External Evaluation and Review Report

Advance Training Centres Limited

Date of report: 23 November 2018

About Advance Training Centres Limited

Advance Training Centres (ATC) provides foundation-level education, with a strong military preparatory school and tikanga focus. The students are teenagers who have yet to succeed in formal education.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	3033 Great North Rd, New Lynn, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	266 (132 equivalent full-time students in 2017) Māori 50 per cent (134) Pasifika 32 per cent (86)
Number of staff:	15 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	Advance Training Centres Limited
	New owners purchased the organisation in early 2016. The PTE has three campuses in New Lynn, Manukau and Hamilton.
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment of the PTE in the previous external evaluation and review (EER).
Scope of evaluation:	Ngā Rangatahi Toa E Whai Hua, Certificate in Fitness and Recreation (Level 1)
	Vocational Pathway (NCEA Level 2)
MoE number:	8872
NZQA reference:	C30811
Dates of EER visit:	4 and 5 September 2018

Summary of Results

ATC has been largely successful. At-risk students mostly stay engaged, learn and significantly improve their well-being, with many progressing to further learning. Self-assessment has contributed to important improvements. However, some areas require more attention.

Confident in educational performance

- At-risk students arrive with little prior educational achievement. Most stay engaged, learn valuable knowledge, skills and attitudes, improved behaviour, and significantly enhance their well-being. Many progress to further learning and a few into related employment. Over 90 per cent of the students are satisfied.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- ATC offers an effective, structured learning environment with a military preparatory school character and a tikanga focus. Manaakitanga is central to ATC's success at retaining students. Staff, community agencies, fellow students and systems contribute strongly. ATC offers an effective mix of classroom-based learning, physical education, developing foundation skills and a stronger cultural identity.

- Governance and management has mostly supported high and improving educational performance through a time of major change. Staff are valued. ATC manages its most important compliance accountabilities, but some matters need to be addressed.

- ATC has a rich understanding of its students and their world, which enables ATC to respond to student needs. Completions and retention have risen significantly. ATC needs to focus on further analysing student achievement and producing more robust programme applications.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ATC students arrive often with at-risk behaviours, poor well-being and little if any prior educational achievement. Their first significant achievement is that most students remain engaged (and increasingly so) in the educational programme to the end.[2] Many students learn new and valuable communication, teamwork, well-being and tikanga-related knowledge, skills and attitudes. ATC assesses this through unit standards. Recent course and qualification completions have exceeded Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) minimum performance expectations in 2017 and in the 2018 year to date. These rates are improving.[3] Close to half of the students gained their first qualification. Māori and Pasifika achievement rates, while mostly exceeding the above TEC benchmark, were 3-5 per cent below the rates for all students. ATC could more clearly monitor and analyse this to support improvement. Sound assessment and moderation practices give overall confidence in these results. More than half of the 2017 students also made progress in literacy and numeracy. ATC is piloting an individual student progress review sheet to better track individual achievement and outcomes. The PTE has a generally strong understanding of achievement which is reflected in the improving completion rates. There are a few self-assessment gaps, including the incomplete tracking of the two programmes and the benchmarking of results.
Conclusion:	Students with little prior achievement get strong results, with many making considerable progress. ATC's achievement data is generally sound.

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[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] Retention rose from 59 per cent (level 1) and 66 per cent (level 2) for the programmes respectively in 2017, to around 75 per cent for both programmes in 2018 year to date.

[3] See Appendix 1: Table 1 and Table 2

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Key stakeholders agreed that most students acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes that strengthened their cultural identity, significantly improved their behaviour and enhanced their well-being. Students and key stakeholders powerfully described in one word the often-transformative impact of the ATC experience as: 'empowering', 'motivational', 'life changing', giving the students 'direction', 'connection' and 'hope'.[4] The foundation education assessment results[5] confirm that personal development is taking place. Student surveys at the beginning, middle and end of 2017 found that over 95 per cent of students were satisfied with their ATC experience. Student destinations are well tracked and were strong; over half of the 2017 Vocational Pathway students progressed into paid work or further study; 62 per cent of the 2018 level 1 graduates progressed to the level 2 programme. Students also contributed value as role models for at-risk youth; they participate in community initiatives and course referrals often come from them. Three youth transition service representatives stated they had not seen comparable outcomes elsewhere in the sector, and the other interviewed community stakeholders agreed with this view. These outcomes are also a government priority as 80 per cent of the students are Māori or Pasifika.[6]

The PTE collects and analyses a broad range of good quality outcomes data. There are opportunities for improved self-assessment through additional analysis, clarifying the key and often complex programme outcomes and more systematically identifying the outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students. However, any gaps have no significant impacts. |
| Conclusion: | There was strong evidence that many students and key stakeholders derived high 'added value' from the ATC training. |

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[4] Students, tutors and community stakeholders were asked to describe ATC in one word.

[5] See 1.1.

