



NEW ZEALAND **QUALIFICATIONS** AUTHORITY
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External Evaluation and Review Report

VSTET Limited

Date of report: 10 August 2022

About VSTET Limited

VSTET is a newly established private training establishment providing individualised programmes for Alternative Education and Youth Guarantee learners in the Otago region.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	229b Kaikorai Valley Road, Bradford, Dunedin
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 22 students (11.5 equivalent full-time students) in 2021; 36 per cent Māori
Number of staff:	Two full-time; one part-time
TEO profile:	VSTET Limited (provider page on NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	This is VSTET's first EER.
Scope of evaluation:	All of organisation. Delivery of education to learners funded through Alternative Education and Youth Guarantee. At the time of the EER, delivery involved the Step Up, Step Out programme leading to the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1); Foundation Skills (Level 1) Construction Context, also leading to the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1); and the Construction for NCEA Level 2 Vocational Pathway.
MoE number:	6665
NZQA reference:	C48156
Dates of EER visit (virtual):	12 and 13 April 2022

Summary of results

VSTET is providing highly valued learning experiences and personal growth opportunities for disengaged youth. Individualised learning programmes, complemented by a high level of pastoral care, support learners to improve their social skills, re-engage in their learning, and successfully transition to further education or employment. Informal and formal self-assessment practices are effectively identifying areas for improvement.

Confident in educational performance

- The Step Up, Step Out programme is providing Alternative Education learners with engaging learning experiences and is contributing strongly to their growth in personal and social skills and preparedness to re-engage in school or continue to work toward NCEA Level 1 and/or NCEA Level 2 in the VSTET context.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Youth Guarantee learners are benefiting from the workshop training which provides practical work skills and contributes to increased confidence, and supports transition to further education or employment.
- Programmes and learning activities are well designed to support individual learning pathways. Quality resources are used and learners are well engaged in the learning process.
- Moderation practices and related recording systems, to support the quality and continuous improvement of assessment, are evolving.
- Pastoral care is a standout feature of the learners' experience at VSTET. An open, respectful and supportive learning environment builds learners' confidence and fosters success.
- Staff are valued and work collaboratively. They share values and collectively contribute to VSTET's organisational purpose and direction.
- Despite some delays in gaining access to some reporting databases, VSTET manages compliance

matters effectively and in a timely manner.

- The confidence ratings given in this EER reflect VSTET's progress to date and acknowledge there is not yet an established pattern of sustained, exceptional performance. With further consolidation and embedding of contributing processes, VSTET has the potential to demonstrate exceptional educational performance supported by comprehensive and highly effective self-assessment.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>VSTET is making good progress with consolidating delivery, learner achievement and outcomes. The first year of delivery in 2020 was significantly impacted by Covid lockdowns interrupting enrolments, learner engagement and the opportunity to fully demonstrate outcomes.</p> <p>Results for 2020 show that Alternative Education learners had a 45 per cent attendance rate, and 137 credits were awarded to the cohort, with an average of 15.2 credits per learner. In 2021, there was a 50 per cent attendance rate and 155 credits were awarded, with an average of 15.5 credits per learner.² In 2021, Youth Guarantee learners achieved a 59 per cent course completion rate, with seven qualification completions.³ Māori learner achievement was on par with all learners.</p> <p>These achievement rates are greatly enhanced by the positive gains learners are making in relation to personal motivation, social skills, setting and achieving goals, improved mental health and general outlook on life and future opportunities,</p> <p>The parents/caregivers interviewed during this EER confirmed that they value these personal and social gains more than academic achievement, as they want their young people to be</p>

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 Alternative Education reporting is based on the total credits achieved by all learners enrolled during an academic year, and the attendance is calculated on the total number of learner days available as per enrolment patterns. For example, in 2021 there were 555 learner days available, and 282 student days delivered, giving a 50 per cent attendance on average across all learners.

³ There were no course completions for Youth Guarantee learners in 2020 due to Covid-19 delays. Learners completed assessments in 2021.

