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External Evaluation and Review Report

Avatar Institute of Learning

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 9 August 2018

Avatar Institute of Learning at a Glance

Avatar provides education and training to people already working and those who wish to work in health, specifically aged care.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	New Plymouth
Code signatory:	Yes – approved 2018
Last EER outcome:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2014, NZQA was Confident in Avatar’s educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	All programmes
Courses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills for Healthcare (Level 2) – this programme is funded by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Successful completion gives 22 credits towards the 40-credit New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2).• New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2)• New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 3) (with strands in Health Assistance and Support Work)• Competency Assessment Programme – this programme is approved by the Nursing Council of New Zealand. It is designed to enable internationally qualified nurses to gain competency to work as a registered nurse in New Zealand health care.
Number of students:	Approximately 60 learners annually
Number of staff:	One full-time, three part-time and two casual staff
MoE number:	7687
NZQA reference:	C28512
Dates of EER visit:	30 and 31 May 2018

Summary of Results

Highly Confident in educational performance

- This small PTE is meeting the niche and specific requirements of the primary stakeholder and learners through the provision of a skilled and competent workforce for aged care.
- Learners successfully complete their programme of study, including demonstrating competency at the appropriate skill level to work in aged care.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Graduates of all programmes have a genuine career pathway and are eligible to work in aged care at a higher level of responsibility and rate of pay.
- The longstanding delivery of programmes explicitly meets the needs of learners and employers through the provision of quality education and training.
- Support for learners is comprehensive and matched to their needs – educational and personal.
- The Nursing Council of New Zealand and MSD have a high degree of confidence in the programmes Avatar delivers.
- Governance and management are effective in supporting educational achievement and monitoring and managing compliance accountabilities.

Key evaluation question findings

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Avatar’s programmes and the training scheme are delivered to a small number, but diverse range, of learners and almost all successfully complete their programme of study. Internal processes systematically monitor the progress of each individual learner and cohort. The quality of achievement is validated through external moderation, MSD outcome review and monitoring by the Nursing Council of New Zealand.</p> <p>Half of all learners are in the Competency Assessment Programme. Since commencing delivery in 2016, all learners have successfully completed. The smallest programme, Health and Wellbeing (Level 2), has 100 per cent successful completion. The first cohort of Health and Wellbeing (Level 3) learners are part-way through the programme and at the time of the EER were on track to successfully complete.</p> <p>The MSD-funded Skills for Healthcare training scheme has been delivered twice with a total course completion rate of 86 per cent and 62 per cent achievement of the unit standards within the course. An improvement in literacy and numeracy for at least 40 per cent of learners studying at levels 2 and 3 is valued by these learners.</p> <p>All learners develop practical skills and gain an awareness of attributes applicable to working in aged care, relevant to their position. For example, Competency Assessment Programme students develop leadership skills, and learners on the health care programmes develop skills enabling them to safely deliver personal care.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Almost every learner at Avatar successfully completes their programme of study, including demonstrating competency at the appropriate skill level to work in aged care.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>All three areas of training have provided valued outcomes. Sixty per cent of MSD Skills for Healthcare graduates are employed. This is significant because many were new to caregiving and without previous employment. This shows they were well prepared to work in aged care where the skills and knowledge gained are in demand. Although the employment outcome is below the MSD contracted target, graduate employment is above the average compared with other providers. MSD highly values the outcomes of further study and has paid the additional costs for the 42 per cent of MSD learners who continued with their studies and successfully completed the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 2).</p> <p>Maida Vale Retirement Village in New Plymouth is the primary stakeholder, and is the direct recipient of the training outcomes and best positioned to provide feedback to Avatar, which it does. Graduates in the level 2 programmes are mostly Maida Vale’s own staff, showing the value in meeting its need for qualified staff to work in their aged care facility and for employees who understand and share Maida Vale’s focus on quality care.</p> <p>All Competency Assessment Programme graduates gain New Zealand nursing registration. Most gain employment in a registered nurse role within New Zealand health services, meeting the country’s need for registered nurses. Competency Assessment Programme graduate and employer surveys have a very high response rate and provide strong evidence that graduates have the competency to work as registered nurses in New Zealand health care. This systematic process to gather postgraduate information could be extended to formally include and review the long-term outcomes for graduates of the level 2 programmes.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>The provision of a skilled and competent workforce for aged care specifically, but not exclusively, for caregivers at Maida Vale Retirement Village is well met. Graduates of all programmes are eligible to work in aged care at a higher level of responsibility and rate of pay.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>The design for all programmes includes an essential mix of theory and supervised practicum working with a preceptor (skilled practitioner) for Competency Assessment Programme students and buddies for the caregiver learners. All learners directly apply the learning in their workplace practice, which is a significant proportion of each programme and is assessed on-job.</p> <p>The nature of the work lends itself to improving the literacy and numeracy of learners, and Avatar successful includes these activities in the level 2 and 3 programmes.</p> <p>Assessment activities and assessor judgements across programmes undergo systematic internal and external moderation, and meet the standard required. Ongoing review of programmes, which incorporates feedback from learners through surveys and direct feedback, is occurring and changes are made as a result.</p> <p>Tutors all have many years of experience, current knowledge and expertise through their work providing health care at Maida Vale. They also undertake professional development to support and enhance their adult education skills and knowledge and to explore more specialist areas of aged care such as dementia.</p> <p>The Nursing Council of New Zealand monitors the programme content, delivery and quality of practicum and formal arrangements with aged care providers with whom Avatar places the Competency Assessment Programme students. The Nursing Council of New Zealand has indicated its confidence in Avatar and the programme and recently increased the number of Competency Assessment Programme students Avatar can enrol annually.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Avatar programmes are highly relevant and reflect the skills and knowledge required in the provision of aged health care. Activities match the classroom teaching to the workplace where learning is integrated under supervision.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Students in the Competency Assessment Programme are deemed international students. As such, Avatar ensures their pastoral care needs are well understood and met. Most Competency Assessment Programme students choose Avatar based on personal recommendation. Most of them move to New Plymouth to undertake Avatar's eight-week Competency Assessment Programme, at additional cost to themselves. This indicates the value students and graduates place on Avatar's Competency Assessment Programme and support.</p> <p>MSD identifies and highly values the extensive support and pastoral care provided to learners in the skills programme. This was a significant contributing factor in the decision to extend the duration of the initial contract. Examples of this support include: small class sizes; one-to-one teaching and support as required; provision of transport, access to food, clothing and other social services; and the recent engagement of a staff member to specifically connect with and support Māori learners.</p> <p>Communication and ongoing engagement by Avatar tutors visiting learners in their work placements, and connecting with preceptors and buddies ensures learners are well supported and provided with appropriate guidance and supervision as they develop their skills and apply their learning in the workplace.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Students are fully engaged in their learning as at least half of the programmes are in a work placement. The support for learners is comprehensive and matched to their needs. This is important as some learners are new to aged care, and in addition to this study most are working and attending to family commitments.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Avatar is well led and the values and mission of the PTE align with the vision of the primary stakeholder, Maida Vale, for the provision of quality care by qualified staff.</p> <p>The PTE has a clear strategic plan, which is operationalised and reviewed formally every quarter and discussed informally by the directors and management at weekly meetings. The risk plan is appropriate for the size of the PTE and identifies crucial areas and contingency plans to address areas of potential risk. An example is the sustainability of quality delivery that may be affected by staff changes, a real and significant risk for small PTEs.</p> <p>Resources are allocated to support the professional development of Avatar staff and to ensure teaching and learning materials are sufficient. The directors are prepared to resource areas to prepare for future needs. An example is the allocation of a number of hours to support and engage with Māori learners due to the likely increase in the proportion of Māori learners who study at Avatar in the near future.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Avatar delivers programmes to a diverse range of learners with a range of needs, both educational and personal, which affect achievement. Avatar governance and management provide leadership and resources to effectively support educational achievement.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings and supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Avatar is well aware of compliance matters and has processes to effectively identify and manage these responsibilities. External monitoring by the Nursing Council of New Zealand indicates that legislation and regulations are complied with.</p> <p>Health and safety is important when providing healthcare services. Formal arrangements in the work placements for preceptors and buddies ensures all parties understand their responsibilities. This is important to limit any risk to clients, the rest home or students during the work placement.</p> <p>The NZQA training scheme and programmes are delivered as approved and attestations are received in a timely manner. Avatar very recently gained approval as a signatory to the Code of Practice.¹ NZQA congratulated Avatar on the quality of the application. This indicates that if Avatar undertakes its responsibility as outlined in the application, the pastoral care needs of international students will be well met.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Avatar identifies and monitors its compliance accountabilities systematically using effective processes.</p>

