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External Evaluation and Review Report

Stellaris PTE Limited

Date of report: 30 October 2018

About Stellaris PTE Limited

Stellaris delivers business diploma programmes to international students based in Auckland and Tauranga. The course aims to provide students with strategic business knowledge and skills for the global business community.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	143 Durham Street, Tauranga (head office and delivery site) 290 Queen Street, Auckland 6 Courtney Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga (not in use)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 18 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Three full-time and seven part-time
TEO profile:	https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=787419001&site=1 Stellaris previously delivered a Certificate in Governance (Level 7) to domestic students studying part-time.
Last EER outcome:	Stellaris' previous external evaluation and review (EER) outcome in 2015 was Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Diploma in Business and Strategy (Level 7) The diploma was first delivered at the end of 2016. The EER team visited Auckland and Tauranga sites.
MoE number:	7874
NZQA reference:	C30516
Dates of EER visit:	21 and 22 August 2018

Summary of Results

Stellaris knows about students' overall achievement, but better analysis of data would help show how well students perform and identify where improvements have led to increased outcomes and value. There are some systems to improve teaching effectiveness, although there are still areas for improvement.

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|---|---|
| Not Yet Confident in educational performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall achievement has been low to date. Only 42 per cent of students who enrolled from 2016 to July 2017, expected to complete in 2018, achieved a qualification.• The PTE has identified key reasons for lower performance and responded by making changes to entry processes and course intakes. |
| Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students gain a qualification that enables them to work in higher levels of management.• Stellaris has not consistently met the Code of Practice requirements. Ongoing monitoring is required to ensure that outcomes meet the code requirements.• The PTE is still embedding self-assessment processes. Better analysis of qualification results and teaching effectiveness will provide evidence that the organisation is meeting the most important needs of students. |

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The organisation reports that 11 students have graduated since the diploma was introduced at the end of 2016. An analysis of the data would help to understand whether students are completing the qualification within the expected timeframe and the reasons for non-completion. Currently, the raw data shows that only eight of the 19 students expected to complete within a year have achieved the qualification (42 per cent), which is low.</p> <p>The organisation does monitor course completions but there is no analysis of course data to understand how well students compare between different cohorts for the same paper, or how many students re-submitted assignments, or re-enrolled in papers. Better analysis would also help to understand the achievement for different intakes and across the delivery sites.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Data does not clearly show how many students have completed a qualification, only on an individual basis for each course. Improving contributing processes, such as monitoring tutor performance and ensuring assessments are robust, would help confirm the validity of outcomes.</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.

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The diploma aims to give students the skills and knowledge to work in management within New Zealand or overseas.</p> <p>Currently, the evidence collected by Stellaris for six of the 11 graduates shows that some of graduates have gained promotions or are studying at a higher level after gaining the qualification. The recent five graduates were yet to be interviewed.</p> <p>Stellaris also intends to conduct a survey of employers to see how they value the skills and knowledge of graduates they employ. To date, there is no formal evidence of feedback from employers.</p>
Conclusion:	There was no comprehensive evidence of graduate outcomes demonstrating the value for them or to their employers. Stellaris had gathered some data to show that students are achieving the outcomes they desire and that these outcomes match the qualification aims.

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Stellaris' programme design and delivery do not match the approved programme. Recent visits of NZQA monitors identified concerns about delivery structure, moderation, tutor qualifications, and entry requirements.</p> <p>Stellaris has implemented some improvements as part of its ongoing review of course outcomes (i.e. checking entry requirements, revising the number of course intakes).</p> <p>Stellaris tutors have a course outline, lesson plan templates and marking guides to promote consistency between tutors and across delivery sites. Tutors use a range of learning activities (i.e. their own and shared resources). Student feedback is variable, with most satisfied. However, student feedback does not identify individual tutors, as it had previously.</p> <p>Students are aware of assessment requirements and marking criteria. Tutors mark one another's work and students submit work on Turnitin. However, this does not always authenticate assessment. Tutors may not know the students at other sites. There has been some moderation, but some assessments have not been pre-moderated yet, and tutors do not get sufficient feedback to ensure their assessment practices are robust.</p> <p>A local advisory committee provides advice, but there is no input from employers to ensure relevance and meets their needs.</p> <p>The organisation has a sustainability model: all resources, course materials and assessment are online to reduce waste.</p> <p>The academic manager role is part-time: evidence suggests this may not be enough time to embed effective systems (i.e. moderation, annual review of programmes and tutor performance).</p>
Conclusion:	Although the organisation has used student feedback and course results to make improvements to some aspects of delivery, there are still concerns with the programme structure and assessments.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Stellaris has good support for students. A staff member provides pastoral care at each site and all staff have attended a code of practice workshop to help apply the code.</p> <p>The chief executive interviews students to confirm their study aims. The academic director based in Tauranga is responsible for checking that students meet the academic entry requirements before students enrol. It would be helpful to analyse if more robust testing of students' qualifications and English language skills at entry has led to increased completion rates. Previous tests were not an accurate reflection of students' skill levels and could be associated with a lower completion rate. There were also issues with some students' prior qualifications: some had not gained a level 6 qualification or didn't have the required academic knowledge.</p> <p>A review of students' files showed some inconsistencies in travel insurance coverage for the required period. IELTS results were missing for two students, but this does not appear to be a systemic error.</p> <p>Attendance is closely monitored, and students were aware of the rules. PTE management reported that there were still issues with getting some students to comply. However, with enforcement, students were responding.</p> <p>The chief executive is responsible for pastoral care at the Auckland site, with another director responsible for pastoral care at Tauranga, along with the administration manager. The chief executive is also responsible for marketing the PTE overseas. The student handbook covers the code requirements and assessment criteria, along with other information about studying with Stellaris. Students were happy with the assistance they received at enrolment and the information about their programme.</p>
Conclusion:	The small class sizes enable good student support. Processes for enrolment and attendance have been tightened. Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of the PTEs pastoral care activities would help ensure compliance with the code requirements.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There have been significant changes since the previous EER (i.e. a new director, new delivery site, and new qualification). The major issue has been catering to a different student demographic, from domestic students involved in business to international students studying fulltime, often for the first time in New Zealand.</p> <p>Some responsibilities were devolved from two founding directors to a third director shareholder (the chief executive based in Auckland). This requires better systems for monitoring the quality of the programmes and the outcomes. The chief executive is also responsible for pastoral care and marketing.</p> <p>The directors meet regularly and receive advice from the retiring chair about the PTE's direction. The board has identified the decrease in enrolments from one country due to immigration policies as a risk. The PTE is investigating new programme offerings and other markets as a result.</p> <p>The academic management team review the programme and academic processes. There is no evidence that this is effective as recent monitoring identified concerns with academic processes. These still need to be resolved.</p> <p>The organisation employs tutors on part-time contracts with clear job descriptions and an orientation. Tutor performance reviews draw on observations, self-review and student feedback, and used for professional development. Not all tutors have the appropriate tertiary level teaching qualification and although Stellaris enrolls tutors in an adult teaching unit standard, this is insufficient.</p> <p>Stellaris has goals for qualification achievement, survey responses and satisfaction rates, but there is no evidence of monitoring of achievement towards the goals.</p>
Conclusion:	Oversight of organisational activities is divided over the two campuses, which creates issues for managing the quality of the learning and ensuring effective monitoring systems are in place at all levels.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Stellaris is responsible for managing compliance with NZQA’s PTE Registration rules and the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.</p> <p>The organisation has submitted the relevant attestations and declarations for all directors and managers as part of the registration requirements. However, it has not met its responsibilities for maintaining programme approval (i.e. not notifying NZQA of changes to delivery structure, moderation, and issues with students meeting entry requirements). In addition, the Unfunded International Providers information is due.</p> <p>There was also a breach of the Code, with one student not having insurance for a period of 18 days while enrolled and one other student not having insurance documents that had been translated into English. A self-review of their performance against the Code was not sufficient and Stellaris is required to resubmit the self-review report by 1 November 2018.</p> <p>These issues do not provide assurance that the PTE has sufficient systems to monitor compliance.</p> <p>There are arrangements to recruit appropriate overseas agents, including monitoring visa approval rates of potential agents, getting feedback from Immigration New Zealand, and providing agents with accurate information about the programme requirements. However, the agent recruitment process has not been updated in the PTE’s policy manual.</p>
Conclusion:	Stellaris needs to strengthen its systems for monitoring compliance.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Diploma in Business and Strategy (Level 7)

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal

Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that Stellaris PTE Limited:

- Analyse course and qualification data to identify trends and whether changes have led to improved outcomes for students.
- Gather employer and industry feedback to help inform programme content and delivery activities.
- Ensure moderation is carried out according to the schedule and that the process provides useful information to improve the quality of assessments.
- Review enrolment procedures to ensure students' qualifications are relevant to the programme of study.
- Review organisational goals and ensure they are relevant and can be measured.
- Regularly conduct formal reviews of compliance with the Code of Practice and update any policies to reflect current practice.

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.

NZQA requires Stellaris PTE Limited to:

- Ensure students have required travel insurance before they enrol.
- Provide the Unfunded International Providers information to the Ministry of Education.
- Notify NZQA of any changes to the delivery of approved programmes.

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 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.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

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. The requirements are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/qa-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/>, 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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