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# External Evaluation and Review Report

## Hillary Outdoors Education Centres

Date of report: 6 December 2018

# About Hillary Outdoors Education Centres

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*Hillary Outdoors Education Centres aims to develop young people through adventure-based programmes. There are two campuses: Tongariro and Great Barrier Island.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Access Road No 3, State Highway 47, Turangi
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 19 equivalent full-time students on tertiary programmes plus approximately 6,000 school students per year on short courses. International: two equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	43 full-time staff and three part-time staff
TEO profile:	<a href="https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=961925001">https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=961925001</a>
Last EER outcome:	Confident in educational performance Confident in capability in self-assessment
Scope of evaluation:	Level 4 and 5 outdoor education programmes
MoE number:	9619
NZQA reference:	C31069
Dates of EER visit:	20 and 21 September 2018

# Summary of Results

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*Educational performance is generally strong; however, management of some compliance obligations could be strengthened. Self-assessment is effective, with opportunities for further improvement.*

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	<p>Student achievement is high; external moderation results provide confidence that assessment is appropriate.</p>
<b>Confident in educational performance</b>	<p>The skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in students are highly valued by students and employers.</p>
<b>Confident in capability in self-assessment</b>	<p>Programme design and delivery are well matched to the needs of students and related employment requirements. Learning activities effectively engage students and assessment is well integrated with delivery.</p> <p>A very supportive, inclusive learning environment contributes positively to student learning.</p> <p>Governance and management are effective at supporting educational achievement. There is a clear focus on the quality and safety of the adventure-based educational opportunities provided.</p> <p>Some compliance accountabilities are managed effectively. However, compliance with NZQA's rules and requirements is not effectively managed, and self-assessment relating to compliance management needs to be strengthened.</p> <p>Reflection is well embedded in the organisation, but self-assessment would be strengthened by better collation and analysis of data and a stronger focus on the effectiveness of activities and processes.</p>

