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External Evaluation and Review Report

Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoors
Education Trust

Date of report: 21 December 2022

About Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoors Education Trust

Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoors Education Trust (Hillary) offers certificate and diploma-level programmes that produce graduates for the outdoor and adventure education industry in New Zealand/Aotearoa.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	Access Road No 3, State Highway 47, Turangi
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 22 (14 on the level 4 certificate; eight on the level 5 diploma); Māori four, Pakeha 18; under 25: 19 (13 female, six male); over 25: three (two male, one non-binary) International: nil
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents; 13 part-time
TEO profile:	See NZQA: Hillary Outdoors Education Centres The organisation was restructured in 2019 to meet the challenges of Covid-19 and to remain financially viable and sustainable. Changes included staff redundancies, approval of new programmes, and the development of online delivery capacity due to Covid-19.
Last EER outcome:	In 2018, Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoors Education Trust was found to be Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor and Adventure Education (Multi-skilled) (Level 4) (Ref: 3765-1) (ID:125419)• New Zealand Diploma in Outdoor and Adventure Education (Multi-skilled) (Level 5) (Ref:3766-1) (ID:125454)
MoE number:	9619

NZQA reference: C50227

Dates of EER online enquiry: 7 and 8 September 2022

Summary of results

Governance and management, staffing, programmes, and teaching and learning have all been comprehensively reviewed since the last external evaluation and review. This robust self-assessment has led to wide-reaching organisational improvements for students. Compliance with NZQA quality assurance and Tertiary Education Commission financial viability expectations needs urgent attention.

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| Highly Confident in educational performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students gain qualifications and personal and leadership skills that enhance their lives and increase their employability.• Effective student support has contributed to consistently high student achievement across all student groups.• Staff are highly qualified and experienced practitioners. Some are accredited assessors of the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association, which sets the industry standard. |
| Confident in capability in self-assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A culture of self-review and ongoing improvement is embedded in teaching and learning practices and processes.• Hillary's governance and management has negotiated a restructure of staff and programmes to better meet organisational and student needs.• Ensuring full compliance with NZQA's rules and regulations requires urgent attention from Hillary. |

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at Hillary achieve very well. In 2019 there was 100 per cent qualification and course completions for all students. In 2020, Covid-19 had personal and educational impacts for students and Hillary. The required change to online delivery during lockdowns was a difficult fit for the mostly kinaesthetic learners. Qualification and course completions in 2020 reflect these challenges. In 2021, qualification rates improved (refer Appendix 1, Tables 1 and 2). In 2022 course completions are tracking at 100 per cent and qualification completions at 85 per cent. Internal and external moderation validates achievement outcomes.</p> <p>Student achievement data and progress are reviewed regularly. This includes daily instructor meetings, monthly management meetings and quarterly reporting to the board. Reporting includes reviewing all student achievement, including Māori achievement. The 100 per cent completions in 2019 included data for all learners, showing parity of outcomes for Māori in that year. In 2020 and 2021, parity with other learners was not achieved due to students' increased family commitments during Covid-19.</p> <p>Retention and progression rates are strong. In 2020, seven of eight level 4 graduates progressed to the level 5 programme, with the remaining students entering employment. In 2021, all six of the level 4 graduates progressed to level 5. While student numbers are small, they indicate that student satisfaction with the level 4 programme is consistently high. Skills and knowledge gained are vast and highly relevant (see 1.2). The importance of progressing from certificate to diploma-level to improve skills and enhance employment opportunities is well understood by the students.</p>

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

Conclusion:	Students' complete courses and gain qualifications. Processes for reviewing student progress are highly effective. Student retention, progression and achievement are high.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students acquire useful skills and knowledge to meet a growing demand for industry graduates. Employers prioritise Hillary graduates over others. Reasons include positive attitude, enthusiasm for the industry, well-developed technical abilities, the ability to manage risk, understanding of health and safety, and possessing the personal skills to be work-ready.</p> <p>Students improve their wellbeing, enhance their abilities and attributes, and gain transferable skills, in addition to gaining a qualification. Examples reported include improved self-management and communication skills, greater resilience and leadership qualities. The practical outdoor skills gained lead to more active lifestyles and greater fitness levels.</p> <p>Hillary contributes to upskilling both individual students and the overall industry. It is one of two New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (NZOIA) assessment centres in the North Island. Students at certificate and diploma levels can gain professional qualifications with NZOIA as part of their study. They also gain an outdoor first aid qualification with a Category 1 provider. The quality of the secondary schools' programmes (the majority of Hillary delivery) is enhanced by having tertiary programmes running alongside. Students can facilitate the training with secondary school students, under close supervision, adding value to their own learning.</p> <p>Hillary values its graduates by employing them. Of the current team of 14 instructors, five are Hillary graduates. Graduate surveys sent to 47 graduates over 2019-21 showed that a high proportion of the graduates went on to further study or gained employment in the outdoor education industry. Anecdotal information is gathered at industry forums and other shared events in this niche industry, providing relevant insights into valued outcomes. Determining how well graduates are meeting</p>

	graduate programme outcomes and using this data to inform programme design and delivery would provide added value.
Conclusion:	Students improve their wellbeing and confidence. Personal growth is enhanced. Graduates are work-ready and highly valued by industry.

