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Report of External Evaluation and Review

The College of Future Learning New
Zealand Limited trading as The
College of Future Learning

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 24 November 2017

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	6
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	7
Summary of Results	8
Findings	9
Recommendations	17
Appendix	18

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Final Report

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:	The College of Future Learning New Zealand Limited trading as The College of Future Learning (FutureCOL)
First registered:	1992
Location:	304-308 Ellison Road, Hastings
Delivery sites:	As above and Level 3, O'Connells Shopping Centre, 30 Camp Street, Queenstown. No students are currently enrolled at Queenstown.
Courses currently delivered:	http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=869847001&delSiteId=0
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	From 2013 to 31 March 2017, 611 students have been enrolled. Domestic: 370 (205 equivalent full-time students) International: 241 (200 equivalent full-time students) At the time of the external evaluation and review (EER) visit, 160 students were enrolled, 90 of whom were international students.
Number of staff:	30 full-time equivalents
Scope of active	http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqi/search/results.do?or

accreditation:

[g=869847001](#)

Distinctive characteristics:

FutureCOL is a regional PTE with a prominent international student cohort and, until recently, a prominent Youth Guarantee and formerly Youth Training cohort and an Alternative Education programme. Of the domestic learners enrolled since the previous EER, most have identified as tauira Māori.

FutureCOL receives Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) programme funding for SAC (Student Achievement Component) levels 2 and 3 and above.

Recent significant changes:

Since the March 2013 EER, significant changes have taken place at FutureCOL:

- In September 2015, the college underwent a change of ownership.
- The college ceased to be part of the NTEC Tertiary Group from January 2017. This arrangement involved shared services for international marketing activities and programme development and some academic quality collaboration.
- A new chief executive was appointed in April 2016.
- A Queenstown campus was established in December 2016, but at the time of the EER had not commenced enrolments because of ongoing due diligence of viability.
- The following sites have now been formally closed, although some have not operated for some time: Auckland, Henderson, Wairoa, Napier, Napier South.

Previous quality assurance history:

External evaluation and review

At the previous EER in March 2013, NZQA was Highly Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment. The evaluators made three mainly self-assessment related recommendations.

Approvals and accreditations

FutureCOL made 14 applications to NZQA for the period 2014-2017; two were withdrawn, the remainder were approved. These mainly related to programme approval and accreditation as a response to the outcomes of mandatory reviews of qualifications, or programme changes in response to self-assessment processes.

Tertiary assessment and moderation

For 2013-16, NZQA externally moderated assessment samples for 22 standards from nine moderation systems. Assessor decisions for 61 of 72 samples of student work were accepted. Assessments for three of the standards required modification.

NZQA and ServiceIQ made an unannounced visit to FutureCOL on 1 December 2016 in response to a protected disclosure complaint. Seven areas were investigated (including staff qualifications and assessment and moderation activities). Of the seven, none of the complaints were upheld. However, some variability in the quality of marking by different tutors was identified and methods for recording attendance needed simplifying for clarity. FutureCOL conceded that the process of appointing and inducting a new tutor may not have met the conditions specified by both Service IQ and FutureCOL's own policy.

The TEC conducted an audit in December 2016. Twelve issues and discrepancies were identified and 16 recommendations made. Documentation provided to the TEC indicated that actions had been taken to address the recommendations by 30 April 2017.

A joint NZQA/Immigration New Zealand letter was sent to the PTE detailing concerns over the Indian student visa decline rate in 2016. FutureCOL's visa approval rate for Indian nationals applying for student visas in India for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 August 2016 was 37 per cent. The

letter further stated that FutureCOL was expected to achieve a minimum of a 50 per cent student visa approval rate for student visa applications by Indian nationals in India for January to March 2017. Immigration New Zealand data shows that FutureCOL's approval rate from 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2017 had improved to 71 per cent. Most international enrolments have been from the Indian market.

Immigration New Zealand has set a minimum Indian student visa approval rate of 60 per cent for the 2017 calendar year.

Other:

FutureCOL hospitality students compete in regional and national culinary competitions. At the 2017 Regional Salon, students won 11 medals and one student received a citation (2016: eight medals won). At the 2017 Salon Culinaire national competitions, FutureCOL students won 10 medals (2016: nine medals won).

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Focus areas and rationale for selection

Three focus areas were included in this evaluation. Together they cover the majority of student enrolments and the mandatory focus area for international providers.

Focus Area 1. International students: support and wellbeing

NZQA is committed to the responsible development and delivery of education to international students. It is essential to New Zealand's 'brand' to ensure that all students are adequately supported in their programmes of study. To that end, from August 2016 NZQA introduced a standard focus area for all EERs of TEOs that enrol international students. This focus area examined how effectively the TEO under review is discharging its pastoral care responsibilities towards its international students.

Focus Area 2. Certificate in Hospitality (Professional Cookery) (Level 4)

This is an area of continuity and specialisation with a mix of international and domestic students. There were 49 students at the time of scoping.

Focus Area 3. Computing Diploma programmes (National and New Zealand)

This is the highest-level FutureCOL programme, and is an area of continuity as well as showing transition to a new qualification. At the time of scoping there were 14 international students enrolled.

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-eeer/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.

Two evaluators visited the college for two days. During that time they interviewed the owners, chief executive, senior staff and teachers from the focus area programmes, students and stakeholders. A range of documentation and reports was sampled and considered as part of this evaluation. This included a self-assessment summary, a TEC audit report, NZQA and ServiceIQ report on FutureCOL's assessment and moderation, curriculum materials and assessments, timetables, student files, planning documents and meeting minutes.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance and **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **The College of Future Learning**.

FutureCOL is reviewing its performance, modifying its programme offering, and establishing the necessary community stakeholder connections for the longer term. Clear, well-documented self-assessment activities underpin these actions.

Course pass rates have significantly improved after two years of uneven performance, and this is a direct result of changes made to programmes and enrolment processes. As at August 2017, the course completion rate across all programmes is 82 per cent for TEC-funded students and exceeds 96 per cent for international students. This is close to the 2014 rate, and a major improvement on the 32 per cent completion rate for domestic students recorded in 2016. Many of these local students had not achieved well at school and have also had challenges securing stable, paid employment. That said, the two focus area programmes both rated positively for educational performance within this review.

Ensuring more consistent educational performance, based on better alignment between the programmes offered and student needs, has very clearly been a priority. This is a consequence of the change of ownership in late 2015 and the appointment of a new chief executive in 2016. The leadership of the PTE is working effectively to better understand their now much improved performance data, update the programme portfolio, and stabilise staffing in the wake of significant changes to the PTE's governance and management. Management is also ensuring that their important compliance requirements are met. Overall, learner needs and key stakeholder requirements are also being met, and sound educational practices are occurring.

In 2016-17 there has been much improved self-assessment of systems, performance, matching needs, and what needs to change at FutureCOL as a result. Some of this has been a response to external forces (the TEC audit and Immigration New Zealand notification, for example) but much of it has occurred since the ownership change. The PTE has the usual range of tools and processes to review and plan for change: student and employer surveys; management and programme-level meetings to monitor performance; a strengthened quality management system with policies being modified to reflect organisational changes; and programme development and moderation systems that support quality provision. The quality of and use of these various tools and processes is good. Numerous improvements have arisen from their use.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

The rating for performance and capability in self-assessment in relation to each of these two key evaluation questions is **Adequate**.

(These two key evaluation questions are reported together as the evaluators' findings and ratings were complementary and overlapping.)

Domestic student achievement has been patchy, most notably in the now-discontinued Vocational Pathways and Alternative Education programmes. Those programme offerings have not clearly matched students' needs. These uneven results also undermine the value of the outcomes from a student, whānau and funder perspective. International students continue to pass their courses at rates in excess of the PTE's 95 per cent target. These students have previously been successful in their home countries' education systems; they also have a clear focus on qualifications leading to a work rights visa and potential residence in New Zealand. Evidence indicates that this employment goal is being achieved, although understandably international students are often likely to move from the region and are more difficult to track.

Retention of students, course completion and predicted qualification completion have improved markedly in 2017 as a result of termination of some programmes and tighter acceptance processes. As at August 2017, the course completion rate across all programmes is 82 per cent for TEC-funded students.² This is close to the 2014 rate, and a major improvement on the 32 per cent completion rate recorded for 2016. New, shorter job-specific programmes at level 3 and lower now being rolled out are likely to better match the needs of younger learners and the older unemployed. The focus area programmes have had course completion rates averaging 75 per cent for cookery and 70 per cent for information technology since the previous EER, but these too have been variable year-on-year. The content and level of these two programmes have clear linkage to skill needs in New Zealand.

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

² Data was supplied from the PTE's learner management system (Take2). Disaggregation of courses may also contribute to this improved pass rate, as indicated by the PTE's management. Some students achieved credits within a course, but as they had not achieved the cluster of standards combined in that course, this was not recognised as a positive result.

