

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Nelson Training Centre

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 21 August 2013

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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:	Nelson Training Centre (NTC)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	138 Hardy St, Nelson
Delivery sites:	Head office and training centre as above
First registered:	1 November 1993
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Hospitality (Foundation Skills) (Level 1) 40 credits• National Certificate in Hospitality (Entry Skills) (Level 2) 45 credits• NCEA Vocational Pathways Service Sector (level 2) 80 credits
Code of Practice signatory?	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 20 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Owner and one tutor; both full-time Four part-time tutors
Scope of active accreditation:	NTC holds consent to assess in a variety of domains and unit standards in the areas of hospitality and foundation skills up to level 3.
Distinctive characteristics:	NTC provides trainees with skills to enter the hospitality industry. Trainees are usually referred to NTC as an alternative education option by Work and Income New Zealand, Child, Youth and Family, other local community and social

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networks and local secondary schools. NTC not only provides tutoring for trainees to learn the skills needed for commercial food preparation and front-of-house service, but also runs the Back Alley Cafe, where trainees can prepare and serve food under commercial conditions.

Recent significant changes: This year, NTC has moved from delivering short-term Preparation for Employment programmes funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) or offered under contract to the Ministry of Social Development, to a year-long Youth Guarantee programme. Whereas in previous years the focus has rightly been on short-term acquisition of skills for employment, the focus has now moved to include qualification completion.

Previous quality assurance history: NTC has a history of compliance with NZQA requirements. At the last quality assurance visit by NZQA, in 2009, the organisation met all requirements.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the external evaluation and review (EER) consisted of the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management and strategy.

In addition, the following focus area was selected:

- Programme design, development and delivery.

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.*

Prior to the EER visit, the lead evaluator discussed the visit by telephone and email with the owner. A one-day EER visit was made to the NTC site in Nelson, where the evaluation team, consisting of the lead evaluator and one other evaluator, reviewed a range of documentation and met with the owner; teaching and administration staff; current students; and a variety of external stakeholders.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

NTC's strength is in the outcomes it achieves for its students and its community. Overall, the organisation comprehensively meets the needs of its students, industry and other stakeholders. The data collected by NTC from 2010 to 2012 shows that, on average, youth and mature students achieved above the minimum credits set by the TEC. The data also shows that, during the same period, 57 to 75 per cent of students achieved a positive labour market outcome compared with the 60 per cent target set by the TEC.

NTC is highly committed to providing quality training to the hospitality industry and is valued for the work it does. The learners obtain industry-relevant knowledge and skills, improve their overall confidence and experience changes in attitudes that are valued. Both the organisation and its staff have a strong focus on student achievement and are well supported by management. NTC keeps in close contact with its graduates and industry. Over 60 per cent of 2011 graduates continue to work in the hospitality industry.

NTC has student support structures that are appropriate to the needs of the students and minimise barriers to them achieving their goals. Students are very well supported both pastorally and academically.

The organisation is well governed and managed, has a long history of positive engagement with its communities and industries, is providing quality training and is valued for the positive contribution it makes to the hospitality industry and to the Nelson community.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

NTC has established a reflective organisational culture which encourages staff to put forward ideas for improvement. The educational performance and overall needs of the students are informally reviewed at the end of each week and in a comprehensive manner every three months by both staff and students to inform ongoing individual action plans. The TEO is closely attuned to the needs of industry through regular and sustained engagement with its industry and community.

NTC has comprehensive systems to gather and collate formal and informal feedback from learners and employers. However, there is a need to more systematically review teaching practices and course delivery, as the needs of

students studying on a full-year programme differ from those on previous short-term programmes.

NTC has good systems to record student progress, and achievement data is regularly discussed and analysed to identify ways to further improve performance.

The evaluation team believes that as self-assessment processes continue to be implemented at NTC, and staff engage with the key evaluation questions, significant and meaningful ongoing improvements will result and the excellent outcomes evident in previous years will be sustained in the new programme structure.

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**.