	<p>socially able and happy, and to have future life opportunities.</p> <p>Learners are proud of their achievements and the progress they are making at VSTET. For many learners, going to class and participating in a group, making friends and social connections, and having a plan for the future are important achievements. Others are proud of the skills they are developing and the items they are producing in the carpentry workshop. Chopping boards and bedside cabinets – which are gifted to family members or sold online and at markets – are strong examples of the personal and business-related skills learners are gaining.</p> <p>VSTET has comprehensive information on their learners’ transitions and progressions after finishing their study. This is gained through withdrawal information, social media, personal contacts and the youth worker network. Over the past two years, nine of 11 Alternative Education learners have successfully transitioned to employment or continued in education, either at the local polytechnic or by re-enrolling at VSTET in the Youth Guarantee pathway. The successful outcomes for Youth Guarantee learners are also strong, with 12 of 19 gaining employment or continuing with education.</p> <p>VSTET monitors the learners’ progress, achievement and outcomes closely. Learning plans are maintained for each learner, good records are kept, and reports on progress are made regularly. Learnings and reflections from these early years of delivery are being used to inform improvements, such as accessing information about prior education and enhancing interviewing and enrolment processes to ensure a good fit for the learner and their aspirations.</p> <p>VSTET engages with stakeholders involved in the youth community in the Otago region, and values this engagement and feedback. Formal recording of this feedback will provide input into programme review and further understanding of valued outcomes going forward.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Learners are gaining credits, achieving qualifications and making successful transitions to employment or further education. Improvements in well-being, and the development of important social and life skills are highly valued.</p> <p>VSTET has the staff and systems in place to consolidate delivery, make improvements and initiate and evaluate future plans to extend the programmes and enhance achievement</p>

	and outcomes.
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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>Programmes are designed to be contextualised to align with learners’ interests and enable them to gain credits toward NCEA levels 1 and 2 and other qualifications. VSTET establishes learners’ prior achievements (unit and achievement standards), their learning needs and aspirations, and develops individual goals and learning plans in consultation with the learners. Results of literacy and numeracy testing⁴ contribute to understanding needs, planning and delivering learning activities.</p> <p>Literacy and numeracy activities are skilfully embedded in learning activities, such as surveying class members for their preferred flavouring while making popcorn, and measuring essential oils in candle making to achieve a balance of scents.</p> <p>Formative assessment is used well to prepare learners for summative assessment and success, such as in carpentry where learners are given time to make mistakes and practise tasks before formally being assessed on their building project. Learners are provided with feedback at each step of their learning journey. Progress is monitored and recorded on wall charts and signed off in learning plans.</p> <p>VSTET engaged in NZQA’s national external moderation system for the first time in 2021. Of the eight unit standards moderated, five were consistent with the standard, and three were not. NZQA’s monitoring of internal moderation of the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1) Step Up, Step Out programme, also in 2021, identified some areas where practice and documentation could be strengthened. VSTET provided NZQA with an action plan setting out the changes being made; however, it is too early to determine the effectiveness of these changes.</p>

⁴ The Tertiary Education Commission adult literacy and numeracy tool is administered on a four to six-monthly basis, as required by the TEC for Youth Guarantee learners.

Conclusion:	Programmes and learning activities are well designed to support individual learning pathways, quality resources are used, and learners are well engaged in the learning process. Moderation practices and recording systems are being enhanced.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Learners are well supported at VSTET. Staff understand the learners' social and well-being needs, and create a caring and supportive environment in which these needs can be met. Social anxieties are common with the learners. They are given space and support to develop strategies to manage these. Behavioural expectations are established early, ensuring learners understand boundaries and consequences. This contributes to the development of respectful relationships among the group and with staff, as seen by the evaluators.</p> <p>VSTET provides learners with transport, free food and regular group outings. Tutors reported they use the time in the van to get alongside their learners and better understand their challenges in life. Regular group outings and social activities reward appropriate behaviours and provide learners with opportunities and experiences they may not otherwise have. Activities such as visiting the art gallery and museum, local beaches and the albatross colony expand the learners' horizons.</p> <p>Learners and their parents/caregivers interviewed during the EER expressed appreciation for the support provided and the extracurricular activities. Learners said their tutors treated them with respect and as adults. They feel comfortable in their learning environment and are able to provide feedback and seek support. They contrasted this favourably with their past unsuccessful experiences in high school.</p> <p>Further wrap-around support is provided by local youth agencies, with each learner assigned a case manager/youth worker.⁵ These services integrate well with VSTET, working</p>

⁵ Otago Youth Wellness Trust provides wrap-around support services for Alternative Education learners, and Youth Services is contracted by MSD to provide support to Youth Guarantee-funded learners.

	<p>alongside the tutors, monitoring learners' progress, and ensuring they are connected with expert services as required.</p> <p>VSTET conducted a thorough review of the interim domestic Code of Practice in March 2021, identifying some minor areas for further development, which they have been addressing.</p>
Conclusion:	Pastoral care is a standout feature of the learner's experience at VSTET. An open, respectful and supportive learning environment builds learners' confidence and fosters success.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>VSTET strategically identified the gap in the provision of vocational training for youth in the Dunedin region, and has effectively established a range of niche programmes. These complement other programmes available in the area, providing learners with contextualised learning in construction, café skills and childcare, that enable them to gain credits towards NCEA Level 1 and Level 2 and/or the level 1 and level 2 Foundation Skills qualification or other New Zealand qualifications such as BCATS.</p> <p>The directors are committed to providing the resources and guidance needed to support educational performance. The large facility has been skilfully renovated to create welcoming spaces where learners are eager to learn and socialise.</p> <p>Staff are valued and work collaboratively. They share values and collectively contribute to VSTET's organisational purpose, and support learners to achieve positive outcomes. Professional development opportunities are provided to build teaching capabilities, and staff actively participate in the vocational education community.</p> <p>VSTET is consolidating its business operations after being challenged by the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, as well as some extended timeframes for gaining programme and funding approvals during their set-up phase. The continued focus on balancing the financial and educational factors sustainably has seen them through this period, and positioned them to</p>

	<p>anticipate and respond to future opportunities and changes.</p> <p>Informal and formal self-assessment processes, such as staff monitoring and sharing learners' progress daily, and end-of-year programme evaluations and policy reviews, are maturing and are focused on continuous improvement.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>VSTET has a clear educational focus and business strategy. The contextualised programmes are successfully catering for a specific segment of the youth market. Self-assessment processes are contributing to ongoing improvements.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The managing director has oversight of all compliance activities. A schedule of events is used for known compliance requirements and timeframes. Regular contact is maintained with national and local agencies, and reporting is meeting Ministry of Education requirements and informing compliance accountabilities – for example, the monthly attendance, and mid and end-of-year reporting to the Alternative Education co-ordinator.</p> <p>NZQA attestations have been submitted in a timely manner.</p> <p>During the set-up phase, VSTET experienced delays in gaining access to reporting databases, such as STEO, Workspace 2 and Nga Kete. The managing director reported that in spite of regular communications, these delays 'compromised being able to report learner results, qualifications achievements and funding-related matters as required'. These access issues, compounded by Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, explain the number of credits reported to NZQA outside of the required 90 days from the assessment date.⁶</p> <p>A Tertiary Education Commission audit conducted in September 2020 found that VSTET's record-keeping was satisfactory. Two issues were identified relating to conducting initial and progress</p>

⁶ In 2020, 25 learner results (27 per cent), in 2021 19 learner results (7 per cent), and in 2022 (to 28 February) 17 learner results (30 per cent) were reported to NZQA outside of the 90-day period.

	<p>literacy and numeracy assessment for Youth Guarantee learners, and a recommendation to have courses set up at unit standard level to enable recognition of prior learning. These issues have been addressed and were confirmed as normal practice by December 2020 and in the January 2021 Single Data Return.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Despite some delays in gaining access to some reporting databases, VSTET has managed compliance matters effectively and in a timely manner.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: All of organisation – all programmes currently delivered (Alternative Education, Youth Guarantee)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

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.

It is recommended that VSTET consider:

- formally gathering data and feedback from stakeholders that would contribute to self-assessment and further inform outcomes data and programme reviews.

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

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 fraud⁷*
- *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.*

⁷ 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 2021, 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 including TITOs but excluding universities, and*
- maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 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, training schemes 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 2021. 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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