



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Valley Education and Training
Enterprises Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 6 September 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	4
Summary of Results	5
Findings	7
Recommendations	14
Appendix	15

MoE Number: 9981
NZQA Reference: CO4753
Date of EER visit: 18 and 19 May 2011

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:	Kopu, Thames
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1995
Number of students:	Domestic: 25 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Five equivalent full-time staff
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing (Levels 2 and 3)• National Certificate in Computing (Levels 2 and 3)• National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1)
Sites:	One as above
Distinctive characteristics:	Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited (VETEL) is the only PTE in the Thames area offering Training Opportunities and Youth Training programmes from levels 1-3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. VETEL summarises its mission as, “more than just training” as it emphasises socialisation, support, and personal growth. It is committed to incorporating more literacy and numeracy into all its programmes.
Recent significant changes:	VETEL has recently started work on an adult literacy and numeracy contract organised by Thames Timber. It has also recently obtained a contract for 44 placements with the Ministry of Social Development's 12 Months

Plus client placement service.

Previous quality assurance history:

The most recent NZQA quality assurance visit was an audit in 2009 and resulted in VETEL substantially meeting all requirements.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

In accordance with NZQA policy, the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy was included in the scope. VETEL's largest programme, the Foundation-Focused Training Opportunities computing programme, was selected as a second focus area.

The third focus area is the Youth Employment Skills programme. This was selected because it is the organisation's other main programme and is in the process of being upgraded.

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 external evaluation and review was conducted over two days by two external lead evaluators. The evaluation involved engagement with:

- The manager
- The two full-time tutors
- An ex-tutor now working as a development assistant
- The students on the two programmes selected as focus areas
- Stakeholders and former students.

Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited 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 **Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited**.

VETEL's students record high levels of achievement. In the Foundation-Focused Training Opportunities (FFTO) computing course, for example, the percentages of students who achieved more than the 20 credits required by the Tertiary Education Commission were 67 per cent in 2009 and 70 per cent in 2010. The comparative nationwide figure in 2009 was 31 per cent¹. A similar story of achievement is revealed by the percentage of students gaining employment or moving to further training of 67 per cent for the FFTO computing course in 2009 and 57 per cent in 2010. Higher rates of 88 per cent in 2009 and 60 per cent in 2010 for the same positive labour market outcomes were recorded for the Youth Employment Skills (YES) programme. VETEL is clearly filling a gap in education provision around the Thames area. Students and staff confirm the growth in student self-esteem derived from the achievement of New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF) unit standard credits and their move into employment or further training.

The process of needs analysis at VETEL is thorough and consists of such features as an interview form which summarises some of the students' needs, an initial trial lasting at least a week, and the six-weekly programme evaluation meetings which provide updates of the students' needs to be met. Some of the students interviewed by the evaluation team described how VETEL responds further to their needs by providing education pathways to other institutions such as polytechnics. The students benefit from small class sizes and the experienced input provided by the manager and the development assistant. Both these people frequently visit the two classrooms and check the methods of delivery. Such visits assist in overcoming the inexperience of the tutors, and other processes are being developed to ensure students remain at VETEL for no longer than necessary.

A multiplicity of forms of support for the students is evident, ranging from the six-weekly programme evaluation interviews to the provision of vehicle transport to collect the students. The end product is a positive and supportive learning environment underpinned by effective management. The governance and management teams are to the forefront in the way they are frequently thinking about the future and considering a range of opportunities. Many of these are contained in the business plan.

¹ Calculated from Ministry of Education: *Education Counts: Retention and Achievement: Achievement in targeted training programmes*.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited**.

The six-weekly programme evaluation sheets and the associated one-to-one meetings between the students and the tutors provide an effective opportunity for VETEL to review the progress of each student. Performance baselines and associated systems are being developed to fully record the progress being made in VETEL's literacy and numeracy work at Thames Timber and at its own site. However, some of this data has only been collected for reporting purposes and is not being fully analysed. VETEL recognises that it needs to use such data better to understand its training and to improve educational performance.

