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External Evaluation and Review Report

Newton College of Business and
Technology

Date of report: 18 June 2019

About Newton College of Business and Technology

Newton College of Business and Technology (NCBT) delivers undergraduate diploma programmes in business and technology. All students are international students with a particular focus on students from India.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	25 Union St, Auckland CBD
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes. No students under 18 years of age were enrolled at the time of the external evaluation and review (EER) visit.
Number of students:	Domestic: nil International: 148 full-time students – predominantly from India with a small number from China, Nepal and Brazil.
Number of staff:	23 full-time and two part-time
TEO profile:	See: NZQA - Newton College of Business and Technology
Last EER outcome:	NCBT's previous EER outcome in 2014 was Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5 and 6)• New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6)• International Students: Support and Wellbeing
MoE number:	8437
NZQA reference:	C32426
Dates of EER visit:	20 and 21 November 2018

Summary of Results

NCBT provides solid support for its students and equips graduates with valuable skills for the job market in New Zealand and their country of origin.

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

- NCBT has high course completions, along with very high student satisfaction with their outcomes. However, the poor moderation results of late raise doubt about the reliability of achievement results.
- Students at NCBT are achieving or exceeding their academic and personal goals. Long-term relationships with employers also signify that the outcomes for students are valued.
- NCBT is using its industry and community connections and relationships effectively to develop and deliver programmes that meet individual and stakeholder needs.

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Students at NCBT are experiencing a supportive and caring learning environment.
- NCBT has a clear vision and understanding of its business and leadership committed to providing effective support for educational achievement. Monitoring of performance is regular and transparent but deficiencies in assessment indicate a systemic failure in the organisation's management of assessment over a prolonged period and subsequent doubts about validity of achievement.
- NCBT has a good understanding of its compliance accountabilities. However, management of compliance has resulted in some important obligations not being met.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NCBT's own records indicate that students have achieved very good results. Course completion rates have consistently been above 90 per cent since 2014. The retention rate of students across all programmes is very high.</p> <p>However, the high level of achievement is brought into question because assessment practices at NCBT have been deficient (discussed further in 1.3) therefore the validity of student achievement results cannot be regarded as reliable.</p> <p>Interviews with students and a cross-section of external stakeholders indicates that the students are acquiring useful skills and knowledge which prepare them well for employment, including a strong emphasis on the teaching of 'soft skills'. Students grow in confidence and develop work ethics. Poor English language can be a limiting factor in achieving success, to which NCBT has responded by developing and delivering the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Levels 3 and 4) to enable those students who need it to acquire foundation English language skills before commencing mainstream study.</p> <p>NCBT has a student management system which allows the progress of students to be easily monitored by any staff. Staff across the organisation meet daily, during which time they discuss student progress.</p>
Conclusion:	NCBT has high course completion rates, along with very high student satisfaction with the outcomes. However, the poor assessment practice and moderation results over a prolonged period raise doubt about the validity of achievement results.

