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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 10 July 2017

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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

Name of TEO:	Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre (Taratahi)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1991
Location:	Cornwall Road, Masterton
Delivery sites:	Masterton, Greytown, Stratford, New Plymouth, Napier, Taupo, Putaruru, Huntly, Auckland, Whangarei, Invercargill and other temporary sites.
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Farming (Level 2) – includes the National Certificate in Agriculture (Introductory Skills) (Level 2) and (General Skills) (Level 2)• New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2)• Vocational Pathway (NCEA)• Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3)• National Certificate in Farming Skills (Work Ready) (Level 3)• Certificate in General Farm Skills (Level 3)• Certificate in Equine (Stable Procedures and Equitation) (Level 3)• New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3)• National Certificate in Agriculture (Cattle Farming, Dairy Farming, and Sheep Farming Strands) (Level 4)

- National Certificate in Agriculture (Production Management) with a strand in Dairy Farming (Level 4)
- Diploma in Dairy Management (Level 5)
- New Zealand Diploma in Agribusiness Management (Level 5)

Code of Practice signatory:	Yes, since 2006
Number of students:	Domestic: 1,331 (582 equivalent full-time students (EFTS)) in 2015 – Māori, 621 (47 per cent); and Pasifika, 53 (4 per cent) International: nine (13 EFTS)
Number of staff:	123 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Various domains mostly relating to the primary sector. See details on NZQA website: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=850443001
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Taratahi was gifted to the Crown in 1918 to be held on the following trusts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide training for returning soldiers who wanted to learn good farming practices • To be a demonstration farm for training students, youth and farmers in modern farming practices. <p>The board includes representation from the Primary Industry Training Organisation (Primary ITO), the Ministry of Primary Industries, and Federated Farmers. The Minister of Tertiary Education appoints the board chairperson. The mission of Taratahi is to 'build workforce skills in primary industries through quality education; the demonstration and dissemination of knowledge and skill'. The delivery approach is to offer 'real training on real farms': hands-on applied learning on actual farming businesses combined with learning theory in the classroom. Students at the main Masterton campus can live on site in a range of accommodation.</p> <p>Taratahi owns two farms, leases seven, has formal management contracts for three others, and formal access arrangements to around 200 farms. It is primarily funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The PTE offers a range of programmes leading mostly to national qualifications from level 1-5 on the New Zealand</p>

Qualifications Framework, in agriculture, fencing, equine, apiculture, and horticulture. Taratahi has memoranda of understanding with Eastern Institute of Technology, Primary ITO, and Massey and Lincoln Universities. The latter two are arrangements to deliver the Diploma in Agriculture (Level 5). Taratahi delivers Vocational Pathway, STAR and Primary Industry Trades Academy programmes which offer secondary school students structured agriculture familiarisation programmes.

Recent significant changes: The provider has been through major changes since the last external evaluation and review (EER) in 2010. There was a considerable expansion in student numbers, programmes, campus sites and delivery on behalf of institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) (see also *Previous quality assurance history*). Student numbers fell from a peak of 1,200 to 580 EFTS in 2015, including reduced delivery for ITPs. The death of the chief executive in January 2015 led to an interim appointment in 2015 and a permanent appointment in early 2016, along with a new academic director. This EER was postponed for 12 months due to the circumstances the provider faced in 2015.

Te Ara Whakamua, a strategic plan partly implemented at the time of the EER site visit, has resulted in a changed senior management structure, various appointments in mid-2016, and a revised business model and education strategy.

The PTE has developed relationships with a number of iwi and gained funding for Māori and Pasifika Trade Training.

Taratahi recently obtained NZQA approval to deliver the following programmes:

- Vocational Pathways
- Foundation in Agriculture (Level 2)
- New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3)
- New Zealand Diploma in Agribusiness Management (Level 5)

Previous quality assurance history:

The previous EER of Taratahi took place in November 2010; NZQA was Confident in the educational performance and Highly Confident in the capability in

self-assessment of the PTE.