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:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Programme design, delivery and assessment activities match student needs well. The New Zealand certificate and diploma programmes, first delivered in 2020, entailed a shift from unit standard to module-based teaching, learning and assessment. Improvements included fewer overlaps in content, a reduction in assessments and more varied assessment tasks. Experts in the field instruct each module. This ensures that students are exposed to different teaching styles.</p> <p>The impact of Covid and lockdowns necessitated the quick development of online resources. Google Classroom and Messenger were used effectively to meet this need. These resources are now used to complement classroom teaching. Module content on Google Classroom aids student preparation for face-to-face activities.</p> <p>Students graduate with the skills that enable them to work at any multi-activity outdoor centre. Hillary's location in Tongariro National Park provides easy access to bush, lakes, gorges and mountains. Practical skills, such as white water kayaking and alpine skills, provide solid foundation skills for students to be industry ready. Kayak guiding companies contact Hillary for graduates to employ.</p> <p>Kaumatua from the local hapū are contracted to deliver tikanga and kaitiakitanga modules. Hillary runs courses at the marae for local youth. Students with learning disabilities are supported to complete programmes by provision of reader/writers and extra time to complete assessments.</p>

	Hillary is highly responsive to industry needs. Due to closed borders from Covid-19, the ski industry was short of instructors, so skiing was added to programmes to meet this need. Students were given season passes to practise winter skills and upskill in skiing and snowboarding.
Conclusion:	Programmes have been developed and adapted to better match student, instructor and employer needs. Hillary has a recognised leadership role in the outdoor education industry.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Responses to the wellbeing needs of students are appropriate. Many students are straight from school and away from home for the first time. Hillary encourages students to flat together and to practise skills learnt during the week and on the weekends, with equipment on loan from Hillary. A van from Turangi, provided by Hillary to transport students, has increased attendance. Support during Covid-19 was comprehensive. Student holidays were taken during lockdowns, staff checked in regularly on students, and instructors were available 24/7 if needed. All students returned post-lockdown. Staff focused on pastoral care and the best life outcome for each student which, for some, meant discontinuing study.</p> <p>The learning environment is inclusive. Many students are kinaesthetic learners and lack confidence academically. Literacy and numeracy skills are established at the entry interview and support provided if needed. Hillary has good pre-entry processes in place to ensure students are the right fit for the programme. Instructors are approachable and give students individual attention and extra help.</p> <p>Classes are small, with a 1:6 instructor-to-student ratio for practical fieldwork. Both programmes are delivered over four days (Tuesday-Friday) each week. Each Monday students attend the centre. This enables opportunities for level 4 and 5 students to mix, to review the previous week, to get help with assignments, discuss the upcoming week, and have a fitness workout. This has been a purposeful and effective shift from previous less structured self-directed learning time. Students</p>

	<p>have regular opportunities to give feedback, and this feedback is actioned. For example, the 2021 certificate students wanted more time for kayak rolls. This has now been provided for the 2022 certificate students.</p> <p>Students are welcomed onto the local Ngati Hikairo marae in week 2 and return at programme completion to share their learning, growth and to celebrate successes. There are two Māori scholarships available for students from the marae to encourage Māori participation.</p>
Conclusion:	Student support is proactive, comprehensive and well resourced. Student voice is valued and used to make worthwhile improvements to teaching and learning.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Governance is mostly effective, with clear organisational purpose and direction. The governance team of six trustees are well informed and consulted regularly by management. Hillary responded effectively to changes prompted by the impact of Covid-19 on the organisation, and on the outdoor education industry in general. The subsequent restructure, while challenging, was well managed, guided by a clear focus, and has led to positive outcomes.</p> <p>Recruitment and development of staff is effective. The appointment of a new tertiary programme manager in 2021, with 20 years' experience in delivering outdoor education, has been highly beneficial. This person leads a well-qualified and experienced team, some of whom are assessors for NZOIA.</p> <p>Staff are valued. Investment in staff training includes two weeks of team training a year plus opportunities for individual professional development. Sending staff to conferences and symposiums is a priority, to ensure that they maintain and develop important connections with industry. Hillary has hosted two NZOIA annual symposiums and is hosting the 2022 event.</p> <p>Hillary has strong community links, including with Māori, and actively contributes to the community. The centre at Tongariro is</p>

	the local Civil Defence Centre, instructors are part of RARO (Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation), and staff provide avalanche awareness courses for the public. To ensure ongoing access to the Department of Conservation (DoC) estate, Hillary consults with DoC, community groups and local iwi. Knowledge of kaitiakitanga underpins behaviour in work and recreational settings.
Conclusion:	Governance and management support educational achievement well. Changes following the restructure are not yet fully embedded.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Aspects of the new organisational structure of the tertiary area were implemented to increase administration efficiency and improve the ability to manage compliance. Improvements include the appointment of a dedicated tertiary administration person and centralising the administration functions to the Tongariro Centre. Despite these measures, management of compliance is not as effective as it could be.</p> <p>At the last EER in 2018, two matters of NZQA non-compliance were found; one regarding non-compliance with Rule 18 English language requirements for international students; and the second, filing the required statutory declarations for all trustees with NZQA. Hillary has no international students currently, therefore the evaluation team could not determine compliance with Rule 18. Statutory declarations are up to date.</p> <p>Extensions for the Student Fee Protection (SFP) audit were granted by NZQA for 2021. The extension due date for the 2021 SFP was not met in 2021 but has since been met in November 2022. An extension date for the 2022 SFP of 31 October 2022 was not met and a further extension to 15 December 2022 was granted. The 2021 and 2022 SFP oversights suggest compliance management in this area needs urgent attention.</p> <p>Stringent safety procedures and a comprehensive safety management system guide decisions at Hillary. There is an open safety culture where incidents are recorded and analysed.</p>

	<p>Daily operations meetings include health and safety updates and discussion of incidents from the previous day. Students are aware of the importance of health and safety in outdoor education. A 30-year DoC guiding concession to access DoC land for training purposes is due for renewal. Hillary has had verbal assurance that the concession will be honoured for a minimum of 20 years.</p> <p>The centre has a dedicated safety manager and Hillary is registered as an adventure activities operator under the Adventure Activities Registration Scheme. Hillary also has an external safety advisory committee that sits quarterly and advises on all aspects of safety within the organisation. The safety manager reports to the committee, and any incidents are discussed with the tertiary team. Hillary meets the Adventure Mark Safety Audit, the outdoor education industry standard.</p> <p>At the NZQA consistency review in 2022 of the New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor and Adventure Education (Multi-skilled) (Level 4), Hillary was found to be sufficient. There was one recommendation from the consistency review, which has been referenced in KEQ 1.2 and added to this report's recommendations.</p> <p>A Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) desktop audit in 2021 concluded that: overall systems, policies and procedures are effective and meet legislative and investment plan requirements. In the audit's focus area of Organisation Eligibility, there was one area requiring improvement. Hillary Outdoors Education Centres is not meeting the TEC's financial viability expectations and is assessed as High Risk. To increase capability in this area, the board of trustees has recently appointed a chair with financial expertise and extensive experience with charities such as Hillary. In 2022, the organisation no longer has a working capital deficit and the board monitors finances closely. Also, Hillary has been granted additional TEC funding for up to 30 student places for 2023. These have all been taken and the programme is full.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Hillary meets the relevant outdoor education industry requirements and demonstrates effective compliance management in these areas. However, understanding the reasons behind not fully meeting NZQA rules and regulations requires urgent attention by governance and management.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor and Adventure Education (Multi-skilled) (Level 4)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Outdoor and Adventure Education (Multi-skilled) (Level 5)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoors Education Trust consider:

- whether discussions with graduates would benefit from inclusion of a focus directly aligned to the Graduate Programme Outcomes, to directly determine how well graduates are meeting those outcomes and to further inform ongoing improvements to programme design and delivery. (NZQA consistency review recommendation, 2022.)
- the effectiveness of centralising administrative functions for meeting NZQA expectations.

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 completions by ethnicity 2018-21

Ethnicity	2018	2019	2020	2021
Māori/Pasifika	100%	100%	65%	66%
Non-Māori/Pasifika	87%	100%	83%	100%

Table 2. Qualification completions by ethnicity 2018-21

Ethnicity	2018	2019	2020	2021
Māori/Pasifika	100%	100%	40%	60%
Non-Māori/Pasifika	83%	100%	65%	87%

Data provided by Hillary Outdoors Education Centres

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 fraud²*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

² NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under 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 authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

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, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 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 2018 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, training schemes and consents to assess and 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, 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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