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:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NCBT has a strong emphasis on employment and developing the skills necessary for employment in New Zealand. The majority of students enter study at NCBT with the intention to 'study, work and settle' in New Zealand. For these students, the outcomes have been very positive. For instance, 66 per cent of New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration graduates gain employment in New Zealand within three months of graduation. This is a positive result considering the difficulty that many new migrants experience in trying to break into the job market in New Zealand. Many graduates may take several years before they secure a full-time job in their chosen field.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback about graduate students is very positive and shows that the students are well prepared for work in New Zealand.</p> <p>A small proportion (less than 5 per cent) of graduates with level 6 qualifications progress to level 7 programmes at NCBT or at Massey University. This is done with guidance from NCBT staff, and these students achieve well at higher levels of study.</p> <p>Tracking of graduate destinations and determining the fit between the graduate's knowledge, skills and attributes and the requirements of their destination is deliberate and effective.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Students at NCBT are gaining good value from their study by achieving or exceeding their academic and personal goals. Long-term relationships with employers also signify that they value the outcomes for students.</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:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NCBT's course design and delivery are meeting the needs of students and stakeholders by providing courses that are relevant to the students, employers and communities they serve. The organisation is well attuned to the needs of students through years of experience in the same market and through constantly seeking feedback from students, employers and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Teachers identify the aspirations and interests of their students and, where possible, structure their teaching to align with those aspirations. This ensures that student learning needs are being well met. There was evidence of the teachers regularly engaging in meaningful discussion about teaching practice and student progress. Teaching staff spoke about how they share ideas, experiences and knowledge through their daily interactions and staff meetings. This is driven by the passion of the teachers as well as a whole-of-organisation approach.</p> <p>Unfortunately, since the 2014 EER, almost every external review of NCBT programmes has highlighted shortcomings in assessment practice and moderation. Although NCBT has tried to address the issues, the measures taken have not been effective and moderation results have worsened. In 2018 two separate NZQA moderation and assessment reviews at NCBT identified serious problems, across several programmes, with the both the validity of assessments, and the authenticity of student work. Nearly all of student work sampled, that had been marked as correct by NCBT staff, was deemed by external moderators to have fallen short of the standard required to pass.</p>
Conclusion:	NCBT is using its industry and community connections and relationships effectively to develop and deliver programmes that meet individual and stakeholder needs. The deficiencies in assessment practice identified at NCBT indicate a systemic failure in the organisation's understanding and management of assessment.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at NCBT receive active, integrated and ongoing support from staff at all levels of the organisation. Intending students are well guided into courses that are appropriate to their aspirations and capabilities. Teachers and students described numerous activities and initiatives to motivate, engage and encourage students to get the full benefit from their time at NCBT. However, students being allowed multiple opportunities to resubmit assessments with high levels of assessor guidance is a common feature of assessment conditions at NCBT.</p> <p>Teachers provide timely, ongoing feedback to each student on their progress.</p> <p>Attendance expectations are effectively communicated to the students and are monitored closely with timely and appropriate follow-up as required.</p> <p>In 2017 NCBT changed the scheduling of courses from 2.5 full days per week to 5 x 4-hour days. This has enabled students to have contact on every day of the week and engage more fully with teaching staff who are available to students outside of formal teaching times.</p> <p>The organisation has effective processes to review how well it meets the spirit and intent of the Code of Practice.² This, and other evidence sighted, provides assurance that international students are well supported.</p>
Conclusion:	Students at NCBT are experiencing a supportive and caring learning environment, and this is well reviewed within a reflective organisational culture, ensuring its ongoing effectiveness.

² Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There is a clear long-term vision for the organisation, which is well understood and put into practice at all levels. Staff are valued by management, as illustrated by the long tenure of most of the staff. Almost all staff are full-time which adds to the academic capital of the PTE.</p> <p>NCBT has good physical resources available to students which are well maintained and replaced through a planned approach. The campus is ideally located to engage with industry and commerce.</p> <p>NCBT has well-established administration and management systems and procedures in place, with ethical practices. An open-door policy and clear communications have created a pleasant environment and confident atmosphere within the organisation.</p> <p>The recruitment, monitoring and ongoing development of teachers is a strength of the organisation, and this is shown in the effectiveness of the teaching. Teaching and learning are well resourced with well-trained staff, appropriate teaching materials and good facilities.</p> <p>Reflective practice is well established. Much of the monitoring takes place at the individual level. While this is effective, collation and analysis of organisational-level data would strengthen self-assessment by enabling the identification of trends and patterns in performance.</p> <p>The moderation issue cited previously indicates that although management was making an effort to improve assessment performance, the effectiveness of the actions taken was not being monitored.</p>
Conclusion:	NCBT has a clear vision and understanding of its business, and strong leadership committed to providing effective support for educational achievement. Monitoring of performance is regular and transparent but not necessarily effective, and further monitoring of performance improvement actions is required.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NCBT has a culture with an emphasis on being compliant. The evaluators were shown a 'compliance calendar' which is a useful checklist of compliance obligations, due dates, etc. This is monitored at senior management level.</p> <p>NZQA attestations and returns have been met within required timeframes. The courses at NCBT are being delivered consistent with NZQA approvals.</p> <p>Whilst NCBT has managed its compliance obligations associated with moderation, the results of moderation indicate that assessment practice falls well short of the required standard. NCBT failed to self-identify the issues raised by NZQA monitoring of three programmes.</p> <p>NCBT leadership is proactive in managing areas for compliance, including Code of Practice obligations, programme approvals and immigration requirements. The PTE monitors visa approval rates and exceeds the minimum requirements set by Immigration New Zealand.</p> <p>A random sample of student files was selected and checked during this EER. All necessary documents were in the files in a well-organised and easily accessible format.</p> <p>NCBT is managing health and safety compliance well including building compliance.</p>
Conclusion:	NCBT has a good understanding of its compliance accountabilities. However, management of compliance has resulted in some important obligations not being met.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5 and 6)

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.3 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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 Newton College of Business and Technology:

- Review the effectiveness of actions taken to improve assessment and moderation and the monitoring of student performance.
- Develop an organisation-wide approach to addressing the systemic gaps identified.

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 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.*

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 fraud³*
- *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.*

³ 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 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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