

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Dunedin Training Centre

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 15 December 2011

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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:	14 Bridgman Street, South Dunedin
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1992
Number of students:	Domestic: 115 International: nil
Number of staff:	12 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Seven national certificates (levels 1 and 2) Individual and discretionary courses and endorsements (levels 1 and 2)
Sites:	No additional sites
Distinctive characteristics:	Dunedin Training Centre has an exclusive focus on adult and youth programmes for employment or further learning for a student group with predominantly low levels of literacy and numeracy and serious personal barriers to learning.
Recent significant changes:	Development of a comprehensive database for tracking of student and organisational achievement. Continuing development of a quality learning environment for a range of skills and trades.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the most recent quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2009, three requirements of the then standard were not met, relating to governance and management and delivery of

courses.

Other:

Dunedin Training Centre has strong community links in South Dunedin, both in the provision of employment destinations and training sites for students, and in the dedicated involvement of long-serving staff in the welfare of students and their families.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Focus areas selected were:

- The recently developed literacy and numeracy programme, involving both individual intensive learning for seriously disadvantaged students, and embedding literacy and numeracy training in course material and delivery.
- The National Certificate in Commercial Road Transport, a programme accounting for 50 per cent of all Dunedin Training Centre credits, engages students in the construction and maintenance of a high quality, on-site learning and practice environment.
- Mandatory focus area: governance, management, and strategy.

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 EER team included one external lead evaluator and one lead evaluator. The managing director and all teaching and administration staff of the PTE were interviewed, as well as external stakeholders including representatives of the automotive, building, engineering, painting, and road transport industries, and of the health care community and further education organisations. One day was spent on site and one day in subsequent distance enquiry and interviewing of key stakeholders by phone.

Dunedin Training Centre has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Dunedin Training Centre**.

Confidence in the performance of Dunedin Training Centre (DTC) resides in three major factors: first, a level of student achievement meeting contractual requirements; second, the emphatic approval of outcomes from a wide spectrum of external stakeholders, mostly local employers; and third, the enthusiastic endorsement of students for the relevance and value of their learning. Contributing to these factors is the unremitting support and encouragement of tutorial staff, who are expert in their fields and dedicated to the well-being of each student. DTC has created a family environment which has often achieved lasting transformation in the lives of trainees, in many cases a shift from a marginalised, hazardous lifestyle to secure and useful employment and a newly discovered well-being and self-belief, enabling positive involvement in family and community.

DTC is a strongly community-focussed PTE. Apart from funding and accreditation bodies, stakeholders are local employers, local families, community agencies, police and courts, schools, and social and ethnic groups. Evaluation of DTC's performance is centred primarily on feedback from these groups, and while they deliver a clear affirmation of DTC, its performance could be better assessed by a wider spectrum of evidence than is presently available. While there are already ample grounds for confidence, high confidence in DTC's educational performance would require further enhancement of its evaluative processes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Dunedin Training Centre**.

Self-assessment by DTC is partly quantitative, partly evidential, and partly qualitative. Quantitative data is available for every student, with close tracking of attendance and progress throughout the duration of studentship. Evidential data is sourced from individual class assessments, placement outcomes during training, and destination outcomes related to the trainee's hopes and ambitions. Qualitative assessment is based on the accumulation of positive or negative impressions from these and other sources, such as student and employer feedback, family meetings or conferences, discussions with community and legal agencies, and so on. Most frequently, these impressions are positive and encouraging.

While important, these sources could be enhanced, and conclusions strengthened, by a more rigorous accumulation and analysis of performance data over time, to reveal otherwise unnoticed trends, threats, and shifts of need and focus, both internally and in DTC's constituency at large. Systematic internal benchmarking,

and external benchmarking with other providers, either locally or further afield, would be a valuable part of this process, enlarging the scope of evidence and providing better data for analysis and strategies for improvement. Similarly, assessment of DTC's contribution to outcomes would be enhanced by a more systematic and comprehensive self-assessment and professional development policy.

Strategies already exist to address these gaps, and this fact, along with an already ample flow of evidence from DTC's intricate network of community relationships, and from its ongoing face-to-face interaction with individual students, gives good grounds for confidence in DTC's self-assessment capability.

