



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Excel Ministries Charitable Trust

Date of report: 22 October 2024

About Excel Ministries Charitable Trust

Excel Ministries Charitable Trust is a Christian-based school focused on the development of performance art skills, specifically music and dance. In addition to the Auckland studio, two satellite sites supporting music programme delivery are in operation. All programmes culminate in a concert performed across the North Island.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	20 Portage Road, New Lynn, Auckland; satellite sites in Taupō and Palmerston North
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic 2024: 63 students, including Māori (22 per cent) and Pasifika (46 per cent). Students with an identified disability are not recorded. Sixty per cent of all learners are from South Auckland. International 2024: nil
Number of staff:	Three full-time, 10 part-time and one contracted tutor
TEO profile:	See: Excel Ministries Charitable Trust Excel Ministries Charitable Trust (EXCEL) has two satellite sites established in partnership with churches, one in Taupō (2020) and one in Palmerston North (2024). The satellite sites are intended to meet the demand for music programmes outside Auckland. Students join Auckland classes online and attend one-day block courses at the EXCEL head office. A local supervisor provides students with tutorials, revision, guidance and support. EXCEL heads of department connect with supervisors weekly to support them in their role. Satellite students all participate in

EXCEL performances across the North Island.

Since 2022, EXCEL has had a formal memorandum of understanding with a dance academy to facilitate an academic pathway at EXCEL for the dance academy students toward New Zealand qualifications at levels 4 and 5.

The dance academy uses EXCEL facilities after hours and over the weekend. The programme is delivered and assessed by an EXCEL contract tutor (the dance academy's owner-operator).

Last EER outcome:

In 2020, NZQA was Confident in Excel Ministries Charitable Trust's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

Scope of evaluation:

- Performance in Music (ID:123081) leading to award of the New Zealand Certificate in Music (Level 4) [3418]
- Performance in Dance (ID:124225) leading to award of the New Zealand Diploma in Dance (Level 5) [3425]

MoE number:

9531

NZQA reference:

C57333

Dates of EER visit:

23-25 July 2024

Summary of results

Excel Ministries Charitable Trust (EXCEL) has a core strength in supporting students' achievement and their personal and professional development, convincingly meeting stakeholder needs. Self-assessment is of inconsistent quality. Findings have been used to make improvements, but there is not sufficiently cohesive or coordinated self-assessment to guide and inform performance.

Confident in educational performance

- Achievement was impacted during the Covid pandemic. However, for the past two years rates of achievement have improved and are now consistently high. There are opportunities for improvement in data analysis and reporting that would provide a more comprehensive understanding of achievement.

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

- EXCEL's networking and stakeholder relationships in the performance sector result in career and study pathways for students and graduates. Church communities are benefiting from the technical and performance skills and abilities students and graduates have acquired and developed.
- EXCEL has matched programme design to the needs of the students. Proficient staff provide highly effective teaching and a quality learning environment. EXCEL programmes would benefit from continued improvement in the rigour of academic processes and practices.
- EXCEL is a small PTE with approximately 15 learners in each one-year programme. Daily engagement, specialist teachers, the Christian-based character of EXCEL and improved feedback mechanisms effectively support students in their learning.
- Governance and management performance is variable. EXCEL has a clear vision and purpose, and staff and students are valued and supported to achieve important outcomes. However, some

key academic processes and practices are not sufficiently robust or comprehensive to ensure academic quality is maintained.

- Management of compliance accountabilities is inconsistent. EXCEL's own compliance management is not sufficiently coordinated or cohesive to proactively identify and promptly respond to areas of weakness and opportunities for improvement.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are acquiring performance skills and gaining New Zealand qualifications in music and dance. Achievement has been variable over the past four years², a major factor being the severe impact of Covid on EXCEL students, in particular on Pasifika communities in South Auckland.³ Course and qualification completion data is tracked year on year, indicating that rates of achievement improved and were more consistent in 2022 and 2023. Enrolments increased in 2023, and this trend is continuing in 2024.</p> <p>EXCEL is collecting and collating a range of useful data, such as priority learner outcomes, to better understand equity matters. There are opportunities to improve and better articulate data analysis and findings. For example, EXCEL is not yet collecting or analysing data and outcomes of students who identify as having a disability, although heads of department are aware of these students and their positive outcomes.</p> <p>Withdrawal numbers are captured but, as with most outcomes data, generally there is little narrative to explain analysis and findings. This is important as the student's journey and factors contributing to achievement or non-achievement are not systematically captured to understand and review performance.</p>
Conclusion:	For the past two years, rates of achievement have improved and are now consistently high. There are opportunities for improvement in data analysis and

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 Refer Appendix 1.