The organisation is continually checking that it is meeting the needs of its learners and some of its external stakeholders. There is room for further checks on links to external stakeholders, particularly employers, to take place. VETEL recognises this through its recent interest in using Survey Monkey online software to fill the gap.

Systems are implemented to ensure that the teaching is effective. The manager uses summaries of the six-weekly evaluation forms to check student progress and to reflect on improvements that could be made. An example of this was a suggestion for students to record their goals in a more accessible place so they could easily refer to them on at least a weekly basis. A thorough appraisal system has been established which exemplifies the commitment to assessing the current situation and to raising performance. VETEL recognises that it could still do more to strengthen the link between self-assessment and educational performance. Once this link has been strengthened, VETEL may be confident that it is maximising the effect of its good self-assessment practices.

TEO response

Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

The students at VETEL on the main programmes emphasised how much they feel they are achieving. They described the wide ranges of skills they are developing. These ranged from some basic life skills to advanced computing skills. Evidence was seen of one past student who was unable to concentrate when he started at VETEL and stayed outside the room for long periods. He gradually improved and progressed to doing some programming in QBASIC before moving to a polytechnic where he completed a computing certificate and was one of five students from his class of 35 who were accepted into the degree course.

All the students confirmed in particular how much their job-seeking skills were improving. These positive impressions of achievement are justified, according to the results seen by the evaluation team. In the FFTO computing course, for example, an average 54.9 credits were achieved per student in 2009 and an average of 49.4 credits in 2010 (Tertiary Education Commission requirement, 20 credits). The percentages of students on this course who achieved more than the required 20 credits were 67 per cent in 2009 and 70 per cent in 2010. The comparative nationwide rate of 31 per cent for 2009³ illustrates the high level of achievement by VETEL students.

A similar story of achievement, although at slightly lower levels, is revealed for the YES programme. The average credits per student remained relatively stable at 30.2 in 2009 and 29.5 in 2010, while the percentages of students gaining more than 20 credits were 60 per cent and 44 per cent for those two years. The 2009 rate of 60 per cent can be compared with the nationwide rate of 37 per cent⁴, again illustrating the high level of achievement of VETEL students.

A continuous check on the level of achievement is kept by the students in their handbooks and by the tutors. This self-assessment practice is formalised to some extent by the six-weekly evaluation sheets and the associated one-to-one meetings with the tutors. The meetings provide an opportunity to review the progress of each student and to report the main points to VETEL's manager who is also one of the two directors. Evidence was seen of the manager using these summaries to improve current processes. An example provided at the time of the evaluation visit was the suggestion from the manager based on feedback

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ Calculated from Ministry of Education: *Education Counts: Retention and Achievement: Achievement in targeted training programmes*.

⁴ Calculated from Ministry of Education: *Education Counts: Retention and Achievement: Achievement in targeted training programmes*.

from the meetings that more attention should be paid to the levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy.

VETEL undertakes some informal benchmarking through contacts with other providers but could strengthen this aspect. It could also develop a system adapted to its particular programmes which could show meaningful achievement trends over time.

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**.

Although many of the students at VETEL have not previously had positive experiences with the education system, they recognise that VETEL is providing them with valuable skills. These are reflected in the positive labour market outcomes being achieved: 67 per cent for the FFTO computing courses in 2009 and 57 per cent in 2010. Higher rates of 88 per cent in 2009 and 60 per cent in 2010 for the same outcomes were recorded for the YES programme. When the rates for the two main programmes for 2009 and 2010 are combined, the 15 students who recorded negative outcomes included four who have since moved on to study at polytechnics or universities and seven who only studied at VETEL for a few days.

VETEL is clearly filling a gap in education provision around the Thames area. The students and staff confirm the growth in student self-esteem derived from the achievement of unit standard credits, the moves into employment and further training, the maintenance of regular attendance, and the development of life skills in such areas as cooking and health and safety.