A TEC-commissioned audit in 2014 found irregularities in the delivery primarily of the Certificate in General Farm Skills (Level 3), and Taratahi was required to return some funding to the TEC. At the same time, NZQA conducted monitoring visits which identified no significant issues with Taratahi's delivery, assessment or the validity of qualifications awarded. However, some Taratahi programmes departed from the original approval requirements; the PTE made the necessary changes to address these issues.

Taratahi has the following NZQA-approved sub-contracting arrangements: Panorama for delivery of an equestrian programme; InForest Training for the General Farm Skills programme; and EasySafety for the Ag-contracting programme

Taratahi consistently met the national standard for NZQA-moderated unit standards from 2013-2015. A Primary ITO visit report in August 2016 noted that the PTE is 'fully engaged with moderation and has systems and processes in place for both external and internal moderation'. According to the ITO, Taratahi submissions generally met the national standard or required minor modifications. Any issues were promptly addressed.

Taratahi applied in late 2016 for the approval of a suite of 11 new programmes to align with newly listed New Zealand qualifications. There were significant gaps in the applications and so, in consultation with NZQA, they were withdrawn to permit further development. Four new applications of a higher standard were received in February 2017 and are currently being evaluated.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The lead evaluator reviewed documents submitted by Taratahi, as well as external moderation reports and other NZQA and TEC-held data. A scoping meeting took place with the academic director via a video call about three months before the site visit. The four key focus areas selected, and the rationale for their selection, were:

- Governance, management and strategy is a mandatory focus area, and compliance was given additional focus given Taratahi's recent history.
- National Certificate in Farming Skills (Work Ready) (Level 3) and Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3) made up 38 per cent of the total 2015 funded

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EFTS. This is a residential programme at the Masterton site where most delivery occurs. The Farming Skills certificate is also offered in Whangarei.

- National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) made up 7.5 per cent of the total 2015 funded EFTS. Some students progress from the level 3 certificates to this higher-level qualification. Delivery occurs only at the Masterton site.
- National Certificate in Agriculture (Introductory Skills) (Level 2) Youth Guarantee-funded programmes made up 8.5 per cent of the total 2015 funded EFTS. This foundation programme is delivered in Putaruru, Whangarei and Masterton to NEET¹ youth. The focus area was modified on site as a revised programme, Introduction to Farming, was delivered in 2015 which included the above qualification and the National Certificate in Agriculture (General Skills) (Level 2). A Foundation in Agriculture programme is being delivered in 2016 leading to the New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2). The revised focus area was agreed as a foundation agriculture programme at level 2 (Youth Guarantee-funded).

The other sizable programme in 2015 was the Certificate in General Farm Skills (Level 3) – 15.5 per cent of 2015 EFTS (69). A TEC-commissioned audit in 2014 found irregularities in the delivery of this programme.² This programme was not selected as a focus area as Taratahi said it had reduced 2016 enrolments (58 EFTS to date), and that an NZQA-approved programme will replace it in 2017. However, this report gives the programme some attention due to the TEC publication of the 2015 results after the site visit for this EER.

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 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.

The lead and one evaluator spent 2.5 days at the Masterton site. Two other evaluators spent 1.5 days in Putaruru, including the first half-day video-conference with the Masterton site. The team returned to Masterton for the third day.

The following staff or stakeholders were interviewed in person or via phone: the chief executive officer, chair of the trust, the academic director, the general manager strategic projects and facilities, the general manager finance, four national

¹ Not in employment, education or training

² See *Previous quality assurance history*.

coordinators, the tertiary records officer, the national manager student support and customer services, the general manager central and southern regions and sheep and beef business, the Wairarapa and Waikato regional managers, the Wairarapa campus manager, the Māori and Pasifika Trade Training – poutoko tauira – student support officer.

The following tutors and students and graduates were interviewed:

- Eight level 3 tutors, six Masterton students or graduates³ in the National Certificate in Farming Skills (Work Ready) and Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3)
- Three level 4 tutors, seven Masterton students or graduates³ in the National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4)
- Seven level 2 tutors, 11 Foundation in Agriculture (Level 2) students in Putaruru.