¹ The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016

Focus Areas

2.1 Focus area: All programmes

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

Recommendations

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

Requirements

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

Appendix 1

About Avatar Institute of Learning

Distinctive characteristics: Avatar provides training for the aged care sector and is located on the premises of a privately owned retirement village.

Programmes offer training at entry level for employment, as well as the Nursing Council of New Zealand Competency Assessment Programme for nurses wishing to become New Zealand registered nurses.

Recent significant changes:

Since the previous EER:

Staff. The most significant staff changes are the appointment of a training coordinator in 2014; an increase to the part-time education support role and hours, to manage compliance and evaluation in 2016; a new part-time administration support role in 2017.

NZQA. In May 2018, NZQA approved Avatar as a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.

New programmes. All Avatar programmes and the training scheme have been approved and delivered. None of the programmes being delivered during the previous EERs in 2010 or 2014 have continued.

Student numbers. There has been a significant increase in student numbers since the 2014 EER. They comprise 50 per cent domestic and 50 per cent international students. Domestic learners include seven Māori and no Pasifika.

Previous quality assurance history:

NZQA external national moderation results for 2014-2015 were unsatisfactory, and an action plan was agreed. NZQA quality assured standards are no longer contained in any of Avatar's programmes.

External moderation with Careerforce in 2017 confirmed that Avatar is assessing to the national

standard.

Other:

In April 2018 Avatar met all requirements of the Nursing Council of New Zealand monitoring visit for the Competency Assessment Programme for registered nurses. The Nursing Council of New Zealand has confirmed a significant increase in the number of students Avatar is able to enrol into this programme.

MSD has confirmed extension of the initial contract which commenced in 2017 to deliver Skills for Healthcare.

The very small number of Māori learners across Avatar programmes does not provide sufficient information to make meaningful judgements about parity of achievement. Avatar is aware of the increasing number of Māori learners enrolling and the need to monitor and respond to their learner needs to support achievement.

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Prior to the EER, the NZQA lead evaluator and the education support manager agreed on the proposed focus area and procedures for the visit. A range of information was supplied to NZQA prior to the visit which informed the EER planning.

Two NZQA evaluators met with the managing director, director education support, training coordinator, tutors, assessors, students and talked to stakeholders via phone which included representatives from Careerforce, MSD, and the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

A range of documents, information and records were made available and reviewed to confirm and validate the on-site discussions.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. 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 fraud²*
- *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.*

² 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.

Appendix 2

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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