The achievement of NTC learners was positive across a range of key outcomes. The data collected by NTC from 2010 to 2012 shows that, on average, youth and mature students achieve above the minimum credits set by the TEC.² The data also shows that during this period, between 54 and 77 per cent of students achieved a positive labour market outcome, which was generally above the targets set by the TEC. Although there is no TEC benchmarking data available, NTC is able to compare its performance with other providers in the region through its ongoing involvement with industry, other providers and social service agencies. The service agencies interviewed indicated that NTC performance in this regard was 'among the best in the region'.

Staff, community agencies and employers reported that the learners obtained new and industry-relevant knowledge and skills as well as achieving unit standards, awards and qualifications. They also saw the students improving their employability, confidence and attitudes. The agencies interviewed were of the view that NTC was the region's top-performing provider of short-term employment preparation programmes in its demographic, i.e. youth, long-term unemployed, second-chance learners. The real test for NTC will come this year as the first year of offering a full-year programme, which includes three qualifications.

NTC has created a culture and philosophy of high expectations (for example of achievement, punctuality, presentation and behaviour) of students, staff and management. Students are aware of these expectations from the day they first enter the organisation and that every aspect of NTC is focused on helping them to meet these expectations.

NTC has developed an effective process for reviewing learner achievement. Twice each week the students work in a real cafe at the centre, serving customers. Their performance is reviewed by staff and decisions are made about what they need to focus on going forward. Every three months a formal periodic assessment is undertaken. All students self-assess against a range of relevant criteria. Staff take

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

² The TEC required a minimum of 20 credits in 2010 and 2011, which increased to 40 credits in 2012.

a full day to discuss the progress of each student, both vocationally and personally, and score each against the same criteria. At the full-day review, the staff also take a wider view of the progress of the whole class and take any corrective action if required. Students then have a one-to-one discussion with a staff member about their progress and any gaps between their own perception and those of the staff. This enables an individual learning plan and goals to be set for the next three months. The process is repeated again in three months. Students reported that they found the process useful, motivating and informative. Staff reported that this process gives them a collective understanding of the progress of every student and use it as the catalyst for targeted strategies to improve individual achievement.

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 **Excellent**.

The perceived value of NTC outcomes for the learners, industry, funding agencies and other stakeholders is high. The number of graduates who gain employment or engage with further education or training is greater than TEC requirements and continues to increase. Students gain worthwhile skills, knowledge and attitudes from the programmes that NTC delivers. NTC also places significant emphasis on employment-related disciplines to get students 'work-fit'. Employers report that these acquired competencies are immediately applicable to the workplace and are valued by the employer. Additionally, students gain valuable life skills such as confidence, self-esteem and numeracy and literacy skills.

NTC engages well with the local hospitality sector and is seen to be widely valued for the contribution that it makes. Stakeholders interviewed, including students, reported high levels of satisfaction with NTC's programme and the way it has addressed the needs of students whose previous educational experiences had not been positive. There was clear evidence that NTC had identified and successfully used pathways from its programmes to other providers. Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) stated that they know that NTC graduates who staircase to NMIT courses at higher levels are thoroughly prepared and always achieve well. They also commented that they regularly refer students who may not be quite ready for higher-level study to NTC for preparation.

Fieldwork placements from the courses at NTC have not only been valuable in their own right, but in many cases have led to students gaining ongoing employment with the fieldwork host.

NTC contributes to the broader Nelson social fabric by, as part of their practical studies, students organising or participating in worthwhile events and services for the community, including providing a free Friday lunch at the Back Alley Cafe to a

range of community groups. This gives students a real-world opportunity to engage with customers and practise the communication skills they have learned.

The stakeholders spoke of the owner's high profile, sound reputation and focus on providing value. NTC has also for several years completed a formal employer survey to ascertain how well graduates are meeting the needs of employers and to identify industry trends that need to be reflected in the programme. The owner has found, through over 20 years of experience, that the best way to conduct the survey is to personally visit and interview each individual employer. This information is then summarised, discussed with staff and, if appropriate, used to inform improvements to courses.

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 **Excellent**.

NTC's efforts to meet the individual personal and academic goals of every student are a stand-out feature of the organisation. The owner of NTC believes that the most critical factor in its success is being known to provide good value to its students and the community. The provision of this well-founded, hands-on and relevant hospitality programme meets the need of graduates, the industry and other stakeholders

Continuous engagement with industry and stakeholders is core to the business. NTC has a very good understanding of the community and local hospitality industry, built up through sustained engagement over the 25 years of being in business. All NTC teaching staff have worked and currently work in the local hospitality industry. They use their industry networks to provide work experience and employment opportunities for their students.

NTC utilises a variety of mechanisms to understand student needs. The application interview initially identifies their key needs and aspirations and an individual learning plan is developed. The periodic assessment process, carried out at three-month intervals as described in 1.2, enables staff to better understand the needs of their students and individualise the learning to suit. Students have a fortnightly session with a non-teaching vocational coach who helps them identify achievable short-term goals and key needs and develop strategies to address them. Staff and students interviewed at this evaluation confirmed that this help was valued, and contributed well to their overall progress.

NTC seeks feedback from learners through a variety of mechanisms. As well as the formal student feedback process, staff members have an open-door policy and it is clear that students approach them with problems and issues. Staff members were able to cite examples of how course content and delivery methodology had

been improved as a result of feedback from learners or external stakeholders. An example of this is the restructuring of the programme to enable students to be released on a Thursday or Friday to take up work experience or part-time paid work in the local hospitality industry.

The move to a year-long, qualification-focused programme has been a significant shift for NTC. This change is in line with the Government's Tertiary Education Strategy for youth and was made after consultation with staff, agencies and the TEC.

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**.

Teachers and students relate generally very well to each other. The students spoke highly of NTC's teaching staff. They liked the open, friendly style. They found the hands-on learning activities – supported by theory – to be engaging, challenging and highly relevant. Studying in a small class ensures students have constant access to the teaching staff and can make suggestions about improvements. Students noted that staff were responsive to concerns or issues raised. The strong rapport between students and teachers was evident from discussions with the students and the formal student evaluation results.

Although NTC's teaching staff have extensive industry and professional experience, and an obvious natural passion and ability to engage students, the evaluation team believes that ongoing professional development for teaching staff will assist them to keep their teaching current and ultimately lead to improved outcomes for students. At present, none of the teaching staff, apart from the owner, hold an adult teaching qualification, and nor are staff participating in other professional development initiatives. This gap has added significance as the lessons on 'theory' appear overly reliant on workbook materials that focus on individual unit standards. This unit-by-unit approach results in a programme where theory learning and application is at times fragmented and could be better integrated. All of the staff have some training in workplace assessment which, combined with their natural abilities, has been sufficient for the short-term training that NTC has historically delivered. However, the move to longer courses and formal qualifications will necessitate a different set of skills and understanding to maintain engagement with students and ensure that high-quality learner outcomes continue to be achieved.

NTC is considering how to best meet the literacy and numeracy needs of students. At least some of the students would benefit if literacy and numeracy development were to be embedded into the courses and if teaching staff were trained in the delivery of literacy and numeracy skills. This could greatly improve the learning

environment, produce a more cohesive programme and lead to better qualification completion.

Although the environment at NTC is very collegial, with staff regularly discussing their teaching and students, there is no a peer review process or formal appraisal of teaching. Having staff sit in on each other's classes occasionally and critiquing their teaching using a structured process would be of benefit to both the teacher and observer.

Students reported receiving clear information about assessment tasks and receiving good, timely feedback about their learning progress. Internal moderation is practised on a regular but largely informal basis through ongoing information-sharing between staff and the director. NTC is compliant with the moderation requirements of NZQA and Service IQ (the industry training organisation for hospitality).

As well as the formal student feedback process, teaching and management staff have an open-door policy to enable staff and students to approach them with problems and issues. Course evaluations completed by the learners contain positive feedback. A more systematic approach following the gathering of feedback, which could include reporting back to students on the action taken, would be preferable and may improve educational outcomes for students.

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**.

NTC has robust and student-friendly systems for the academic and pastoral support of its students. The organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment and students receive sound pre-enrolment guidance. The good retention and completion rates referred to in previous sections indicate that the support and guidance provided has been generally effective in engaging students.

The variety of funding NTC receives and the programmes it offers attracts a diverse group of students to the organisation. Many students come with no school qualifications, low literacy and numeracy skills and/or at-risk backgrounds. As there is a waiting list for places, NTC staff acknowledge that it would be a simple matter to tighten selection for the course which would probably improve completion rates and make their job easier. However, management and staff are strongly committed to accepting a few students each year who they know will struggle but who they believe, given good support, have a reasonable chance of success. The success of this strategy was borne out in evaluation interviews with students, agencies and secondary schools, who could all quote numerous cases of students

who have progressed well and become good citizens and an asset to the hospitality industry.

NTC has a process for monitoring punctuality and attendance in the belief that students who attend classes regularly have a greater chance of success. The system, while strictly enforced, is supportive and seeks to identify and address the reasons why students may not be attending classes.

As well as the valuable support provided by teaching staff, NTC has employed a designated vocational guidance coach who works one-to-one with the students. The way in which she works collaboratively with teaching staff ensures a wraparound, seamless academic support structure which students obviously appreciate. Students are moved to more applied tasks or more theory-focused activity as one mechanism to support them to remain engaged in their learning. Students have access to NTC staff outside of class hours either in person, by telephone or by text. Students reported that they feel comfortable contacting staff and always get a helpful response.

The support systems at NTC are student-centred, well resourced and well intentioned, and appear to be producing results. Management and staff have a good, intuitive understanding of student support needs and regularly discuss ideas for improvements. To date, there has been little formal analysis of exactly how much the student support provided has contributed to student achievement. Doing so would give NTC a better understanding of how to prioritise areas that require student support.

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**.

NTC is a privately owned and operated training provider with an unmistakable vision and purpose. The organisation has effective systems for monitoring student achievement and supporting staff to improve educational achievement. NTC has a clear strategy and understanding of its business. The organisation recognises where it fits in the marketplace, and any deviation from its established niche is as a result of research and planning. Each year the owner, with the assistance of an outside consultant, asks, of himself and staff, review questions informed by the end-of-course outcomes data and course evaluations to assess the state of the organisation in the current environment. This systematic process is used to develop a revised strategic plan with clear targets. The organisation is well led and the responsibilities of staff are clear and known.

Effective resourcing is planned and provided for all courses, and repairs and maintenance of resources are well budgeted for. The quality of course material is good and the training environments support learning.

The organisation has, over time, employed and retained a competent, well-qualified and dedicated group of staff. Staff obviously enjoy the environment and feel valued. There is a need for a greater level of systemisation in the review and ongoing development of the teaching, particularly given the demands of a stronger educational focus in the one-year programme. This would help NTC to maintain the high quality of its outcomes for its learners.

Monitoring of performance at all levels of the organisation is regular, transparent and open, although a greater level of systemisation around the self-assessment of teaching would assist NTC to identify opportunities for improvement. It was evident that the monitoring of performance, while often challenging, is always supportive and focused on students.

The organisation enthusiastically encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to better meet student and stakeholder needs. This has led to a reflective environment and a 'no-blame' culture throughout the organisation. Evidence indicates that the owner and staff actively seek feedback from many sources to use as a learning and improvement tool. The focus of NTC's self-assessment to date has been largely immediate and intuitive. The next challenge for NTC is to focus its efforts towards increasing its systematic self-assessment of educational performance by embedding methodical, whole-of-organisation analysis and ensuing action from self-assessment activities.

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: Programme design, development and delivery

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 Nelson Training Centre:

- Continue development in the collection of data for self-assessment
- Build capability in analysing this data
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive self-assessment regime that leads to improvement in student outcomes.

Listed below are some specific suggestions that may lead to improvements. This should not be seen as an exhaustive list. Nelson Training Centre should ensure:

- that at least some teaching staff undertake specific training in literacy and numeracy support, for instance the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (NCALE)
- that all long-term teaching staff become qualified in adult teaching.

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).

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/>.

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