The external stakeholders interviewed by phone were: the Taratahi independent financial monitor, a Primary ITO moderator, a representative of Beef and Lamb New Zealand and a TEC investment manager.

A range of documents and data were reviewed, including a self-assessment summary, Te Ara Whakamua strategy, board minutes, the Taratahi education strategy, annual reports, internal and external moderation reports, TEC investment plans, various programme reports, funding applications, TEC performance data, and other documents. The provider's website was viewed. After the site visit, the TEC educational performance indicator results for 2015 were released, using new methodology. This prompted some further enquiry into the educational results (see *Scope of external evaluation and review*) particularly the Certificate in General Farm Skills (Level 3).

³ The number of students and graduates interviewed was lower than expected as it was term break when the site visit occurred.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the educational performance and **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre**.

Taratahi is meeting the essential needs of most of the students, and those of employers, iwi and other stakeholders. While the self-assessment information has varied in quality, it is now improving across all key areas of the organisation. The plans developed in 2016 have been purposeful and robust, informing a range of substantive actions.

- The educational achievement of Taratahi students is mixed, yet mostly sound. The course and qualification completion rates track closely to the PTE sector medians that Taratahi uses as benchmarks. The assessment processes and strong moderation results give overall confidence in this educational achievement. The analysis of the results is progressively improving, offering more in-depth understanding to support better decision-making.
- Significant proportions of graduates across different programmes progress to higher-level training, though the rates are generally below the PTE sector median. Most level 4 Certificate in Agriculture graduates gain paid work in the farming industry. Other graduates also gain industry-related work (or work while studying). There are some gaps in the collection and analysis of the destination data and employer feedback, though plans are in place to address this issue.
- The teaching and programmes are generally effective. Taratahi actively engages with primary sector stakeholders to develop programmes to meet their needs. Many students are learning and applying their learning on farms under Taratahi direction. A systematic review of the educational approach and curriculum has occurred. Flaws in recent programme applications to NZQA are being addressed in early 2017.
- Most students stay engaged and complete their studies. However, the pastoral needs of some student groups have not been met and some gaps have been significant. Robust reviews in mid-2016 have led to changes addressing many of these concerns.
- Taratahi is working constructively in a deliberate and systematic way to address a range of significant challenges. The PTE has strong, active and evolving relationships with many key stakeholders including other tertiary organisations, primary industry bodies and iwi entities. More evidence of impacts and improvements is still required before NZQA can be confident in Taratahi's overall performance.

Findings⁴

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

The overall educational achievement of Taratahi's students is mixed, yet mostly sound. This was illustrated by 70 per cent of the full-time 2014 Taratahi student cohort gaining a qualification by the end of 2015, which placed Taratahi just below the median rate for all PTEs.⁵ This is a mid-range result for achievement.

Taratahi programme reports benchmark their results against the previous two years' results, the institutional average and PTE sector medians. The level 2 Youth Guarantee (Table 1) course completions over the past three years have increased significantly, while the qualification completions have remained static.

Table 1. National Certificate in Agriculture (General Skills) (Level 2) and National Certificate in Agriculture (Introductory Skills) (Level 2)

Course and qualification completion rates for Youth Guarantee students from 2013-2015 (percentage of total equivalent full-time students)			
Year	2013	2014	2015
Course completions (level 2 PTE sector rate)	48 (54)	54 (62)	74 (60)
Qualification completions (level 2 PTE sector rate)	43 (43)	40 (56)	41 (59)

Sources: TEC and Taratahi

Course completion rates in 2015 are well above the sector median and the TEC's minimum expectations; this is a strong result. However, recent qualification completions are well below the sector medians, although they match the TEC's minimum expectations for the past three years. There is some evidence that students improved their knowledge and skills, including in numeracy. One accomplishment has been the completion rates of the Māori students – doubling between 2012 and 2015⁶, significantly reducing the gap between Māori and non-

⁴ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁵ <http://archive.tec.govt.nz/Reports/2015/Taratahi-Agricultural-Training-Centre-Wairarapa-Cohort-Based.pdf>. A more reliable cohort-based method was used to calculate overall qualification completions in 2015.