The very mixed findings of the TEC audit in 2016 led management to undertake a detailed review of administrative systems and processes. A resulting analysis of all domestic student records since 2013 has been completed to understand and quantify the reasons for withdrawal or non-completion of programmes. While 53 per cent moved on to employment or study elsewhere, 13 per cent reportedly left early due to 'attendance or other behavioural concerns' and 9 per cent for 'health-related concerns'. These figures underscore the challenges facing both students and teachers.³ Many of the domestic students had not previously enjoyed success at school, and many have had insecure employment in casual or seasonal work. Overall, the focus on, analysis of and understanding and use of learner achievement data is improving.

Knowledge of the value of outcomes, and consolidated evidence that withstands external scrutiny is somewhat lacking. Anecdotal and survey feedback of graduate outcomes is clearly being gathered but this lacks analysis. Based on community stakeholder comment, it is plausible that FutureCOL is one of a number of groups contributing to improved learner outcomes within the Hastings area. A more comprehensive understanding and evidence base for this value-add would greatly strengthen the college's self-assessment. The same can be said about gathering more specific employment outcomes data. The new programmes and initiatives being considered (such as marae-based teaching) warrant monitoring and evaluation by the PTE and their stakeholders to ensure needs are matched, students are retained and value is added as intended.

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

FutureCOL students on the focus area programmes under review are well supported, and taught in suitable conditions using relevant equipment and technology. The teachers have a good grasp of their vocation and subject matter, the curriculum they need to deliver, and the expected parameters of NZQA and ServiceIQ. Information technology tutors in particular are highly qualified and experienced. Examples of in-class observation of teaching by subject experts, and professional development records and plans were available and thorough. These and other factors contribute to a picture of learner needs and key stakeholder requirements being met, and sound educational practices occurring.

³ Fifty per cent of Hastings' population falls within the two highest socioeconomic 'deprivation categories' of the [New Zealand Index of Deprivation \(NZDep\)](#).

The balance between theory and practice and group as well as individual performance is clear, logical and subject to ongoing reflection and review at regular minuted staff meetings. Tweaks and changes to delivery occur from these reflections, and individual student progress is now much more closely monitored. Students described a learning process where expectations are clearly understood and suitable guidance is provided in oral and written form. Teaching staff are very accessible to students, which students highly value. Students are also very clear on who to speak to with regard to concerns, complaints or an after-hours crisis. Attendance requirements are adhered to, with a daily roll and monitoring of lateness.

Linking programmes with industry, in particular information technology programmes, is somewhat unconvincing. Some students desire to have more industry exposure and opportunities to network with prospective employers. The strategy for this relatively small programme area seems uncertain, although the programmes on offer are sound and current.

Moderation of assessments by NZQA, ServicelQ, Primary ITO and Skills Organisation has indicated that students are being assessed appropriately. Internal moderation is conducted according to a plan, and the PTE also uses contract moderators. This, along with active use of plagiarism education and monitoring of student work, supports the credibility of FutureCOL students' results. A small sample of recently marked work from the information technology diploma was selected for checking by the evaluators. This work had been marked, errors noted, feedback provided and verified by a peer. Although the work was clearly written by second-language users, the responses seemed reasonable in relation to the topic.

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

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**.

The learning environment at FutureCOL is inclusive and supportive – blending domestic students with international students. This has had some challenges, but overall students and external stakeholders note the benefits. Interactions with Māori community leaders and business have been strengthened over the last 18 months to understand their needs, but also to link to and support other initiatives such as those occurring in Hastings CBD, Flaxmere and Whakatu.

The hospitality programme's barista and cookery facilities, along with comfortable student areas, provide an environment where students feel supported and serve one another. Excursions and social activities are held from time to time with similar goals. Staff have a good understanding of their specific responsibilities and have

job descriptions that specify these and distinguish teaching from more specialised student support. Collectively, FutureCOL staff support the students. This includes meeting the requirement of the Code of Practice.

Pastoral care of students seems to be a strength and key feature of FutureCOL. Some very difficult situations and cases have and are being managed. Students are cared for and followed up, but unfortunately this has not always been enough to ensure their success. As indicated earlier, student retention on programmes has improved.

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

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**.

The appointment of a new chief executive who has recent experience at senior management level with an institute of technology/polytechnic has reinvigorated the college. Internal reviews identified the need for consultant input, and this is occurring in relation to interactive strategic planning workshops with all staff, and assessment/moderation training. These build on previous professional development. Initial tutor training occurs in-house and includes assessment towards achievement of common assessor unit standards. Staff are then expected to undertake an adult education programme at level 5 through The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. A staff and organisational development schedule is maintained, is accurate and is shared with the governance of the PTE. There has been an increase in spending on these developmental activities under the new ownership.