The programme that started in late 2010 with Thames Timber is another illustration of the contribution being made by VETEL to the community. This initiative originated in a Tertiary Education Commission employer literacy and numeracy contract. VETEL supplies the tutor and additional support in the form of another tutor who provides one-to-one assistance. The programme currently has 53 learners. VETEL has observed the growth in confidence by the participants, and Thames Timber has reported that team morale has increased and there is now more interest in other education courses. The whole community benefits from such changes. A similar situation exists with the contract that VETEL has obtained with the Ministry of Social Development's 12 Months Plus client placement service to provide 44 job placements. VETEL achieves this target with placements in a wide variety of sectors.

The performance baselines established for the literacy and numeracy work at both Thames Timber and VETEL were sighted by the evaluation team, and systems are being developed to fully record the progress being made. At the moment, however, some of the data has only been collected for reporting purposes and is not being fully analysed. VETEL recognises that it needs to use such data better to understand its training and to improve educational performance.

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 **Good**.

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

The process of needs analysis for students is thorough and consists of such features as an interview form which summarises some of these needs, an initial trial lasting at least a week, and the six-weekly evaluation meetings which provide updates of the needs to be met. The students' needs are further discovered through tutor observation and informal discussions between the tutors and the students. Appropriate units of study are selected for the students and they appreciate how this helps them make progress. VETEL recognises that some students will be able to move through the YES programme relatively quickly, so they are encouraged to transfer to the FFTO computing courses when they meet the requirements.

This approach to ensuring students study programmes suited to their needs is further endorsed by the accompanying literacy and numeracy programmes which are designed to meet the specific needs of each learner. VETEL also recognises that many students are lacking some basic skills and require a flexible approach to their studies. The students are encouraged to learn social skills, such as speaking in public, and to improve their information technology skills, such as touch typing, as well as to develop better job-seeking skills. In the process of gaining these skills, the students can gain more credits which often lead to the acquisition of additional levels in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. A programme coordinator from Work and Income Employment Zone in Hamilton summarised the FFTO computing courses as, "teaching the technical skills needed to take up employment and also those important basic life skills that are vital to make employment sustainable".

Some of the students interviewed by the evaluation team described how VETEL responds to their needs by providing education pathways to other institutions such as polytechnics. Students confirmed that VETEL also awakens a desire in some of them to move on to other courses such as hairdressing and nursing. Most of these courses involve a move away from the local community, which can pose problems. The students again described how VETEL recognises this and attempts to do everything it can to provide meaningful courses at its site so that students can stay in the local area. Contact is maintained with local organisations such as Thames High School, as evidenced by the fact that three students have returned there from VETEL in the last two years.

It can therefore be seen that VETEL is continually checking that it is meeting the needs of its learners and some of its other stakeholders. However, there is room for further checks on links to external stakeholders, particularly employers. VETEL recognises this through its recent interest in using Survey Monkey software to fill the gap. Currently, the links are relatively informal, consisting mainly of participation in community meetings such as the Work and Income Community Link meetings which take place every two months.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Relationships between the tutors and students are clearly strong at VETEL, and this was emphasised to the evaluation team. The students respect the tutors and appreciate that they are familiar with their backgrounds. The tutors are aware of the need to mix theory and practice, and they do this so successfully that the students remain engaged. Learning plans are drawn up in conjunction with the students who then record their progress on sheets in their student handbooks which list the assessments they have passed and any certificates they may have achieved.

The students benefit from the small class sizes and the internal moderation procedures that have been developed. These procedures have been endorsed by satisfactory external moderation reports. The students also benefit from the input provided by the manager and the development assistant. Both these people frequently visit the two classrooms and check the methods of delivery. At appropriate times, the manager provides feedback which improves educational performance. An example of this was when she suggested that the tutor move around the room more in order to provide individual assistance rather than wait for a request for help to be made.