³ Refer p2 of this report: 'Number of students'.

	reporting that would provide more comprehensive understanding of achievement.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>EXCEL students have opportunities to explore and undertake a variety of career pathways within the performance industry and in further tertiary education. EXCEL is well respected and teaching staff are well connected and engage professionally with the performing arts sector and within church ministry. These are significant relationships and networks, which are responsible for exposing students to, and encouraging them toward, future pathways.</p> <p>Of importance to graduates and stakeholders is the progression to leadership and performance roles in church settings, including large churches with multi-instrumentalist and performance-style worship settings. Through this participation, students and graduates are contributing positively to their local and wider communities.</p> <p>EXCEL's information and data collection has improved in this area. Alongside graduate surveys, the heads of department have personal knowledge of graduate outcomes through the provision of support toward their next destination.</p> <p>To ensure meaningful use and review of these important outcomes, EXCEL would benefit from including the graduate outcomes, findings and analysis in programme and annual reviews.</p>
Conclusion:	EXCEL's networking and stakeholder relationships in the performance sector results in notable career and study pathways for students and graduates. Church communities are benefiting from the professional performance skills and abilities students and graduates have acquired and developed.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The heads of department for dance and music are well qualified and suitably experienced for their roles, both professionally and academically. Tutors are working professionals in the performing arts, often at national level, and some have international experience. All teaching staff effectively use their experience to inform programme and course design and teaching.</p> <p>Over the past four years, EXCEL's programmes have been through several redesigns. The application of skills and knowledge continues throughout the programmes and culminates in public performances that contribute to authentic summative assessment. There is clear oversight and coordination of assessment by heads of department.</p> <p>Moderation policies have been recently updated, marking rubrics have been strengthened, and learning outcomes better aligned to graduate profile outcomes following NZQA monitoring of the level 5 music qualification. Heads of department and the EXCEL director have attended assessment and moderation professional development, which they have found useful.</p> <p>Evidence of various programme and annual reviews provided by EXCEL mostly focuses on a summary of each course. The programme reviews may benefit from having a broader focus to understand how well student and stakeholder needs are being met.</p> <p>Students are well attuned to and evaluate their own academic and performance progress. Small cohorts enable daily feedback through engagement with tutors and from peers as they collaborate in performance rehearsals.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme design is well matched to the needs of the students, and highly effective teaching by proficient heads of department and tutors provides a quality learning environment. There are opportunities to further strengthen self-assessment.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>EXCEL ensures students are enrolled into programmes where they will be developed and have every chance to succeed. Through audition and interview, a range of factors are explored that underpin likely successful completion and progression to the students' chosen pathways. At times whānau or pastoral guides are involved.</p> <p>EXCEL is particularly strong on responsiveness to cultural and generational elements and needs, as well as legacy traditions – faith and culture. Language weeks, marae stays (on tour), talanoa and other non-western practices and epistemologies are woven into the rhythm of the campus.</p> <p>Students feel safe, supported and have a strong sense of belonging. Boundaries and disciplines (attendance and extensions for example) are seen by students as fairly and consistently applied. Spiritual disciplines – prayer, worship, scripture memorisation – are woven into the learning in a way that is inclusive of individuals' various expressions of faith.</p> <p>EXCEL has a pastoral approach to student support. Excel's oversight and understanding of students' pastoral care needs and support is through formal student feedback mechanisms, which have improved since the last EER, as well as daily engagement and connection.</p> <p>The few students at satellite sites⁴ have a supervisor for support who is connected with heads of department and the director of people and culture. However, it is not clear the extent to which EXCEL understands how well the academic and pastoral needs of the one or two dance academy⁵ students are being met.</p>

⁴ Refer p2 of this report: 'TEO profile'.

⁵ Refer pp 2 and 3 of this report: 'TEO profile'.

	EXCEL has used the Code of Practice ⁶ review well to identify strengths and areas for improvement, which has led to the recent introduction of a student wellbeing survey.
Conclusion:	EXCEL is a small PTE with approximately 15 learners in each one-year programme. Daily engagement, specialist teachers, the Christian-based character of EXCEL and improved feedback mechanisms effectively support the students in their learning.

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The PTE structure is effective, and the purpose and vision of the organisation is clearly articulated, focusing decision-making, resourcing and direction. The PTE and the director are well supported by the board which receives and discusses informative reports and has agreed a business plan designed to progress EXCEL's priorities. The increase in student enrolments and rates of achievement indicates that EXCEL is gaining traction in these areas.</p> <p>The Christian-based heart of EXCEL values the students, staff and stakeholders. Governance and management are genuinely and effectively supporting these areas as a priority. Examples include: programme design; provision of quality resources, facilities and equipment; purchase of a system for managing customer relations; and management and support of proficient teaching staff (time off for Master's and PhD study, commitment to gigs).</p> <p>EXCEL has navigated a number of issues well: the challenges and disruptions of Covid, reductions and changes in teaching staff, decreased enrolments and funding. Focusing on these challenges has resulted in a shift of academic responsibilities and less attention to or rigour in some areas: the quality of programme review; external moderation of the level 5 dance programme; and</p>

⁶ Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

	review of the satellite delivery approach. As academic quality underpins the validity of outcomes, oversight of academic quality across programmes needs to be strengthened.
Conclusion:	Governance and management performance is variable. EXCEL has a clear vision and purpose, and staff and students are valued and supported to achieve important outcomes. However, some key academic processes and practices are not sufficiently robust or comprehensive to ensure academic quality is maintained (see also 1.6).

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance management is overseen by the director, and EXCEL is monitoring and reporting some compliance accountabilities well. Effective NZQA-related compliance management includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Practice reviews and publishing the resulting reports on EXCEL’s website • PTE annual statutory declarations • Annual fee return • Delivery as per programme approval. <p>However, there is also evidence of less effective compliance management; for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZQA needed to prompt EXCEL several times (2022-24) to submit student fee protection attestations. • The NZQA monitor’s findings in 2023 for the New Zealand Diploma in Music (Level 5) were not first identified by Excel. • Statutory declarations for governance members were completed in 2020, but not submitted to NZQA. <p>EXCEL has been responsive to addressing gaps identified through compliance monitoring by external entities (NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission). However, EXCEL’s</p>

	<p>own processes and practices in self-monitoring and managing compliance accountabilities are less convincing.</p> <p>Findings in the 2020 EER report led to a recommendation that EXCEL review its compliance management system. The further identification by NZQA at this EER of several weaknesses in academic quality processes, and compliance management, indicates that any changes or improvements made by EXCEL have not been effective.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Management of compliance accountabilities is inconsistent. EXCEL's own compliance management is not sufficiently coordinated or cohesive to proactively identify and promptly respond to areas of weakness and opportunities for improvement.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Certificate in Music (Level 4)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Conclusion:	Although enrolments have still not recovered to pre-Covid numbers, the rate of achievement is steadily improving. Students are acquiring performance skills and progressing to music level 5. Graduate destination data collection has improved, and a range of useful data is collected and collated. The low number of programme enrolments means staff are aware of and can respond to individual student academic and pastoral care needs.

2.2 New Zealand Diploma in Dance (Level 5)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Conclusion:	Student outcomes are generally strong, with 87-100 per cent achievement over the past four years, which is clearly underpinned by effective student support. Graduates progress to career and study pathways, therefore meeting their study objectives. Graduate destination data collection has improved, and a range of useful data is collected and collated. The low number of programme enrolments means staff are aware of and can respond to individual student academic and pastoral care needs.

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Excel Ministries Charitable Trust:

- Consider establishing an academic committee for oversight of academic quality; to oversee all aspects of programme development and delivery (including satellite sites), receive reviews and actions plans, and monitor academic compliance.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of all aspects of satellite and dance academy programme delivery.
- Document the analysis of outcomes data and information collected, to ensure the detail, findings and nuances of programmes over time are available to inform review.
- Review the structure of programme reviews to include a range of programme-related information that includes tutor input and student feedback.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

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

Appendix 1

Focus Area 1. New Zealand Certificate in Music (Level 4)⁷

New Zealand Certificate in Music (Level 4)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total enrolments	29	27	10	16
Qualification completions	49%	41%	60%	75%
Enrolments Māori	7	4	5	8
Qualification completions Māori	3(43%)	2(50%)	3(60%)	7(88%)
Enrolments Pasifika	18	21	4	6
Qualification completions Pasifika	7(40%)	7(33%)	2(50%)	3(50%)

New Zealand Certificate in Dance (Level 4)⁸

New Zealand Certificate in Dance (Level 4)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total enrolments	5	7	4	4
Qualification completions	20%	43%	100%	50%
Enrolments Māori	1	4	1	1
Qualification completions Māori	0	5(75%)	1(100%)	1(100%)
Enrolments Pasifika	3	0	0	2
Qualification completions Pasifika	0			1(50%)

⁷ Source - EXCEL Statistics Overview – Qualification Completions 2018 – 2023 and EXCEL Statistics Overview – Māori and Pasifika MUSIC

⁸ Source - EXCEL Statistics Overview – Qualification Completions 2018 – 2023 and EXCEL Statistics Overview – Māori and Pasifika DANCE

New Zealand Diploma in Music (Level 5)⁹

New Zealand Certificate in Music (Level 5)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total enrolments	13	15	23	16
Qualification completions	69%	53%	78%	75%
Enrolments Māori	5	3	1	2
Qualification completions Māori	5(100%)	3(100%)	1(100%)	2(100%)
Enrolments Pasifika	8	12	19	11
Qualification completions Pasifika	5(63%)	5(42%)	15(79%)	8(73%)

Focus Area 2: New Zealand Diploma in Dance (Level 5)¹⁰

New Zealand Certificate in Dance (Level 5)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total enrolments	6	5	6	15
Qualification completions	100%	100%	100%	87%
Enrolments Māori	1	1	3	1
Qualification completions Māori	1(100%)	1(100%)	3(100%)	1(100%)
Enrolments Pasifika	2	2	3	10
Qualification completions Pasifika	2(100%)	2(100%)	3(100%)	8(80%)

⁹ Source - EXCEL Statistics Overview – Qualification Completions 2018 – 2023 and EXCEL Statistics Overview – Māori and Pasifika MUSIC

¹⁰ Source - EXCEL Statistics Overview – Qualification Completions 2018 – 2023 and EXCEL Statistics Overview – Māori and Pasifika DANCE

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud¹¹*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

¹¹ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

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

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

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

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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