⁶ Taratahi data: course completion rate 2012, 33 per cent; 2015, 66 per cent; qualification completions 2012, 27 per cent; 2015, 55 per cent.

Māori achievement.⁷ Overall, these are sound results, and the level 3 results (Table 2) are better.

Table 2. National Certificate in Farming Skills (Work Ready) (Level 3)⁸ and Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3)

Course and qualification completion rates for Student Achievement Component funded students from 2013-2015 (percentage of total equivalent full-time students)			
Year	2013	2014	2015
Course completions (level 3 PTE sector rate)	74 (83)	85 (85)	80 (82)
Qualification completions level 3-4 (level 3-4 sector median)	81 (79)	95 (79)	76 (78)

Sources: TEC and Taratahi

Course completions have improved substantially since 2013, hovering around the sector median. The overall qualification completion rate matches the median in 2015. The 2015 results for Māori (69 per cent) and Pasifika (72 per cent) are lower than the overall rates. Many of the students gain useful entry-level farming and workplace knowledge and skills.

The results for the National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) were not as strong (Table 3).

Table 3. National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4)

Course and qualification completion rates for Student Achievement Component students from 2013-2015 (percentage of total equivalent full-time students)			
Year	2013	2014	2015
Course completions (level 4 PTE sector rate)	75 (81)	79 (82)	75 (77)
Qualification completions (level 4 PTE sector rate)	75 (79)	87 (80)	39 (71)

Sources: TEC and Taratahi Data

Course completions are consistent and below the sector median. Qualification completions are more variable and dropped significantly in 2015, well below the sector median. These results are based on the old TEC method of calculation. From 2015, the TEC has adopted a cohort-based methodology of calculating qualification completions rates. This methodology will have an impact on the figures.

⁷ Gap between Māori and non-Māori for level 2 Introductory and General Skills programmes: 2012, 39 per cent; 2015, 11 per cent.

⁸ These results are for the Masterton site. The 2015 results are similar for the Northland site which offers only the National Certificate in Farming Skills (Work Ready) (Level 3).

A positive result for 2015 is the achievement rates for Māori and Pasifika being similar to the overall rates.⁹ There is evidence that the level 4 graduates gained practical farm skills and some relevant knowledge, and developed effective workplace attitudes.

The 2014 delivery of the Certificate in General Farm Skills had irregularities that were identified in an external audit.¹⁰ This was reflected in the qualification completion rate of the part-time students being only 23 per cent¹¹; this is a poor result. However, in 2016 there are reduced enrolments¹², all the students are full-time, and Taratahi provided evidence that the completion rate to date is 70 per cent, which is a mid-range result.

Self-assessment of educational achievement has been variable but has clearly improved as new management's processes become embedded. The students and tutors have some understanding of class-level results and progress being made. The provider tracks programme results and annually benchmarks educational results, predominately against TEC performance measures. The results are reviewed at an annual workshop, the previous year's actions reviewed and new actions identified. However, the data quality has been mixed, and the analysis often limited and descriptive. Management has clearly strengthened its internal capability in 2016. A recent comparison of Māori versus non-Māori achievement and a report on withdrawals showed clearer and more detailed data, robust analysis and in-depth understanding of patterns in the results.

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 **Adequate**.

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

The mission of Taratahi is to 'build workforce skills in primary industries through quality education; the demonstration and dissemination of knowledge and skill'. The PTE's value proposition 'is to develop the calibre of graduates required by the sector'. There is clear evidence that the primary sector has an identified need for a

⁹ Course completion rate of 73 per cent (Māori) and 77 per cent (Pasifika), and qualification completion of 42 per cent and 52 per cent respectively.

¹⁰ See *Previous quality assurance history*.

¹¹ <http://archive.tec.govt.nz/Reports/2015/Taratahi-Agricultural-Training-Centre-Wairarapa-Cohort-Based.pdf>.

¹² Enrolments were: 220 EFTS (2014), 73 EFTS (2015) and 58 EFTS (2016). The programme will be replaced in 2017.

young and more skilled labour force to meet current and future requirements.¹³ Taratahi has developed a range of pathways and programmes to develop the capabilities of the students, to help them move to higher-level training and enter into and progress in the primary sector workforce. The PTE gains a broad and useful understanding of what industry, employers and iwi value through their strong linkages. There is some evidence that a significant proportion of graduates gain industry-related work. It is not clear to what extent the capabilities (or ‘calibre’) of Taratahi’s graduates are meeting the requirements of the sector.

A range of reasonable evidence indicates that some students are involved in seasonal primary sector work while studying, and some graduates gain more permanent work. The clearest and strongest case was that 70-90 per cent of the level 4 graduates are gaining paid farm-related work; this is a key programme objective being met. In some cases, young Māori graduates were working on iwi-owned, Taratahi-managed farms, meeting an important aspiration for those iwi. Exit surveys of recent level 3 graduates show strong progression into industry-related work from the Northland site, while the Masterton graduates had mostly gone on to further education. Although there was no outcomes data available specifically for Māori (or Pasifika) graduates, Taratahi has or is developing strategic alliances with various iwi. Post-course phone surveys of graduates had not been done, though these are planned. There was limited formal employer feedback collected on the graduates’ performance. There is a need for more in-depth and cross-organisational analysis of these outcomes, including identifying key trends.

A significant proportion of Taratahi students progress to higher-level training. The evaluators collated data from programme reports to provide a broader picture of these outcomes (Table 4).

Table 4. Progression to higher-level training 2013-2015 – percentage of total students (PTE sector median)

	2013	2014	2015**
Primary Industries Trade Academies	39*	NA	43*
Level 2 Youth Guarantee students	33* (43**)	29* (37**)	32 (34)
Level 3 Certificate in Agriculture ¹⁴	67* (33**)	61* (36**)	17 (24)
Level 4 Certificate in Agriculture	6* (21**)	10* (23**)	11 (16)

Sources: *Taratahi internal data; ** TEC published data

Programme reports record and compare these rates against the PTE sector medians, which they were often below. These are important outcomes for the

¹³ The primary industries have a strategic goal to double export returns by 2025. A Ministry of Primary Industries analysis (2014) identified that the sector needs more skilled people to reach that goal. See <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/funding-and-programmes/other-programmes/future-skills/>.

¹⁴ These figures are for the Masterton site only. The Whangarei site results were somewhat comparable: 2013, 66 per cent; 2014, 43 per cent; 2015, n/a.

students and other Taratahi stakeholders, requiring further analysis. A range of anecdotal evidence shows that individual students develop at Taratahi and improve their wellbeing. However, the picture is limited as there is little systematic assessment of a student's entry-level skills, attributes and wellbeing to show the value gained from their time at Taratahi.

More broadly, in 2016 Taratahi under new leadership has robustly reviewed its role and developed a revised strategy, with Te Awa Whakamua replacing the previous strategic plan. The key objective is that 'Taratahi will be the leading vocational educational provider of sub-degree primary industry pathways'. At this early stage, it is not clear to what extent this objective has been achieved and, more significantly, it is too early to judge whether key outcomes have improved since the last EER.

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**.

Taratahi actively engages with the primary sector, identifying needs and responding through its programmes and activities. The Taratahi board membership includes key primary sector stakeholders which reflects the strong and established links with industry. The PTE has formal memoranda of understanding with Primary ITO and Eastern Institute of Technology, and formal relationships with some iwi. The trust participates in industry bodies such as Sheep and Beef New Zealand, is involved in 10 research projects, and leases a farm from AgResearch. Taratahi manages multiple farms, providing them with direct experience of farm management and being an employer in the sector; the trust also has arrangements with 200 other farms for student placements. These activities all contribute to the training staying current with emerging approaches to farming.

Taratahi has developed programmes responding to various and diverse communities. Forty-seven per cent of the 2015 Taratahi students were Māori, which is an excellent participation rate and reinforces the strategic importance of parity of achievement and knowledge of outcomes – see Findings 1.1 and 1.2. The PTE has recently begun to offer Māori and Pasifika trades training; Taratahi attributed the oversubscribed enrolments to their strong relationships with iwi. It is too early to rate the performance of this initiative. Taratahi is piloting marae-based delivery, delivering training in five prisons, and supports offshore training in the Pacific through aid funding. The PTE offers a wide range of programmes, from taster courses through to the Massey and Lincoln Universities' level 5 Diploma in Agriculture.

Taratahi has an established training approach: 'real learning on real farms'. Education delivery follows the annual farming cycle. Frequent access to farming

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businesses supports a strong connection between learning new knowledge and skills and students applying that learning on a farm. Students, stakeholders and staff agree that this approach is well suited to both the industry and students. Taratahi has systematically reviewed its educational delivery model and curriculum at level 3 in 2016, to ensure students develop the competencies required to successfully work in the sector, and to meet student needs. The provider has consulted widely in developing a suite of 11 new programmes to align with the newly listed qualifications. While there were significant gaps in the initial applications for NZQA approval, the four applications received in February 2017 were of a much higher standard.¹⁵ The students and staff generally thought the equipment and materials were suitable, although some facilities were 'a bit tired'.

Annual programme reports are a key mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of the programme. These findings are used to inform programme changes in the following year, such as the introduction of the NCEA vocational pathway in 2016 and development of a level 1 and 2 programme in 2017 for Youth Guarantee students. As noted in Findings 1.1 and 1.2, the analysis of 2015 results and stakeholder feedback had some limitations. However, the level 2 programme report had some clear analysis of the six-monthly student paper-based evaluations. The three focus area programme reports for 2015 identify key actions that will be taken as well as the previous year's actions, and in some cases the outcomes of these actions were recorded and clear. Taratahi has identified the need for more real-time feedback, exploring an online survey tool. The rich and live information the evaluators gained from class interviews indicates that an independent and oral feedback process would supplement the written student evaluations.

To ensure that the programmes being delivered meet all key requirements, annual confirmation reports have been introduced. The process involves a detailed checklist matching programme specifications against programme delivery. These reports provide increased confidence that the Taratahi programmes are compliant.

¹⁵ See *Previous quality assurance history*

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 **Adequate**.

A range of generally sound teaching processes at Taratahi support the students to learn and achieve. The tutors interviewed were familiar with their students and changes in the student makeup. They had areas of expertise and some also had industry qualifications. The maximum tutor-to-staff ratio of 1:12 contributes to a supportive learning environment as students gain more one-to-one attention. There are various signs that literacy and numeracy education has become an important part of teaching practice. Two-thirds of the classroom tutors¹⁶ now have the level 5 qualification in literacy and numeracy education. Literacy and numeracy education was the key topic at the recent professional development week. The proportion of students being formally assessed using the TEC's literacy and numeracy tool increased significantly between 2014 and 2015, particularly at level 2. The tutors interviewed by the evaluators described how they embedded literacy and numeracy in the lesson plans and teaching delivery. More generally, student feedback on the tutors' teaching practice – from surveys and those interviewed on site – was positive.

The common teaching approach is to introduce a topic in the classroom or on the farm and then demonstrate the practice on the farm where the students apply their learning. Students are given feedback on their performance before their final assessment. There has been some piloting of alternative assessment approaches. For example, students had to work in pairs to diagnose a common condition on a cow, video the diagnosis, and submit an electronic presentation for assessment.

Taratahi has mostly robust internal processes to check that assessments are fit for purpose and that judgments being made are reliable and consistent. NZQA and Primary ITO external moderation standards have consistently been met, or the changes required were minor in nature. However, a 2015 internal moderation case sampled during the EER visit identified clear gaps in the assessment practice of a sub-contracted provider, which had not been followed up. In addition, samples of international students' level 5 marked work – although moderated post-assessment – lacked referencing and/or attribution of sources.

Processes that support teaching have varied in quality, but these gaps are being addressed. Management takes snapshots of the tutors' current level of formal training qualifications and the observations of tutors. One beneficial outcome of the snapshot process occurred in 2016: while all the level 2 tutors have a literacy and numeracy teaching qualification, recent staff changes have meant that new permanent staff are now being enrolled in the qualification. The snapshot also

¹⁶ As opposed to the farm-based tutors.

revealed that under half of the 68 tutors had achieved unit standard 4098, which Taratahi views as the accepted standard for assessing in the workplace. Annual observation of tutors by senior team members – a Taratahi requirement – has sometimes not occurred, while peer observations have also been sporadic. The recent organisational review put in place additional systems to strengthen teaching practice. A national coordinator-teaching quality role to drive improvements was established in July 2016. In August, a working group, informed by Ako Aotearoa advice, developed a cross-organisation outcomes-focused professional development plan. These processes provide a platform to support ongoing improvements.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

The support and guidance that Taratahi provides enables most students to stay engaged and complete their studies. However, support and guidance is applied inconsistently, and wellbeing varies among significant sub-groups.

Tutors provide the primary support for most students, particularly for the Waikato Youth Guarantee students. Students there valued that the tutors transport them to and from the campus, provide guidance, and follow up on student absences. At the Masterton campus, Student Achievement Component-funded students can live on site, and the student wellbeing and residential manager plays a significant pastoral role. Tutors in Masterton have been given formal responsibility as mentors in 2016, and schedule periodic one-to-one sessions. The students interviewed by the evaluators, and some feedback sighted, were positive about the support provided.

The pastoral care needs of the small number of international students are being very well met. The level of close monitoring on site, at their accommodation and on-farm was embedded and well received by these students, who are achieving their educational and employment goals. They valued their socialisation with local communities and domestic students.

However, some clear and significant gaps have not been managed effectively. There has not been a consistent, organisation-wide approach to supporting wellbeing applied across the different campuses. A review commissioned in 2016 notes that a 'boarding school' discipline model operating at the Masterton hostel has not encouraged a workplace ethic of self-responsibility. A robust analysis of withdrawals identified that Māori and Pasifika students under 20 years of age had the highest withdrawal rate. The leadership has identified a bicultural gap in Taratahi that has added significance, given the high Māori enrolment. Some health and safety and behavioural incidents recorded, both on campus and in workplace venues, gave the evaluators some concern.

The new Taratahi leadership responded with a range of substantive actions in mid-2016. It is regrettable that action in some cases had not occurred earlier. Key actions included:

- The health and safety policy has been thoroughly revised, informed by a review of incident data and good-practice principles.
- A more educative approach to student wellbeing and discipline (including a drug and alcohol policy) has been implemented.
- Two new key support roles have been established and individuals recently appointed:
 - a poutoko tauira – Māori and Pasifika student support role
 - a national coordinator – student support. Part of the national coordinator's mandate is to develop an organisation-wide approach to student wellbeing. The professional development working group has identified bicultural capability as a requirement across all roles.

The Taratahi leadership is aware that significant change is required in organisational processes, behaviour and culture to bring about the desired improved performance. Given the high ratio of male to female students on campus, and some student feedback, the evaluators concluded that a gender-based strategy to support women is warranted.

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

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

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

Taratahi and its leadership have been through a major upheaval due to issues arising from the TEC audit in late 2014 (see *Previous quality assurance history*). However, the organisation continues to have a clear purpose of providing capable graduates to meet the requirements of the primary sector. Many of the current senior management team were appointed in early 2016. A major change strategy, Te Ara Whakamua, has been progressively implemented since April 2016 to address the significant needs and gaps that have been identified. Various structures, roles and procedures have been established or modified to address these matters. The changes made appear substantive, broad and well considered. Many of them have already been noted in this report. In addition, the board recently set up three sub-committees to better govern business planning, risk and education. Financial systems have been overhauled and modernised. The independent financial monitor now viewed the business processes and planning as sound. Programme confirmation reports provide greater assurance that programmes are being delivered as approved. Various national coordinator roles

have been established to enhance consistency across campuses, working alongside regional and campus managers. However, there is currently no reporting framework to rate the performance of the 11 campuses. Staff interviewed said there has been increased consultation, communication and support from the new leadership and they were mostly supportive of the changes being made. The absence of a recent staff survey means this is only a tentative finding.

Taratahi leadership is exploring new or revitalised relationships and new ventures, such as the joint venture with Landcorp Farming Limited and the Shanghai Pengxin Group in establishing the New Zealand Dairy Academy at Taupo. This evaluation found an organisation working constructively in a deliberate and systematic way to address a range of significant challenges and opportunities. Most of the changes are in the early stages of implementation. More evidence of impacts and improvements is still required before NZQA can be more confident in the PTE's overall performance.

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 **Adequate**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

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

The needs of most students of this established programme are generally met. Over three-quarters complete this programme, a rate that has improved since 2013 and matches the sector median; qualification completions also matched this benchmark in 2015 (74 per cent). Two-thirds of the students progressed to higher-level study in 2013 and 2014, while in 2015, 69 per cent had a positive destination outcome. Most were employed in the farming sector (45 per cent) or elsewhere (7 per cent), and a minority went into higher-level study (17 per cent). Student feedback has been positive about the course content, learning on the farm, and the tutors. The analysis of results and the tracking of student outcomes has varied in quality, but is improving.

2.3 Focus area: National Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Adequate**.

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

Some, but not all, of the needs of the students and employers are met. Course completion rates are consistently around 75-77 per cent, slightly below the sector median. Qualification completions varied and dropped significantly in 2015 to 41 per cent, well below the sector median (Taratahi presented evidence that the final rate was 57 per cent). Gaining farm-related work is a key programme objective, and generally 70-90 per cent of the graduates gain work. Level 4 graduates generally gain practical farm skills and some relevant knowledge, and develop effective workplace attitudes. However, there is limited analysed feedback from employers on how well graduates meet their needs. A positive 2015 result is that Māori and Pasifika achievement rates are similar to overall rates, and some Māori graduates were working on iwi-owned, Taratahi-managed farms. The analysis of

results has been variable, while the tracking of employment outcomes is mostly sound.

2.4 Focus area: Foundation Agriculture Programmes (Level 2) (Youth Guarantee)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

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

The needs of most students are generally met. Course completions significantly increased in 2015 (74 per cent), well above the sector median. However, qualification completions remained static (41 per cent), although they have met TEC minimum expectations for the past three years. Tutors provide a good mix of theory and practical delivery and considerable student support. There is some good management support of delivery. There are some tools for reflection, such as the cohort reports which show promise, but these are completed inconsistently. Achievement data has not been well analysed, and outcomes data has not been collected and tracked.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre:

- Continue to strengthen the monitoring and analysis of educational achievement. Particularly, track the achievement and outcomes of Māori, Pasifika and women. Develop strategies to improve their performance and wellbeing.
- More systemically identify to what extent Taratahi is producing outcomes that meet the needs of key graduate groups, the primary sector and other stakeholders. Improved graduate destination data and industry stakeholder feedback is required.
- Explore ways to gather richer and more timely feedback from students and other stakeholders.
- Design a campus-level reporting mechanism to monitor and review performance at each of the delivery sites.
- Develop a consistent approach to assessing the impact of the changes made in key areas such as education delivery, professional development and student wellbeing.

Taratahi has plans in place and has taken actions that address, to varying extents, each of these areas.

Appendix

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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