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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Network for Fitness Professionals
Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 24 November 2017

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Final Report

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:	Network for Fitness Professionals Limited (Netfit)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1995
Location:	66 Murray Place, Christchurch – the business base of the owner.
Delivery sites:	Netfit offer distance courses. The PTE conducts practical assessments and related teaching (labs) at its delivery site at Level 1, 19b Ronwood Ave, Manukau, Auckland.
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Fitness (Foundation Skills) (Level 2)• National Certificate in Fitness (Exercise Consultant) (Level 3)• New Zealand Certificate in Fitness (Group Fitness) (Level 3)• Netfit Certificate in Personal Training (Level 4)• A range of non-formal short courses such as Pilates, Strength and Conditioning, and Sports Nutrition have been offered on demand, but are currently on hold.
Code of Practice signatory:	No

Number of students:	Domestic: currently 34 students are completing their programme. There has been a hold on new enrolments for 2017. Most students are female and working in the fitness industry.
Number of staff:	Four staff, all part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	A range of sub-fields and domains in Fitness, Sport and Recreation up to level 5
Distinctive characteristics:	Netfit is a provider of fitness education which equips students with the skills for employment or further study in the fitness industry. Netfit's programmes are all part-time and delivered in a blended mode which includes a mix of paper-based distance delivery and assessment, and face-to-face workshops and practical labs.
Recent significant changes:	<p>At the beginning of 2017, Netfit was purchased by the New Zealand Institute of Health and Fitness Trust (NZIHF Trust). The sale was the result of the long-term owner of Netfit retiring.</p> <p>NZIHF Trust has been involved in the fitness industry for several years, and also owns New Zealand Institute of Health and Fitness Limited (NZIHF Ltd) and IPT Australia Limited (IPT Ltd). Both organisations provide vocational education and training to the fitness industry. NZIHF is operating a subcontracting arrangement with an institute of technology/polytechnic in New Zealand, and IPT Ltd is a registered training organisation in Australia.</p> <p>The new owner has undertaken a full review of the PTE. Enrolments are on hold and all current students are being supported to complete their programme of study by the end of 2017. The target to complete by the end of 2017 coincides with the expiry date for five standards in two of the four programmes. There has been a reduction in the number of staff and hours worked. Netfit is using this time to strategise and plan the future of the PTE.</p>

Previous quality assurance history: The previous external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted in April 2013. At that time, NZQA was Highly Confident in Netfit's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.

NZQA external moderation results for 2013 and 2015 – respectively for unit standards 11818 *Demonstrate and apply product and/or service knowledge* and 376 *Employ customer service techniques to accommodate customer behavioural styles in a workplace* – indicated that the assessment and assessor judgements met requirements. In 2016, for unit standard 56 *Attend to customer enquiries face-to-face and on the telephone*, the assessment required modification and assessor judgements were not upheld.

External moderation with the standard-setting body, Skills Active, has only occurred in 2017 as Netfit was previously on a three-year cycle due to the low number of learners' results being reported. Two unit standards were selected in 2017: 22261 *Demonstrate knowledge of the purpose, pitfalls and use of exercise testing* and 13384 *Apply motivational techniques to enhance client commitment to a personal training programme*. Both the assessment and assessor judgements did not meet the required standard. Skills Active requested submission of a further unit standard, 13382 *Develop and teach a simple movement skill in a specified workplace*, for peer moderation in September 2017. Both assessment and assessor judgements did not meet the required standard. An action plan and further moderation submission were being negotiated at the time of writing the draft report for this EER. Skills Active noted that no evidence of pre-moderation was provided by Netfit.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER included one focus area: Level 3 and 4 Programmes.

During the EER it became apparent that due to the current circumstances and transition that Netfit is undergoing, All Programmes would be a more accurate focus area.

This focus area encompasses all the educational activity of the PTE.

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.

Two evaluators visited Netfit at the Ronwood Avenue site for one day. Interviews were conducted with the chief executive officer, academic manager and a tutor. Phone interviews were conducted with one current and a previously employed tutor and a Skills Active national moderator. Some current students and graduates provided feedback to the evaluators by email.

In addition to the documents provided for the EER scoping exercise, the evaluators sighted various documents pertaining to Netfit's self-review, performance data, course information including programme reviews and policies, and internal moderation. Documentation that is still in development was also provided. Netfit is using a Cloud-based programme to monitor students' progress and share organisational information. The PTE demonstrated this programme to the evaluators.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Network for Fitness Professionals Limited**.

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Network for Fitness Professionals Limited**.

Netfit is well embedded in the fitness industry through its training and educational activities in New Zealand and Australia. The new owner and academic manager bring a strong industry and academic awareness to their work, and are applying business processes to Netfit from the other organisations they operate. Netfit staff, both current and past, all have significant experience in the fitness industry as educators and practitioners.

Following the change in ownership in January 2017, Netfit has undergone significant change. Key activities of the PTE since the previous EER in 2013 were explored and considered in the findings of this EER.

Most students have been retained in study and gain the qualification they seek to achieve. The students and graduates interviewed said they had gained value from the teaching and qualifications, which validates the skills many have already been using in the workplace.

The effectiveness of some processes – such as internal moderation and the impact of the programmes, teaching and learning – was not convincingly demonstrated. This is primarily due to the loss of key staff.

Netfit has limited documentation or other evidence to support the anecdotal view of staff that processes and activities have been in place and effective from 2013 to the present day. In the past seven months Netfit has been in a planned phase of transition. The organisation has undertaken a full and effective self-review. The resulting information is being used to identify areas requiring improvement and to plan and strategise the new direction, including programmes, resources and delivery to meet the needs of the fitness industry.

Important and useful changes are already evident, such as the use of an improved system to monitor student progress and achievement. This system is providing important information in real time, and is transparent and accessible to all relevant staff. Netfit has improved its internal communications and access to and sharing of important information, such as new policies and processes on moderation and student and graduate surveys. The PTE is also developing an advisory group. Numerous other changes resulting from the self-review are still in their early phase.

Netfit's self-review, the business strategy and plan, the changes and improvements that have been initiated, and the availability of appropriate resources indicate that the organisation is well positioned to meet the needs of the small number of learners currently enrolled, supporting the confidence rating of the forward looking statements of confidence.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

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

Over the past four years, Netfit's distance delivery programmes have retained learners. Most learners have completed, or are on track to complete, the qualification they are enrolled in. Overall, the completion rates for Netfit programmes are considered on par with other distance learning programmes. The baseline for comparison is the institute of technology/polytechnic that NZHIF has a subcontracting arrangement with for the delivery of sector-related and similar-level programmes (see introduction).

Netfit identified shortfalls in the transparency of achievement data and monitoring of student progress, and these have been rectified. Netfit is now collating and reviewing disaggregated data to better understand learner achievement. There is a disparity in the rates of achievement for Māori learners compared with non-Māori. This is significant, as in previous years Māori comprised 20, 12 and 41 per cent of the learners enrolled. Pasifika learner numbers are very low, and on average half of these learners have achieved. Netfit has not taken any new enrolments in 2017. The intention is to work with the remaining students, all who have extensions from enrolments in previous years, through to completion by the end of 2017, when a number of the assessment standards within the programmes expire.

Although qualification achievement appears reasonable, there is no evidence that Netfit has undertaken internal pre- or post-moderation since the previous EER. Netfit is not updating materials or assessments for the expiring standards associated with these programmes. Significantly, external moderation with NZQA in 2016 and Skills Active during 2017 indicates that assessments and assessor judgements are not to the national standard. This undermines the reliability of the reported results, and this is reflected in the rating for this key evaluation question.

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

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

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

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

Netfit has identified that students and graduates undertake the qualification primarily to enhance their professional credibility and validate the skills they are using in the fitness industry, as almost all are already employed. Netfit is registered by the Fitness Industry Association to recognise and register exercise professionals. Graduates gain registration to the Fitness Industry Association which endorses the fitness trainer, holding them to industry standards.

Both the current and previous owner and staff have extensive and relevant experience in the fitness industry spanning many years. Although the value of the qualifications and quality of outcomes for graduates is implied through this authentic engagement, it is not purposefully captured or explored to demonstrate the extent to which industry or graduate needs have been met through the delivery of Netfit programmes.

Learner enrolments declined over 2014-2016 and Netfit identified that its processes to gain feedback have been lacking. Netfit will benefit from the input of the industry advisory group it has begun to establish, and plans to better engage graduates going forward.

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

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 programme delivery and content matches the learner profile of Netfit students who are mostly female, over 25 years and employed in the fitness industry. Netfit's programmes are all part-time and delivered in a blended mode. This involves a mix of paper-based distance delivery and assessment, and face-to-face workshops and practical labs delivered in specialist facilities under qualified instruction. Netfit has followed this effective model of delivery for many years.

This year, as part of the organisational self-assessment review, all programmes have been formally reviewed to check the currency of assessment standard versions, teaching and learning resources, and content. This is an improvement on reviews previously undertaken, as described by staff. As a result of the findings

from the PTE's programme review and the industry-wide Targeted Review of Qualifications, Netfit decided to cease enrolments into programmes in 2017. The aim was to focus on developing new programmes for delivery in 2018 that better reflect the current and future needs of the industry and fitness trainers. Two new programmes are currently undergoing review by Skills Active.

Netfit has been surveying learners at the end of the programme and after practical labs, gathering individual feedback. However, the response rate has been very low and the data has not been collated. As such, the PTE's processes to gather learner feedback on the programme, teaching and learning have been ineffective. The new management and owner are focusing their attention on this area. A new process for systematically gathering feedback is in development and an improved survey has been trialled, which is now on its second iteration.

Overall, Netfit has recognised priority areas where performance was weak and has taken a planned approach – which is well underway – to address these areas.

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

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**.

Learning is self-paced in Netfit's level 2-4 distance programmes. Support is available by email and phone when requested by the learners. Netfit students have readily been provided with extensions which in some cases are significant, taking double the intended time to complete. As Netfit's learners are already working or engaging with the fitness industry, there has been an assumption that, logically, learners would have the capability to directly apply the learning. No analysis was available to indicate Netfit's understanding of or response to the specific support and learning needs of these learners. This is important as the entry-level programme is at foundation level and distance learning has unique challenges and benefits for learners.

As a part of Netfit's plan to move the PTE forward, it has undertaken to support the remaining learners to complete the programme and qualification. Netfit has recently gained a clearer picture of the progress of all learners (see 1.1), enabling the tutor to target and engage these learners to support their efforts to complete. Additional labs have been arranged and offered to give the students a further opportunity for assessment. Netfit anticipates that most, if not all, of the 34 learners will successfully complete by the end of this year.

1.5 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 purpose and direction of Netfit is clear and based on the self-review stocktake undertaken early in 2017. This produced valuable information to guide the strategic planning and decision-making of the PTE. Plans to implement the findings are in development. Netfit has the resource and skill requirements to support their implementation. Netfit continues to review the needs of the organisation in terms of appropriate recruitment of staff and the development of academic policies and processes to support educational achievement.

Netfit is owned by NZIHF Trust. Through this relationship, Netfit is applying well-established business practices being used by two other training providers. These training providers operate in New Zealand and Australia and Netfit benefits from the sharing of industry knowledge and practice in the fitness sector.

The new owner and academic manager have strong industry and academic backgrounds, with years of experience working in tertiary education including in an industry training organisation, participating in the Targeted Review of Qualifications, and helping to write new qualifications for the fitness sector. The programme development currently underway reflects the expertise and experience of Netfit personnel.

Netfit has sufficient resources including skills, knowledge and the capacity to progress and implement its future plans. There are efficiencies where Netfit is able to share physical resources to ensure equipment and facilities are of a good quality and reflect current industry activities. Financial resources have been allocated to support the future investment in Netfit systems; this is evident in the purchase of a new student management system.

Under new governance and management from the beginning of 2017, Netfit has identified areas for improvement and ceased enrolments to focus on future programmes and improve systems and processes. There is evidence of some worthwhile improvements; many are still a work in progress.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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 confirmed the effectiveness of Netfit's compliance management by reviewing information held by NZQA regarding risk, approvals and accreditation, and assessment and moderation, and by on-site interviews. Netfit has used an audit approach and conducted a self-review using the PTE registration rules as a guide, and deemed themselves compliant. This seems a reasonable approach given the scale of the operation.

NZQA's processes regarding change in ownership, site approvals and attestations and returns have been met, and extensions have been provided during the change of ownership. These processes have occupied a considerable part of the PTE's necessary compliance responsibilities for 2016-2017.

Netfit has identified challenges with current programmes; however, the impact is limited in that there have been no enrolments since 2016. As previously discussed, moderation is an area that requires improvement; indications are that internal processes are ineffective. Netfit has the capacity and capability to better implement and oversee moderation and assessment going forward.

Other important compliance accountabilities for Netfit include:

- Complaints – Netfit has a complaints register and confirms there are no staff or student complaints and no legal matters are pending.
- Health and safety compliance in regard to the use of buildings and gyms all have the required consents for operation.
- Staff have first aid training and the skills to use and supervise others using gym equipment.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: All Programmes

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Network for Fitness Professional Limited:

- Review and improve internal moderation and assessment processes and monitoring.
- Develop indicators to measure the criteria from which to gauge the impact and benefit of future programme delivery to the fitness industry and for students.
- Gather evidence that the support and guidance provided to distance learners effectively match their needs.

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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