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 **Good**.

DTC has three funded programmes:

1. Foundation Focused Training Opportunities (FFTO), a 26-week programme with 30 places for trainees 18 years and over at high risk of long-term unemployment. The programme is monitored by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).
2. Training for Work (TFW) is a 13-week programme with 36 places for trainees 18 years and over at medium risk of long-term unemployment. The programme is monitored by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).
3. Youth Training, with no time limit and 49 places for school leavers with low levels of achievement. They can work towards the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) (Levels 1 and 2). This programme is monitored by the TEC.

For FFTO there is a requirement for 26 per cent of graduates to enter further training or education at level 3 or above. This is a major challenge. Further education is not an option for low literacy students. In 2010, 39 per cent of DTC's adult and 70 per cent of its youth trainees had a literacy level that was lower than level 3 in the TEC progression scores. In the 2010 delivery of the adult training programmes (TOPs), 141 students enrolled. Of these, 75 per cent achieved positive employment or further education outcomes. Credits gained averaged 0.9 weekly, exceeding the TEC weekly requirement of 0.5.

In the 2010 delivery of Youth Training, 69 students enrolled for 36 funded places. Sixty-nine per cent attained positive employment or further training outcomes, and the credits gained averaged 0.4 weekly.

Prior to 2011, ongoing enrolments replaced students for all courses. In 2011, ongoing enrolments replaced students for all courses, and fixed-term enrolments for adults were introduced. This has meant that additional and ongoing enrolments are required throughout the year to replace students whose courses have terminated. With adult training courses reduced to 13 and 26 weeks respectively, and with deteriorating employment opportunities, outcome targets are now

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

seriously challenged. Adaptation of courses has been considered, but the quality and relevance of learning is a binding priority.

Notwithstanding these challenges, in 2011 so far, the adult training courses have enrolled 72 students, and with 17 yet to be assessed, have achieved 38 positive outcomes, with credits still exceeding stipulated targets, averaging 0.5 weekly in the FFTO course and 1.0 in the TFW course.

In 2010 the Youth Training target was 36. In 2011 the Youth Training enrolment target of 49 has not yet been achieved, and at the time of the evaluation, an average of 43 students were being enrolled per week. To date, 31 students have left the course, with 13 positive employment outcomes and two progressing to further education, averaging 0.35 credits weekly. A similar fall-off has also been reported by other PTEs in the region.

Overall, these outcomes compare well with Work and Income New Zealand, MSD, and TEC requirements. Otherwise, evidence of the quality of learning resides in the feedback from employers and industrial training sites, in student progress records and course evaluations, in the numbers of students now in permanent employment in the locality, and in the evidently high reputation of the PTE in the area. Students report a high level of satisfaction with their learning and an increase in confidence and well-being. Continuous contact with external stakeholders has produced a similar positive response, affirmed in telephone interviews by the EER team. Those interviewed said the learning was good and relevant, and learners often showed a significant advance in their learning.

Notwithstanding these positive results, there is little comparative information about the quality and value of the learning. Much of the feedback, although widely endorsed, is anecdotal, and the resulting conclusions about performance somewhat intuitive. The evidence base for evaluation is presently limited by the lack of clearly defined benchmarks.

These factors are being addressed. A recently developed DTC database now provides excellent opportunities for more explicit analysis of individual and organisational achievement, and for detailed internal benchmarking year by year. A broader base for benchmarking, perhaps with a cluster of providers within or outside the region, would improve the scope of evaluation with a supply of comparative data. This may be especially important in an environment with reduced funding, increased demand, and diminishing opportunities.

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 **Excellent**.

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

Beside funding and accreditation bodies, industry training organisations (ITOs) are also major stakeholders. As a possible instance of the positive regard for DTC in industry, a national trades association is finalising details with DTC for delivery of block courses in apprenticeship training.

A major feature of the DTC training programme is its intimate connection with the local and wider community. This includes local trade and industry employers, with some of whom DTC graduates are long-term employees and have advanced to positions of seniority. In one organisation, virtually all employees are former DTC trainees. Connections also include schools and pre-school centres, community organisations and agencies, courts, police, and families. Students engage in a variety of community projects, both to advance their skills and to enlarge their community awareness, for example in the support of a local organisation constructing houses for in-need families.

Stakeholders interviewed in a range of sectors expressed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the trainees, both in on-course placement and in employment, especially, as some noted, given the unpromising personal histories and beginning capability of many.

Much of the data for evaluation is necessarily anecdotal, and given the mobile and varied nature of the programmes, it would be difficult to gain feedback through formal channels such as survey forms. Nonetheless, it would be helpful to note key features of success or failure, either in work skills or in life management skills, to provide data for analysis and improvement. Without this, exceptions to a targeted high standard may go unnoticed or, being so common, be taken for granted. Benchmarking of specific factors may show trends or repeating elements that might otherwise escape attention, or be treated as “inevitable” pitfalls of the sector.

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**.

In a student body with widely diverse backgrounds and levels of capability, needs assessment, both initially and throughout, is essential. Enrolment forms and interviews check a variety of personal factors, including educational history, personal circumstances present and past, involvement with courts or other correction agencies, hopes and ambitions, attitudes to learning, and levels of progression in literacy and numeracy. This data is a guide to placement, and

thereafter the fitness of the placement is checked daily and weekly, both for progress in learning and for the personal well-being of the student.

Trainees are continually consulted about developing interests or changes in focus. Their aptitude for a particular direction of learning is also checked with employers or other placement sites. They are encouraged and assisted to achieve a national certificate in their area of choice, and are advised of further training pathways with ITOs or other tertiary education organisations.

Courses are constructed and delivered with particular attention to the individual capabilities and needs of students. Literacy and numeracy are key features, engaging, willingly or not, around 40 per cent of adult learners and 70 per cent of youth. It is offered and monitored one-to-one as needed or requested, and otherwise embedded in every step of the programme, both theoretical and practical. Personal management skills, such as communication, cooperation, and time management are also embedded in all programmes.

Well-equipped workshops and equipment are provided, and are meticulously maintained by both tutorial staff and students.

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**.

The declared aim in all programmes is to engage “the whole person” with a variety of teaching initiatives and opportunities, including on-site workshop projects, computer learning, visiting speakers and trainers, visits to industrial sites, and group and individual projects. Common to all is a body of foundational skills, such as safety, timeliness, study skills, personal management and, as already mentioned, literacy and numeracy, for which progress in formal TEC progressions is monitored daily and weekly for each student. Attendance is closely monitored, with morning and afternoon roll-calls for all trainees, and absences followed up forthwith.

Anxiety and reticence are common barriers to literacy and numeracy learning. Achieving less than level 3 in the TEC literacy progressions is seen as grounds for special assistance, with intensive one-to-one or small group learning, integrating a variety of features such as listening, writing and reading, and recognising unacknowledged skills, especially in numeracy, where for example, “more and less”, and “larger and smaller” are identified as instances of numeracy. A computer suite exists for ongoing access to adult literacy and numeracy progressions.

A wide range of teaching styles and situations is used and adapted to the learning needs of the students. All teachers are experienced practitioners in their field. The wisdom and knowledge of students are acknowledged and used, and existing competencies recognised. The trainee’s personal destination, for example to gain a heavy truck licence or a national certificate, is the primary focus and is planned

and paced for completion. Teachers frequently “do the rounds” of all trainees in placement and subsequent follow-up. Most tutors have completed training in assessment and moderation. A senior moderator oversees internal and external moderation for all courses, and all staff are required to complete unit standards 4098 *Use standards to assess candidate performance* and 11551 *Moderate assessment*. This requirement will be extended in 2012 to unit standard 26712 *Manage moderation within an organisation*.

Two literacy and numeracy tutors are qualified teachers with specialist training in their field, and DTC supports all teaching staff to engage in further professional development opportunities. There is a weekly team meeting for all available tutors, and a monthly teacher-only day, but at present there is no formal tutor appraisal, systematic self- or other assessment of performance, or individual professional development plans. In the absence of these features, and the evidence they would provide, it is not possible to affirm that the performance of teachers, although manifestly good, is excellent. In an environment peppered with risks and challenges, the TEO would benefit from a high level of awareness of the comparative excellence of each member of the tutorial group. DTC recognises this and is to address the matter in the coming year.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

The presiding vision of DTC is to create a “collective” learning environment, promoting equality and willingness to share in a common goal. This is to maximise opportunities for trainees to achieve their social and personal potential, and to recover their confidence and well-being. The instrument for this vision is an inclusive family culture, both at the training site and in the TEO’s involvement with trainees’ families. All TEO staff are involved, but one tutor has primary responsibility for trainees’ well-being and is widely seen to be acting *in loco parentis*.

Personal well-being is a priority. Trainees are picked up from outlying places to be brought to the site, free or subsidised meals are provided, birthdays are celebrated, and barbeques are a frequent and popular event with both tutors and trainees. Driver licensing is free, along with the use of vehicles for the purpose, and material support is provided for a variety of services and goods. Students are assisted in the preparation of curriculum vitae, in preparation for interviews, and if necessary provided with suitable clothing.

The DTC “family” has been described by local Māori as similar to a marae. The chief executive officer (CEO) has an intimate knowledge of students’ histories and present situations, will access community resources they may need, and has

provided funds for legal aid where merited. Family group conferences are commonplace, often involving community agencies, police, and courts.

As already discussed, continuing needs analysis and review of progress are features of student care. Students are given one-to-one attention where required, and teaching and learning methods and situations are adjusted to students' perceived needs. Absences from classes are quickly investigated and followed up, and potentially disruptive applicants may be refused admission to the programme.

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**.

Governance is the responsibility of a family trust which owns the PTE, and of which the CEO is a member. One other member of the trust maintains an overall watch on financial matters, while the CEO brings the vision and wairua (spirit) of the trust into the training environment. DTC's primary focus is the promotion of life opportunities and well-being for adults and young people with serious barriers to learning, or whose personal histories have eroded their confidence and well-being, resulting in lifestyles deplored and condemned by the wider community.

The success of the DTC family culture, with its tikanga of equality, cooperation, and communication between people of disparate ages and backgrounds, is emphatically affirmed by both students interviewed at the EER and by a broad spectrum of stakeholders interviewed subsequently, several of whom expressed admiration for the transformation achieved in seemingly irredeemable situations.

Success in learning achievement is similarly applauded, by both the students and external stakeholders, and is generally in line with the contractual requirements for continued funding, in some cases exceeding them by a good margin. Training is delivered in an immaculate teaching and practice environment, in whose construction and maintenance students are actively involved.

The recent appointment of an office manager has been a major advance in management, bringing a kaupapa previously recorded and monitored in a variety of hand-written files, into a comprehensive, systematic format, with a database now facilitating detailed tracking and analysis of a mass of performance and outcome data for every aspect of the PTE's functioning.

But the challenges of a changed learning environment, with continuing erosion of the labour market and reduced student tenure to 13 and 26 weeks for largely employment-oriented courses, require a more rigorous and systematic analysis of performance data than exists at present. Management is aware of this, and a strategy to address outstanding matters has been outlined. A beginning point has been a redraft of the quality management system, which is now a relevant, concise,

and comprehensible document, well reflecting current practice. Other components of an improvement strategy still in development include:

- A more aggressive and proactive professional development policy for all tutorial staff, including staff appraisals, ongoing internal professional development activities, and a professional development plan for each staff member.
- A more systematic approach to self-assessment with employers and other external stakeholders, and more detailed analysis of individual performance and outcome data to identify emerging trends and opportunities.
- Further development of an already impressive drive for literacy, numeracy and language competency in all areas of learning.
- Increased on-site support for graduates in employment, with ongoing monitoring and feedback from employers.

The implementation of the above components of this improvement strategy has already begun and is scheduled to be well advanced by the end of 2012.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Literacy and numeracy 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**.

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Commercial Road Transport

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

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

2.3 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**.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

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 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-eeer/introduction/>*

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