The tutors are formally observed delivering lessons by the manager and a written report is completed. Students are also involved in the process of evaluating their tutors through an evaluation sheet they are asked to complete. Many measures are therefore taken to ensure that the teaching is effective. VETEL is conscious that its main tutors are relatively inexperienced and appreciates that it needs to maintain systems to support them. The feedback from the tutors to the students occasionally seemed to be vague, and this is an area where more guidance could be given.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

A multiplicity of forms of support for the students is evident. Staff members make their phone numbers available at all times. They help the students with study skills and with any personal issues or arrange outside assistance where necessary. A programme coordinator from Work and Income Employment Zone in Hamilton recognised that VETEL “provides excellent support and mentoring” and appreciated how “tutors work alongside clients to train up and to strengthen any weaknesses they recognise while developing reliable, keen employees”. Individual help is always available for the students and care is taken to provide appropriate education pathways.

One component of the student support system at VETEL is the six-weekly evaluation interviews. These provide an opportunity to review the support being provided through the goal-setting process and to supplement it. However, the evaluation forms themselves place

little emphasis on student support and could be strengthened in this respect. The manager uses the summaries of these forms to provide feedback which she can use to improve processes and, hopefully, educational performance. One example occurring at the time of the evaluation visit was a suggestion for the students to record their goals in a more accessible place so they could more easily refer to them at least weekly.

As befits a small organisation, management is at the forefront in the provision of support to the students. In order to overcome the lack of public transport in the area, VETEL provides transport to collect the students. Many other methods of support have been described which are encouraged and often initiated by management. The end product is a positive and supportive learning environment. Management might like to consider allocating direct responsibility for student support to one staff member, and this person could develop more procedures for checking the effectiveness of the guidance provided, such as through exit interviews.

VETEL already recognises the desirability of employing a male tutor and having more male mentors for the students. There is a good understanding of the problems being faced by the students and there is optimism that VETEL's contacts with the Ministry of Social Development will lead to some additional programmes being developed.

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

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**.

VETEL is successfully meeting the challenges posed by the changing environment in which it operates. The governance and management teams are frequently thinking about the future and considering a range of opportunities. Many of these are contained in the business plan. A support agreement is being completed with the Motor Industry Trade Organisation and a relationship is being developed with the Hospitality Standards Institute. The work of the development assistant is proving to be crucial in these areas. VETEL's contract for job placements with the Ministry of Social Development is another example of management responding positively to change.

Efforts are being made to plan for the future; at the same time, current needs are not being neglected. VETEL is well resourced in the form of computers and is ensuring its staff members improve their adult education qualifications. Professional development for the staff is well supported and all staff members are engaged in further training. Two have almost completed the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education and two of the tutors are studying for the Diploma in Adult Education.

There is a high level of staff involvement at VETEL. This is facilitated by the manager sharing information whenever she can and always being approachable. Staff meetings are held once a week to discuss a full range of issues. Once a year, staff members are asked to evaluate the manager on her organisation, responsiveness, communication, and management. A more detailed approach is adopted for the appraisal of the tutors,

consisting of a self-review sheet, a student review sheet, a management review sheet, and a teaching observation form. Both approaches exemplify a commitment to assessing the current situation and to raising performance.

VETEL recognises that it could still do more to strengthen the links between self-assessment and educational performance. Its self-assessment, for example, revealed a need to secure an improvement in student behaviour. In response, some measures were taken such as using outside speakers for drug issues. Although staff members feel there has been an improvement, no criteria were established to indicate the degree of improvement, the effectiveness of different methods used, or whether other methods might have been more successful. Once this link has been strengthened, VETEL can be confident that it is maximising the effects of its good self-assessment practices.

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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Foundation-Focused Training Opportunities computing courses

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: Youth Employment Skills 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**.

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-eer/introduction/>*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz