to give value to the successful students in its programmes. The evaluators saw that students gain an overall improvement in confidence, study skills, and useful foundation skills like CV writing, interview skills, and employment skills. The learning modules in the programme are focused on personal development with some introduction to a vocational area of the student's preference through the selection of appropriate unit standards. The value to other stakeholders, like employers and the educational institutes where further studies take place, is less obvious as only anecdotal feedback is available.

The programmes that provide the focus areas of the EER have a strong emphasis on self-management skills, timeliness, punctuality and personal responsibility. These skills are important for the types of students that are generally enrolled in YMCA programmes. Most of the YMCA students are under the age of 25 (86 per cent) and the programmes are based on the general YMCA philosophy of 'youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility' through education. Many of the students are considered 'at-risk' or 'second-chance' learners who are given an important boost by the opportunities and the support given by the programmes. The evaluators heard from the students interviewed that engagement in the programmes had been very beneficial in helping them gain a positive direction: 'Saved my life', was the reaction of one student interviewed, and this was typical of the general student feeling.

There is further value in other achievements. Over half of the students gain NCEA level 1 and some go on to get level 2. There is a general advancement in literacy and numeracy. There is anecdotal evidence that some students advance into higher study or gain employment upon leaving, but the collection of data in this area could be formalised and made more systematic. Much of the information that shows the value of the outcomes is derived from measuring student achievement,

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analysis of student feedback, and anecdotal evidence from employers and stakeholders. Student feedback is collected at the end of each semester and this generally shows that there has been great personal benefit from attending the programmes.

Although the collection of destination data is mostly informal at this time, YMCA has made an attempt recently to engage stakeholder feedback through an online survey. This survey is not comprehensive as it did not include employers, concentrating instead on the agencies that direct the students to the YMCA for training, and some of the local polytechnics that enrol some of the YMCA graduates.

A relatively recent move by YMCA is to engage with stakeholders to contribute to research in raising the value of Pasifika and foundation education in New Zealand. The YMCA is also developing research to enhance understanding of soft skills data, but this is a work in progress.

### 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 **Excellent**.

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

YMCA pays particular attention to the needs of the learners as a priority. Evidence that students' needs are being met is strong, but evidence that other stakeholders' needs are being met has less strength.

The provider is particularly focused on tailoring programmes to suit the individual needs of the learner. Entry interviews and surveys are predominantly centred on determining the requirements of each student, based on their previous education, experiences, and their future aspirations. This contributes to putting together an individualised programme for each student to include NCEA requirements, employment options, confidence-building skills, and the incorporation of unit standards in a vocational area that suits the student. The programme delivery is largely self-paced and those students who cannot complete in the allocated time are encouraged to re-enrol in order to complete the programme. Some students leave their programme of study for personal reasons and can be accepted back at a later stage to complete, if they are still eligible. Class sizes are kept small and the different learning styles of the students are understood and accommodated as well as possible. Allowances are made for different learning styles, with one-to-one sessions between staff and students implemented when required. The evaluators learned that the student's programme of study is sometimes specifically tailored so that the student can meet the entry requirements of the programme they wish to escalate to.

Many of the students are directed to YMCA by the Ministry of Social Development and Child, Youth and Family for the purpose of lifting the student's confidence and skills to enter the workforce or go on to higher study. The evaluators saw that YMCA has a strategy of trying to accept into the programmes as many of the students that are directed to them by government agencies as possible. This is in keeping with the YMCA approach of assisting at-risk youth whenever possible. If students are not able to be taken onto the programmes, YMCA does its best to find alternative options. In the case of a few students who have not completed their programmes and cease to be eligible because of their age, YMCA will assist them to complete their studies using correspondence courses.

Many of the students at YMCA have not succeeded at secondary school, and the YMCA programmes are structured to allow these students to gain the qualifications they missed out on. These are mainly NCEA subjects and integrated literacy and numeracy exercises. The programmes that are available regionally are based on the availability of local resources and expertise. Examples of this are the agriculture programmes being held at a farm in Invercargill (which makes good use of a local resource) and the New Mums programme at New Plymouth (which uses the distinctive experience and passion of the staff members).

YMCA has good self-assessment procedures to determine how well the needs of the students and stakeholders are being met. It has a robust system of using the entry interview and survey of needs to design a programme of study to suit each individual's needs. As mentioned, a survey of the agencies who send students to YMCA was held recently and the results of this have been collated, but this initiative would be more effective if it was extended to cover other stakeholders like graduates and employers as well. YMCA is aware of the importance of allowing entry to programmes as soon as the student arrives and so a system of rolling enrolments is used to ensure maximum participation. Student satisfaction is measured in an evaluation survey which is held at the end of each semester. Any student issues that arise from this are noted and dealt with promptly at a local level. Some of the sites offer a trial period of five days for the student to see if they enjoyed the learning before they decide to enrol.

In 2015 YMCA introduced annual programme evaluation reviews (APERs) which are to be carried out by all of the sites. The results of the APERs have been compiled into a report for each site and submitted to the national YMCA. By its own admission, YMCA education adheres to the philosophy of the wider organisation and sees its role as providing 'wider pastoral care than a traditional PTE', and this is reflected in the APER results. The APER is an opportunity to gather some good data about programme effectiveness and allow some comparisons across the sites to inform future teaching and support practice. This is another recent initiative and first reactions to the implementation have been encouraging, but the effects of its use are still to be seen.

## 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Student feedback shows that the facilitation of learning at YMCA is of a good standard and satisfies the needs of most of the students who complete the programmes. The evaluators noted that the teachers are well qualified and experienced at the sites visited. It is evident that the staff have a real passion and commitment for working with disadvantaged and at-risk young people. The values of the organisation are consistently promoted by the staff across the YMCA sites.

The evaluators found that professional development of YMCA teachers is generally robust and strong, and supported by management. It includes literacy and numeracy objectives for staff, completing qualifications in adult learning, and showing competence in the use and assessment of unit standards. The national YMCA intends to reach an understanding with the Open Polytechnic to coordinate a professional development programme for all YMCA teachers nationally. It is noted that professional development is focused on extending the educational skills of the teachers and not so much on expanding the subject-matter skills of the staff.

External and national office internal moderation is managed effectively at the YMCA national education office in Alicetown, Lower Hutt. The general manager collates the samples of moderation from the sites and they undergo scrutiny at the national office. The national office liaises with standard-setting bodies like NZQA and industry training organisations, and supplies the required moderation samples. The evaluators noted that a sample of moderation reports from NZQA, Service IQ and The Skills Organisation all indicate that the assessment systems are working appropriately and without problems.

The quality of the teaching is evaluated in a number of ways. The evaluators saw that YMCA sites use a system of performance agreements to give the staff targets or standards to work to. Internal peer reviews are conducted every six months to evaluate the standard of teaching and give feedback on teaching styles. The teachers that were interviewed all showed great empathy for and commitment to the students, and the effectiveness of this was evident in the positive feedback on the teaching from the students.

The resources at the schools are generally appropriate, although there is some variation in Wi-Fi quality from site to site. Online facilities are used in a worthwhile manner to help students with career advice. Other activities include visits to workplaces to enhance the reality of the learning, and the provision of work-like training environments for the students, as in Invercargill.

There are some concerns about the lack of consistency of practice between the sites, and the lack of communication of national trends and comparisons. There are opportunities for YMCA to compare performance data across the sites and to

share and disseminate examples of good practice for the purpose of improving the performance of the less effective programmes or sites. There is some awareness of this and attempts are made to attain some consistency of practice across the sites and to share good practice. For example, the national office is designing a number of templates to standardise the administration and systems. These templates include standardised lesson plans to assist with internal and inter-site consistency.

There are opportunities for cross-site performance reviews, moderation and exchange of ideas. This is a developing area for YMCA and is illustrated in the exchange of good practice that occurred during a national hui held in 2015 for teaching staff from the sites. Initiatives like the establishment of an online drop-box for staff to exchange ideas and good practice are an attempt to break down the isolation and individuality of some sites that was experienced in the past. Active steps are being taken to strengthen YMCA Education as a Community of Education Practitioners.

Some YMCA sites have as much as a 50 per cent proportion of Māori in the student population, as in Invercargill. There is some evidence of the integration of tikanga and kaupapa in some of the programme delivery, but this is an area that could also have more consistency and a national structure. In 2014, YMCA had approximately 8 per cent Pasifika students, but there were few enrolments of these students in the selected focus areas. Māori and Pasifika achievement rates are generally comparable to general achievement, although Māori qualification completions are lower than non-Māori for NCEA level 2.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

YMCA support for student learning across the sites that were visited was of a high standard. Support is largely facilitated through the close learner-teacher relationships established in the learning context and the individual attention given to guide learners towards achieving their goals. Careful attention is given to understanding each learner's specific needs. Designing individual programmes to suit those needs is the foundation of these relationships. There is much individually focused support to respond to students' individual needs as needed.

Learners are made aware of education and employment opportunities and are guided towards the best options relevant to them. Oral and written assistance is given as required with lesson and assessment activities, according to the needs of the individual student.

A benefit of the different types of programmes provided at each site is that the modes of support vary across the sites, so that they are specific to the needs of the

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local students. For example, the evaluators learned that there is a daycare centre at New Plymouth for the children of the students on the Young Mums programme while the students are in class. Further examples of good support are a public health nurse available at the Invercargill site one day a week, and a support worker in New Plymouth.

The support offered at the YMCA sites goes beyond the parameters of the programmes. For example, in New Plymouth a few older students are retained when they are no longer eligible to continue with their programme (because of age restrictions) and are encouraged to do correspondence on site to complete their learning. Alcohol and drug counselling and smoking cessation support for the students who needed it was a feature in some of the sites visited. Teachers support students' holistic needs, including providing assistance with the students' personal issues, such as helping them to understand invoices and correspondence from external agencies.

Te Whare Tapa Wha model of holistic personal health and wellbeing is being promoted in some of the YMCA sites to improve the self-awareness of the learners for their wellbeing. Teachers and students discuss and reflect often on the students' progress through their negotiated learning path. The booklet *Taku Huarahi* that was seen in New Plymouth is a good visual tool to support and illustrate this process.

The support for students is seen in a number of other ways. The students who live in outlying areas are transported by van from their homes, and some students said in the interviews that this was a safer option for them than travelling on public transport. YMCA sites maintain good connections with local community agencies. The learning environment is consciously styled to cater for the needs of the younger and more vulnerable students, as seen in the pairing of younger and older students together as 'buddies', with the older ones acting as role models (tuakana-teina). There is importance placed on whānau and hapū involvement in the schools' activities to emphasise the community importance of education and development. Students are often supported informally in their further studies and employment after they graduate from their YMCA programmes.

Some sites use Facebook as a means of communicating informally with their students and graduates, and this allows for a good exchange of ideas and maintaining contact after students leave. Some sites are working to upgrade their Wi-Fi services to improve the use of electronic media.

## 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 **Good**.

The evaluators determined that governance and management at the YMCA is good overall, and shows signs of becoming better. It is understood that there have been many changes in the last few years, and that the process of change is not yet complete. Many of the changes have been significant, such as the establishment of new people in key positions in the national office, and the personnel changes in the board of directors in the last two years. YMCA is currently looking for a permanent chief executive to oversee all of the national activities of the organisation, and the establishment of the general manager's position in the education arm of the organisation is also a key development. The new general manager has been in the position for only a few months, but there is a sense of assurance around the changes that have been implemented thus far and those that will follow.

Current advances at a national level include the employment of a business analyst to collect and analyse data transferred from the sites, and the engagement of a quality assurance and policy analyst. All of the staff members at the national office are relatively new to the organisation and most of the directors are new. On interviewing the long-standing chairman of the board of directors, the evaluators learned that the changes are part of a deliberate strategy to revitalise the organisation. Board members come from diverse backgrounds and bring a variety of important management skills to the organisation. It is a requirement that all national board members must come from the regional YMCA boards. This protects the philosophy of the organisation on the national board, although the inclusion of an 'independent director' may be an asset to provide balance and to test the viability of decisions.

There are moves to continue the centralisation of quality assurance, moderation and education strategies. The policies of YMCA are generally understood by management at the sites, but the procedures may still vary from site to site. It is planned that greater consistency and coherency around these aspects will be implemented in the future. The standardisation of documents and processes for use across all of the sites that has already started will be a key part of this process. Much of this reorganisation activity will have the effect of bringing the sites together in common practice and help diminish the 'silo mentality' that was perceived to be present before. A replacement for the national student achievement data collection system is currently underway, which will allow for more effective collection and analysis of data. There are also plans to coordinate student feedback nationally to gain a greater understanding of the issues affecting student learning, but this is something to be done in the future.

Several other important developments are also taking place which are intended to increase communication across the sites and improve the quality of decision-making systems. The establishment of the education leadership team, and recently an academic committee, are robust, positive steps, but these groups have not yet held meetings and their effectiveness cannot be measured at this stage.

YMCA states that it wants to be in the top 5 per cent of PTEs in the sector and it realises that a cohesive approach to education is the best way to achieve this. In 2015 the YMCA held an annual 'national hui' of teaching staff for the discussion of educational matters. Such events are proving beneficial, and the evaluators saw that the feeling of inclusiveness among YMCA sites is growing.

The national office deals directly with the central agencies, NZQA and the TEC, about moderation, programme approval and funding issues. TEC funding is allocated to the sites by the national YMCA office, based on the site's previous performance.

Teacher support and professional development are managed at a local level. Resources are organised locally as well, and this is an area that could be improved by some national coordination to ensure consistency, especially if learning becomes transferrable across the sites, as intended. The evaluators heard that prospective students are occasionally discouraged by their first impressions of school as an institution and some further understanding of this situation would be useful in capturing future YMCA students.

In 2014, APER studies took place as a self-assessment exercise, and the management at the sites indicated that this was a valuable exercise that promoted reflective thinking about the effectiveness of their processes. It is recognised that these APER reports are valuable throughout the organisation to compare and contrast processes and procedures.

The evaluators have seen that governance and management at the YMCA national office has undergone great changes and is in a redevelopment phase. Many new policies have been put in place, new people have been employed for key positions, and some new procedures are being implemented and many more are planned. Many of these endeavours are recent and the effects and benefits have yet to be realised, although they appear to be appropriate developments to strengthen performance. The national YMCA looks forward to a time of improving the cohesiveness and consistency of the organisation across the sites in the future.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

### 2.2 Focus area: NCEA Level 2 pathway – Invercargill

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

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

The ratings in this focus area are lower than other focus areas because the YMCA site at Invercargill has a different set of circumstances to most other YMCA sites. There has recently been a change of staff and management at Invercargill, and a refocus on the quality of educational performance there. This programme at Invercargill is in a state of redevelopment, and was selected as a focus area for this EER in consultation with the YMCA general manager as an example of positive changes brought about by self-assessment. The changes that have been implemented so far at Invercargill are of a formative nature and their effectiveness has yet to be seen. The evaluators encourage the provider to continue with the centralisation and standardisation processes and work in the areas outlined in the recommendations below.

### 2.3 Focus area: Youth Guarantee 3 programme

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

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

### 2.4 Focus area: Y's Mums programme – New Plymouth

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

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

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that National Council of YMCAs of New Zealand:

1. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of national systems for YMCA training, with a focus on ensuring the best quality outcomes for the students.
2. Ensure that data compilation and analysis is shared with staff and teachers in the sites, so that they can improve their understanding of how the provider must adapt at the regional level.
3. Improve the capture of destination data to ascertain the long-term value of the learning achievements.
4. Develop a dataset that reflects learners who return to study after periods of absence to complement existing retention information (e.g. a three-year learner completion dataset).
5. Consider the active sharing at a national level of examples of good practice from local sites.
6. Develop a system of formalising feedback from employers so that their needs and graduate performance can be recorded and analysed.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.*

*This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.*

*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)).*

*The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.*

NZQA

Ph. 0800 697 296

E [qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz)

[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)