## Key evaluation question findings

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Course completion rates are high for national certificate and diploma programmes. Almost all students are retained for a full year of study and gain the qualification they are enrolled in (see Table 1, Appendix 1). These high success rates are validated by strong external moderation results in 2017 (Table 3, Appendix 1). Additionally, a Tertiary Education Commission audit in late 2017 confirmed that some fluctuation in course completion rates between 2014 and 2016 were accurate.</p> <p>Course and qualification completion rates for Māori and international students have been at or above the rate for other students since the last EER. During this period, no Pasifika students have been enrolled.</p> <p>In addition to the technical skills gained, students reported significant personal growth during the programme. Personal attributes are intentionally developed in the programme and students receive feedback on the development of a range of personal attributes including confidence, initiative, reflection, reliability, responsibility and communication when co-instructing groups. The evaluators noted a good example of reflection on student achievement rates being used to inform programme changes and improvement with the redevelopment of a report writing module. Overall, however, improved collation and analysis of achievement data would strengthen understanding of student achievement.</p>
Conclusion:	Student achievement is high and validated by moderation results. Self-assessment of achievement is used to inform programme development.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students highly value the tertiary programmes offered by Hillary Outdoors Education Centres for their personal development and the technical and employment-related skills developed during their study. In recent years, all students have either gained employment or undertaken further study. Graduate employment is almost always related to the qualifications obtained by the students, although the transferable skills have enabled some students to gain employment in other fields. Approximately 30 per cent of graduates undertake further study, mostly at Hillary Outdoors Education Centres. Staff confirm that certificate students moving to the diploma are well prepared for the transition and are successful.</p> <p>Hillary Outdoors Education Centres has engaged with Auckland University of Technology to undertake research on the benefits of outdoor education for youth. Preliminary results for the school programme show significant benefits to learners and form the basis for more in-depth research.</p> <p>Graduates are often employed as outdoor instructors or adventure tourism guides; approximately 30 per cent of Hillary Outdoors Education Centres instructors are graduates. The PTE has developed an understanding of employer requirements through qualitative surveys and staff engagement with industry. Generally, however, feedback gained through staff interaction with industry was not well documented or analysed. Qualitative surveys show that employers value the skills and attitudes of graduates, although a need for more guiding skills was identified. Hillary Outdoors Education Centres has responded positively to this feedback with changes to the programme.</p>
Conclusion:	The skills, knowledge and attitudes developed are highly valued by students and employers. Self-assessment could be strengthened by systematic recording and analysis of employer and industry feedback.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Hillary Outdoors Education Centres' aim is to develop young people through adventure-based programmes. The programmes delivered clearly achieve this goal. The tertiary programmes are structured to meet student needs and to take advantage of the unique location of the centre. An appropriate balance of practice, theory and challenge, in conjunction with small group sizes, engages the students in their learning. Tertiary students are able to apply their technical outdoor and instruction skills through co-instructing school groups with the PTE's staff.</p> <p>Assessment is appropriate and validated by internal and external moderation (see Table 3, Appendix 1 for recent external moderation results). The delivery of the programme and assessment are well aligned, and naturally occurring evidence is collected for many assessments. Students say they receive useful and timely feedback on assessments in a variety of ways, appropriate to the subject and student needs.</p> <p>The safety culture in the PTE and established systems ensure that staff are appropriately skilled to deliver the programmes safely. For example, staff are rated for particular activities and daily meetings ensure there is appropriate staff coverage for planned activities.</p> <p>Programme modules are regularly reviewed, and this process has resulted in worthwhile improvements. Feedback from teachers and students, and assessment results inform these reviews. The PTE reports that changes in the way that end-of-module student feedback is collected has improved the quality of the feedback. However, students are unaware of how their feedback is used.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery are well matched to the needs of students and related employment requirements. Learning activities effectively engage students. Assessment is appropriate and well integrated with delivery.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>A high level of positive engagement between staff and students contributes to the strong support of students, the high level of student involvement in their learning, and an inclusive learning environment. The small group size and practical team-based nature of the learning activities also contributes to this. In response to variable student achievement in 2014, all applicants for places in the tertiary programmes are now interviewed. This enables the PTE to ensure that programme entry requirements are met, the aims and requirements of the programme are understood, and applicants' motivation for undertaking the programme are assessed. Since introduction of the interviews, achievement rates have been more consistent.</p> <p>Students value the access they have to their teachers for academic support. One-on-one student wellness meetings have been introduced to review student progress and to check their personal wellbeing. Students, who are often living away from home for the first time, appreciated these meetings. The provider has access to a range of support services which can be used to address identified issues; students were aware of this support. Hillary Outdoors Education Centres offer scholarships to encourage Māori to enrol. Recipients appreciated the scholarships and one student indicated the importance of the financial support for her to complete her programme. Staff assist students to develop their industry networks and these networks are also strengthened through the work placements. Students value these aspects of their programme which often lead to employment opportunities.</p> <p>The NZQA review of the PTE's most recent self-review against the Code of Practice identified that more attention needs to be paid to determining the effectiveness of policies and practices.</p>
Conclusion:	A very supportive, inclusive learning environment contributes positively to student learning. A better understanding of the effectiveness of pastoral support would strengthen self-assessment.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Governance and management are effective in supporting educational achievement. The organisation has a clear purpose that is apparent across the organisation. The current strategic plan has a focus on ensuring financial sustainability, and the Chair of the trustees reports some progress. However, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) currently has concerns regarding the PTE's financial viability, because they fail to meet one of the TEC's prudential financial standards. The achievement of the existing strategic plan's goals and a new strategic plan are currently being considered by the board.</p> <p>Teaching and learning is well resourced with appropriate equipment and facilities, and new student spaces are being developed. Additional staffing has been employed this year to upgrade learning resources and to provide online access to them. Students were positive about this development, although some found locating specific items complex. Equipment is made available to students for use outside of class time to further their skill development.</p> <p>Staff are valued, and a regular staff engagement survey and safety culture survey demonstrate ongoing improvement. Staff induction processes are comprehensive and ensure that staff have the core skills necessary for activities they are responsible for. Targeted professional development enables staff to develop skills and progress through the PTE's capability framework and consequently to take more responsibility.</p> <p>Reflection is well embedded in the organisation, but self-assessment would be strengthened by better collation and analysis of data and a stronger focus on the effectiveness of activities, policies and processes.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management are effective at supporting educational achievement. There is a clear focus on the quality and safety of the adventure-based educational opportunities provided. Self-assessment is generally effective but there are opportunities for improvement.



## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Marginal</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Marginal</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Hillary Outdoors Education Centres has policies and processes to ensure safe operations in outdoor education. The effectiveness of these policies and processes has been validated by an Adventure Mark audit in 2017. As a result of the audit, the PTE holds accreditation for 12 activities at a range of sites across the North Island. Additionally, the board has an external safety advisory committee which meets quarterly and advises on all aspects of health and safety.</p> <p>Strong, effective management of safety requirements provides some confidence that the organisation is able to develop and implement systems to effectively manage compliance accountabilities. However, the management of compliance with NZQA's rules and requirements is weak and is an area that must be improved. There is no systematic process to ensure compliance; knowledge of some requirements is inadequate. This has led to some gaps in compliance. For example, neither of the two international students enrolled this year had provided the PTE with acceptable evidence that they met English language entry requirements, and one student had insurance that expired just before the course end date. Additionally, several trustees have changed since the last EER, but fit and proper person and conflict of interest statutory declarations have not been filed with NZQA. In 2017 NZQA investigated a complaint from an international student and found that the PTE had breached clause 22(a) of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 by not responding to the student's concerns.</p> <p>Self-assessment of compliance management also requires strengthening. For example, there is no process review for compliance to ensure that the annual NZQA compliance declaration is correct. Hillary Outdoors Education Centres has responded quickly to address non-compliances identified in this report.</p>
Conclusion:	Some compliance accountabilities are managed effectively. However, compliance with NZQA's rules and requirements is not effectively managed and self-assessment related to compliance management needs to be strengthened.

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: Level 4 and 5 outdoor education programmes

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>

# 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 Hillary Outdoors Education Centres:

- Strengthen self-assessment by better use of data and more focus on the effectiveness of activities and processes.
- Implement systematic processes that review and report on compliance requirements associated with being a registered PTE.

# 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.*

NZQA requires Hillary Outdoors Education Centres to:

- Comply with NZQA Rule 18 English language requirements for international students.
- Ensure all trustees file the required statutory declarations with NZQA as required by Section 232 of the Education Act 1989.

# Appendix 1

**Table 1. Student achievement (all students)**

Educational performance indicator	Year		
	2015	2016	2017
Successful course completion	97%	96%	98%
Qualification completion*	81%	72%	93%

Data source: Tertiary Education Commission, except 2017 qualification completion data which was provided by Hillary Outdoors Education Centres

\*Calculation based on equivalent full-time students

**Table 2. Student achievement (international students)**

Educational performance indicator	Year			
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of students	1	0	1	2
Number of qualification completions	1	n/a	1	n/a

Data source: Hillary Outdoors Education Centres

**Table 3. External post-assessment moderation results**

Year	External moderator	Unit standard	Assessment material	Assessor decisions
2015	Skills Active	Exempt moderation		
	NZQA	Exempt moderation (based on previous good results)		
2016	Skills Active	Exempt moderation		
	NZQA	9685	Requires modification	3/3 assessor decisions verified
2017	Skills Active	22781	Meets standard	3/3 agreement assessor decisions
	Skills Active	20147	Meets standard	3/3 agreement assessor decisions
	Skills Active	16634	Meets standard	3/3 agreement assessor decisions
	Skills Active	467	Meets standard	3/3 agreement assessor decisions
	Skills Active	470	Requires modification	3/3 agreement assessor decisions
	Skills Active	473	Requires modification	3/3 agreement assessor decisions
	NZQA	9691	Meets standard	4/4 assessor decisions verified

# 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*
- 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.*

## 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](http://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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