[6] Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ATC has created a highly structured learning environment with a military preparatory school character and a tikanga focus. There is classroom-based learning in the morning followed by physical education activity in the afternoon. This approach successfully attracts and retains students with complex needs and little achievement in mainstream education, including high numbers of Māori and Pasifika. The PTE's self-assessment identified that many enrolling students needed a strengthened cultural identity and sense of belonging and foundational skills for ongoing learning. Its new level 1 programme effectively meets this need and most graduates move to the level 2 Vocational Pathways programme. There is extensive internal moderation and mostly favourable and improving external moderation results, giving general confidence in ATC's assessment practice. ATC has a range of self-assessment activities that are mostly effective in supporting some ongoing programme improvements. ATC has used periodic student feedback and, more recently, small-group diagnostics to identify areas for improvement. An annual programme review analyses performance in detail. Though ATC has invested in embedding literacy and numeracy, the progress in achieving the strategy and student results is less clear. A staff development week is another key annual activity that supports good practice and has led to programme improvements. ATC has identified security officer roles as an appropriate employment pathway for its level 2 graduates. However, the ATC application for a programme leading to a relevant level 3 qualification had gaps and was declined as it did not meet NZQA programme approval criteria. These self-assessment gaps require attention.
Conclusion:	ATC has designed and delivered programmes and a learning environment that matches the complex needs of most students and other relevant stakeholders. ATC's self-assessment is generally strong and most gaps have been addressed.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ATC has a rich understanding of its students and their world. It provides them with a highly supportive 'loving' 'whānau/family-like' environment. This environment is also 'real' and 'challenging', where students learn that actions have consequences. Nearly all students over the last two years have agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the ATC experience.
	ATC attributes much of the rising levels of retention and completions to a revised orientation process that gives applicants a realistic taste of being on the programme and increases the involvement of whānau.
	This exceptional performance is the result of a committed team effort: trained tutors, support staff, various community stakeholders and students supporting students, supported by the leadership team, all make significant contributions.
	The organisation closely monitors the students' attendance and achievement. Weekly staff meetings focus on responding to the challenges facing individual students. The PTE formally and anonymously surveys students at three points on the programme.
Conclusion:	ATC supports many students who have high and complex needs to stay engaged, improve their well-being, complete their studies and experience success.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The ATC leadership has effectively managed major changes since taking ownership in early 2016: i.e. consolidating delivery to three new campuses, investing in generally improved facilities, and focusing on two new core programmes. The self-assessment and decision-making has been effective. Despite the changes, the leadership has enabled improving performance for both programmes. Critically, ATC has retained and upskilled its tutors, who have (or are enrolled in) appropriate qualifications, and has strengthened a robust tutor induction process. ATC is conscious of the high and complex needs of the students. Staff survey results, and the interviews conducted during the EER, show that staff feel valued and supported, notwithstanding the significant changes. ATC has developed strong relationships with community stakeholders who are key for its ongoing success. There are a range of robust quality management systems in place that are mostly effective. Academic leadership has been generally robust, though there were (previously noted) gaps in a key programme application, and some minor compliance matters, noted below.[7] Across the organisation, there is ongoing reflective practice and ATC insightfully uses generally high-quality data to inform its decision-making.
Conclusion:	ATC leadership have been largely effective in ensuring the important needs of its students, staff and other key stakeholders have been comprehensively met.

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[7] See 1.3 and 1.6 for details.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ATC has in place clear roles, responsibilities, procedures and an annual calendar of key compliance events to ensure it meets its key regulatory requirements. There was some good evidence of programmes being delivered according to their key approved requirements of hours, attendance and student eligibility. Tutors had appropriate qualifications (or were enrolled to achieve them) and experience for the programmes they teach. There was some good evidence of systematic assessment and moderation practices taking place. The PTE leadership stated that the organisation is not facing any legal or ethical issues now or in the recent past. However, the organisation had (with one exception) not retired programmes that were no longer delivered or removed non-active delivery sites. It also had reported unit standard results late but made improvements that mostly addressed this issue. The other gaps have now been addressed. It is important that ATC has comprehensive processes to remain compliant with a dynamic regulatory environment, including ensuring public information about the PTE is current and accurate.
Conclusion:	ATC has effectively managed its most important compliance accountabilities. However, some areas which have not had significant impacts on educational performance to date, require attention.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Ngā Rangatahi Toa E Whai Hua – Certificate in Fitness and Recreation (Level 1)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

2.2 Focus area: Vocational Pathway Level 2 – Social and Community Services Sector

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

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 Advance Training Centres Limited:

- Review the effectiveness of the ATC literacy and numeracy strategy and its current status.

- Strengthen the self-assessment of applications for programme approvals.

- Periodically audit ATC's key compliance requirements.

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 1

Table 1. Course completion rates 2015-2018 and TEC minimum expectations for level 1 and 2 qualifications (percentage of total students)

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Year to date)
All students	71	56 (55/60[8])	62 (55/60)	68 (55/60)
Māori	69	53	58	60
Pasifika	67	53	61	75

Sources: TEC 2015-2017 data and ATC 2018 data

Table 2. Qualification completion rates 2015-2018 and TEC minimum expectations for level 1 and 2 qualifications (percentage of total students)

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Year to date)
All students	62	27 (40[9])	47 (40)	53 (40)
Māori	59	21	40	50
Pasifika	51	26	44	65

Sources: TEC 2015-2017 data and ATC 2018 data

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[8] The first figure is the TEC minimum expectations for level 1, and the second for level 2 qualifications.

[9] This figure is the TEC minimum expectation for both level 1 and level 2 qualifications.

Final Report

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[10]*

- *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.*

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[10] NZQA and the TEC comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

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

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). The Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/qa-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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