An academic board and academic review committee meet on a planned schedule, and oversee academic policy, programme development and resulting processes. Additional controls around validating final results have been instituted in 2017 following the TEC audit findings.

Local students study fee-free at FutureCOL, which supports the PTE's ability to attract students from low socioeconomic areas. Website information and other guidance provided to students is accurate, creatively presented and understood by students. The evaluators noted that photographs of student groups on the PTE's website reflected the mix of students actually enrolled.

FutureCOL has knowledgeable and skilful staff who are well led. The new chief executive has initiated or led numerous review and improvement processes and has the confidence of the main funder, PTE staff and community stakeholders. Teachers and administrative staff go the extra mile to coach and encourage students, be they strugglers or those seeking to excel.

The steadily increasing number of international students have been retained and well supported, and have consistently achieved their hospitality or information technology qualification. Issues with visa approval rates are also being addressed.

The renewed focus on building strong community networks is genuine, in-depth, and is being valued by stakeholders, including iwi and business leaders. FutureCOL is actively engaging with the wider community. Similarly, work to take full responsibility for the previously shared services with NTEC Tertiary Group is convincing, and additional staff have been hired for this work.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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**.

The owners of FutureCOL were among the founding partners of the successful NTEC Tertiary Group and so have a very clear understanding of the regulatory and compliance environment within which the college operates. This knowledge is reflected in the prioritisation and resourcing of various initiatives mentioned within this report which are aimed to improve the PTE's performance and compliance. Key examples include:

- Information technology programmes which have been delivered according to an NZQA-approved schedule across 2.5 days are now being changed in response to the recent NZQA/Immigration New Zealand memorandum on 'compressed delivery'.
- Immigration New Zealand data shows that the FutureCOL student visa approval rate for the problematic Indian market has improved from 37 per cent in 2016 to 71 per cent in 2017. More care is being taken around selection and use of overseas agents.
- There is a good history of compliance with NZQA programme approval, external moderation and other rules related to maintaining registration.
- Clarity of staff roles and review processes against the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice are appropriate, although development of the approach may be required to reflect the outcomes-based focus of the new code guideline.
- TEC audit findings from 2016 did not reflect a historically robust administrative and academic management process. There were numerous areas where FutureCOL was non-compliant with TEC requirements, including student records. This has now been convincingly sorted but still reflects limitations on

self-assessment in respect of funder requirements which have only recently been identified and addressed.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: International students: support and wellbeing

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

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

2.2 Focus area: Certificate in Hospitality (Professional Cookery) (Level 4)

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

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

Graduates of this programme can and do pathway to the New Zealand Diploma in Cookery (Advanced) (Level 5) with strands in Cookery or Patisserie. Some students have started their learning with a short barista qualification and then continued to professional cookery. Teachers have shown a high degree of dedication and commitment to coaching students for culinary competitions, including in their own time. Students valued this, and the success they achieved individually and as a group. These competitions also provide staff with a benchmark comparison of the quality of their teaching and the techniques they are using. As noted under 1.1, pass rates are positive, although international student pass rates have exceeded those of the domestic students. The programme has vocational relevance to both the Hawke's Bay and New Zealand hospitality industry.

2.3 Focus area: Computing Diploma programmes (National and New Zealand)

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

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

FutureCOL is currently managing the transition from the National diploma to the New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6). Students observed that there had been no disruption to their programme of study. The use of self-directed study time has been under close scrutiny, and teachers have made clear to students what is expected. As appropriate, informal verbal assessment is used to ensure students use that time as intended within the course design. Students benefit from small groups (fewer than 10 currently) and a good mix of project, group

work, self-study and teacher coaching. The resources available are suitable and ongoing investment and updating has occurred. The teachers are seeking to increase the integration of the programme with industry certification exams, which is a positive initiative. The future of the information technology programmes is unclear. However, a comprehensive strategy was developed shortly after the EER visit.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that FutureCOL:

- Continue with the process of embedding the administrative, academic quality control and data quality measures implemented in 2017.
- Ensure that the changes to the policies and procedures which have been needed due to the conclusion of the links with the previous ownership's PTE continue, and that audits or other checks of adherence with these policies become a regular activity.
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation of new programmes and initiatives occurs, with a view to understanding their performance and showing evidence of their effectiveness.
- Implement and monitor the newly drafted information technology programme strategy.

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz