

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Valley Education and Training
Enterprises Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 22 September 2015

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited (VETEL)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	June 1995
Location and delivery sites:	<u>Kopu/Thames</u> 50 Kopu Road, Thames, Coromandel Peninsula <u>Whitianga</u> 15 Monk Street, Whitianga, Coromandel Peninsula
Courses currently delivered:	<u>Youth Guarantee</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1)• National Certificate in Computing (Level 2)• National Certificate in Welding (Level 3) <u>Training for Work</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Skills Programme
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Around 100 domestic learners per annum
Number of staff:	Six full-time and one part-time staff
Scope of active accreditation:	<u>Programmes intended for SAC (Student Achievement Component) funding</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation Certificate for the Motor Industry

(Level 1)

- Foundation Certificate in Mechanical Engineering (Level 1)
- Certificate in Mechanical Engineering (Level 2)

Standards/consent to assess

A variety of domains to deliver foundation training:
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=998183001>

Distinctive characteristics:	<p>VETEL is a vocational training provider based in provincial locations on the Coromandel Peninsula, primarily catering to priority groups in the area but also delivering short-term (three months) training courses to Ministry of Social Development clients.</p> <p>Around 80 per cent of VETEL's learners on the Youth Guarantee programme are Māori.</p> <p>The ethnic composition of learners on the Training for Work programme varies, with an equal split of learners being of Māori and European descents averaged out over time. There have been Pasifika learners on the programme in the past, but none at the time of the evaluation team's on-site visit.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>VETEL opened a satellite campus in Whitianga in 2012 to extend its Training for Work delivery.</p> <p>SAC funding from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) was not available to VETEL in 2015, and as a result the three SAC-funded programmes were not delivered in 2015. The TEC boosted the Youth Guarantee funding to VETEL and a new programme in welding was developed and is being delivered.</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of VETEL was conducted in 2011. NZQA was Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of the organisation.</p> <p>The TEC conducted an audit in 2014. Findings were responded to positively and the issues identified were addressed promptly.</p> <p>Results from the 2014 NZQA national external moderation of standards for VETEL were not</p>

satisfactory, with only 10 out of 21 assessor decisions approved. VETEL did not meet national external moderation requirements and was required to submit an improvement plan.

Other: VETEL receives funding from both the TEC and the Ministry of Social Development.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER included the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy. 'Māori learners' was selected as the other focus area, as this is the targeted group of VETEL's operations and represents the majority ethnic group of learners at any given point in time.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Self-assessment materials were delivered to NZQA in a timely fashion to inform the scoping of this EER. Prior to the scope of the evaluation being finalised, the lead evaluator met with VETEL's executive director and administration coordinator in person to discuss the selection of focus areas and the logistics of the on-site visit.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators. The on-site visit lasted one and a half days. The evaluation team conducted the on-site visit at Kopu, Thames. By mutual agreement, the Whitianga outpost was not visited as the majority of learners are concentrated in Kopu. VETEL arranged for the staff based at Whitianga to travel to Kopu and were interviewed by the evaluation team.

The evaluation team interviewed all VETEL's staff, including an external advisor who engages on a contractual basis. The evaluation team also interviewed 10 Māori learners from the Youth Guarantee programmes and 11 learners (of various ethnicities) from the Training for Work programme. The Ministry of Social Development was contacted as part of the evaluation. A range of organisational materials and educational records were reviewed.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited**.

- VETEL is a learner-centric organisation which provides essential education and training pathway to regional communities and delivers excellent educational and employment outcomes to learners.
- Completion rates for Youth Guarantee programmes well exceed TEC targets. Good employment outcomes for the Training for Work programme are confirmed and recognised by recent extension in funding from the Ministry of Social Development.
- Learners, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, are respected, cared for, inspired and motivated to succeed. A whānau culture is embedded in VETEL to support learner achievement, and the organisation often goes beyond the call of duty to guide and support its learners.
- VETEL's staff are qualified and passionate. All have personal and business networks across their communities. Such networks are used appropriately to gather intelligence for reflection on organisational performance and programme relevance.
- VETEL is a highly resilient and adaptable organisation with strong leadership and effective management, delivering to its clear purpose and objective. The organisation has demonstrated its flexibility over recent times despite funding challenges outside of VETEL's control.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited**.

- VETEL has the appropriate processes and systems for self-assessment. Data is analysed and reviewed on a regular basis to monitor learners' academic progress and organisational performance against funding targets.
- There is a reflective culture embedded across VETEL. Staff regularly reflect on programme activities and initiatives, record their learnings and incorporate them into plans for the future.
- VETEL can enhance its self-assessment practices by measuring learners' literacy and numeracy at completion to further evidence value of learning beyond key funding metrics. Achievement and employment data can be further used to better understand performance at an organisational level, and in turn to inform improvement initiatives.

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Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Learner achievement for the Youth Guarantee programmes is exemplary. Through closer monitoring and better use of statistics, VETEL has significantly improved its educational performance indicators for the Youth Guarantee programmes.

Table 1. Course and qualification completions, by cohort, 2013-2014

	2013	2014
Course completion	<u>44.2%</u>	<u>50.9%</u>
Māori	54.6%	45.8%
Non-Māori	22.2%	50.0%
Qualification completion	<u>21.4%</u>	<u>60.7%</u>
Māori	26.3%	60.0%
Non-Māori	22.2%	50.0%
Retention	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>53.6%</u>
Māori	17.9%	39.3%
Non-Māori	25.0%	10.7%
Progression	-	<u>35.8%</u>
Māori	-	25.0%
Non-Māori	-	14.3%

Data source: Valley Education and Training Enterprise Limited (VETEL)

As shown in the above table, educational performance indicators for Māori learners are mostly better than for non-Māori learners. This is especially important as around 80 per cent of learners on the Youth Guarantee programmes are Māori (26 out of 36 learners in 2014, equivalent to 72 per cent).

The Youth Guarantee programmes for National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1) and National Certificate in Computing (Level 2) achieved qualification completion rates of 62 per cent and 44 per cent in 2014 respectively, well exceeding the TEC target of 40 per cent for Youth Guarantee levels 1 and 2 programmes.

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

On a personal level, Youth Guarantee learners gain independence through involvement in VETEL’s training. For example, in addition to the knowledge and skills expected from an employment skills or computing programme, basic cooking skills are also passed on. This encourages learners to develop group skills – working with others towards a common goal as well as become self-sufficient, as some learners did not know this important life skill and often attended VETEL on an empty stomach.

Funded by the Ministry of Social Development, Training for Work is a programme that aims to enable its learners to secure employment. The success rate improved significantly in 2014 and this is an excellent employment result for clients in the region. Success rates for Māori are weaker but still respectable. Compared with the Youth Guarantee programmes, the lower Māori achievement rate is of lesser significance as Māori represent only 27 per cent of the learner cohort in the Training for Work programme (eight out of 29 learners for 2012 and 2013; seven out of 27 learners in 2014).

Table 2. Employment outcomes, 2012-2014

	2012 and 2013	2014
Employment outcome	<u>72%</u>	<u>89%</u>
Māori	63%	71%
Non-Māori	76%	95%

Data source: Valley Education and Training Enterprise Limited (VETEL)

Training for Work learners develop confidence and obtain skills which are immediately useful, such as having an email address and using a computer to communicate, developing curriculum vitae and job application skills. Acquiring such essential skills contribute to the positive employment outcomes of the programme.

VETEL measures the literacy and numeracy levels of its Training for Work learners – using the tool supplied by the TEC – at the commencement of the programme, but not at completion. It is therefore unable to report on any progress in literacy and numeracy on completion of the Training for Work programme.

VETEL regularly reviews learner achievement and tracks its performance towards key funding targets. Internally, weekly updates and monthly reports, informed by data analysis, are generated and shared with all staff. Externally, the Ministry of Social Development requires VETEL to report on employment outcomes on a quarterly basis. The evaluation team found that VETEL uses data and its information systems effectively to track and manage the progress at individual and cohort levels. There exist opportunities for VETEL to further enhance its self-assessment and understand its educational and social outcomes performance at an organisational level, as well as achievements beyond funding targets, such as learner progression in literacy and numeracy.

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

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

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

VETEL provides an essential education and training pathway to regional communities and delivers excellent educational outcomes to its learners. Most learners have a disadvantaged background and may not be motivated initially to attend VETEL, but in almost all instances their attitude is turned around within a short period of time. Individuals' lives are transformed through their time with VETEL. The evaluation team heard a number of heart-warming stories from both the organisation and from the learners selected for interview by the evaluation team. Learners are respected and motivated to succeed through a welcoming, caring learning environment. One Māori learner summed the experience up as, 'VETEL's our hope'. The VETEL brand is recognised across the region and attracts learners to its Kopu campus from within a one-hour travel time.

Local employers value the VETEL brand and express confidence in the ability of its graduates. The success in employment placements for Ministry of Social Development clients is recognised, with the Ministry recently extending the funding for the programme for another three years.

VETEL tracks its Training for Work graduates for at least 182 days following completion of the programme as part of its funding and reporting requirements. Beyond that, VETEL has informal processes in place to keep in touch with its other learners, often through the personal connections established during the learners' time with VETEL. The organisation also conducts stakeholder surveys, and uses its local networks to continuously verify the value of outcomes to learners, whānau and communities. VETEL is encouraged to consider the benefits of formalising such processes and further enhancing the use of graduate destination data.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

VETEL is clearly meeting the needs of the communities it serves. The organisation has extensive networks with employers, government and social service agencies across the region and constantly uses the intelligence gathered through a variety of networking opportunities to reflect on the relevance of its programmes and update content and offerings accordingly. For example, at the request of the TEC and following discussions with the local business community, VETEL developed a

programme that enables learners to gain the National Certificate in Welding (Level 3).

Meetings with stakeholders and community groups are recorded and shared among staff. Programme reviews are conducted in a timely fashion and are used to inform decision-making.

VETEL is also meeting the needs of its Youth Guarantee learners. Clear, detailed information on programme and expectations are given to learners before enrolment. An appropriate induction process is in place, suitable to the nature of continuous intake. For example, Youth Guarantee learners on the National Certificate in Welding programme are introduced to health and safety concepts upfront and are assigned a senior peer as mentor. Such arrangements are mutually beneficial as the newcomer benefits from having a mentor who shares their personal journey, which motivates and inspires, while the senior peer has the opportunity to take responsibility and grow their mana. Literacy and numeracy assessment at enrolment time informs the development of individual learning plans, which are used effectively throughout the learners' studies on the Youth Guarantee programmes. The individual learning plans are referred to and updated at the four-weekly evaluation sessions, where the learner and tutor meet one-to-one, review progress and discuss objectives for the upcoming month.

The evaluation team noted some inconsistencies in the practice of individual learning plans and four-weekly evaluation for the Training for Work learners. There are instances where learning outcomes and how they are to be assessed are unclear to learners. This is further discussed in Findings 1.4.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Teaching is generally effective in VETEL. Staff are highly qualified technically (such as in welding, computing and secondary curriculum) and are appropriately qualified for adult education. Professional development is supported by VETEL. Peer observation among teaching staff is practised effectively. There is a positive learning environment. The evaluation team observed enthusiastic, highly engaged learners and staff across all programmes. Guest speakers are invited and field trips are organised at times to motivate learners and to enhance their learning experience. Monthly tutor-only days are set aside to allow the time and space for academic staff to reflect on programme delivery and review academic progress, and for undertaking professional development activities.

Assessment practice in the Youth Guarantee programme verifies learning. Clear information is given to learners on assessment policies and expectations. Learners

understand their progress and how they are tracking according to their learning plan. Useful, quality feedback is given to learners after assessments are marked.

Assessment practice is weaker for the Training for Work programme, as previously discussed in Findings 1.3. Records of individual progression are not always up-to-date. The evaluation team heard instances where the marking of assignments is delayed and feedback not given to learners. This is a concern in terms of teaching effectiveness and is likely a result of the workload of the teaching staff on the Training for Work programme, arising from a surge in demand, the continuous start dates with all learners in the group at different stages in their course, as well as the nature of teaching staff having to assume some administrative responsibilities in a small establishment. The evaluation team also observed some variations in practice for the Training for Work programme between Kopu and Whitianga. For example, Whitianga measures learners on their soft skills development. This is a practice worth considering to be adopted at Kopu.

VETEL purchases and uses teaching and assessment materials that are already moderated. Its post-assessment moderation requires further improvements, given the unsatisfactory results from the 2014 national external moderation. The evaluation team noted that VETEL is improving its internal moderation practices as per the improvement plan submitted to and accepted by NZQA earlier in 2015.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Many of VETEL's learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The evaluation team noted a compassionate approach and an attitude of acceptance regardless of the learner's history and ability. Māori learners on the Youth Guarantee programme interviewed by the evaluation team expressed huge appreciation for the support provided by VETEL, responded to interview questions in a logical and respectful manner, and showed confidence throughout, indicating the success of VETEL in equipping these learners with communication and people skills. As observed by the evaluation team during the on-site visit, learners were noticeably cheerful on campus and were clearly enjoying their time and experience at VETEL.

VETEL has embedded a whānau culture across the organisation to guide and support learners, often beyond the call of duty. For example, free breakfast is provided to learners to ensure they have the necessary attention span to learn throughout the morning; sick learners are transported and accompanied to seek medical attention when they have no means to do so.

Comprehensive information is given to prospective Youth Guarantee learners. New learners are taken through a thorough induction process. An effective strategy is in place for the practice of continuous intake on the Youth Guarantee programme.

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Senior learners are empowered and given responsibility to guide newer learners, enabling learning by both parties in the process.

Attendance is closely monitored, with a number of initiatives in place to encourage attendance as well as to mitigate barriers to attending. For example, a free transport service is provided to pick up and drop off learners around the region (beyond the local Thames area). When VETEL noted that attendance on Fridays was deteriorating, it deliberately held events (such as free lunches and trips) on Fridays to turn the trend around. Attendance on Friday improved as a result. Guidance and support initiatives, such as those mentioned above, are reviewed and fine-tuned regularly. VETEL reflects on the effectiveness of its initiatives and document its findings comprehensively, noting learnings and potential areas of improvement for future initiatives.

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

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

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

VETEL is a highly resilient and adaptable organisation with strong leadership and effective management, delivering to a clear purpose and objective: providing training to priority learners in the region to make a difference in their lives. Despite the challenges in its operating environment over recent years (some of which are associated with funding), VETEL has demonstrated its flexibility and worked constructively with funding agencies and local employers to develop new training programmes that suit the community needs of the region it serves, such as the now Youth Guarantee-funded level 3 National Certificate in Welding programme.

VETEL has a strong presence in the community and holds membership with a number of local organisations, such as groups dedicated to youth support in the region, and groups run by the local council to foster the local business community. Such participation ensures VETEL is fully informed of its operating context, as well as effectively delivering towards its desired social outcomes. VETEL is also an active member in two tertiary education industry groups, both regionally and nationally, and uses those opportunities to share practice and seek ideas to improve its operations.

The managing director has an inclusive management style. The individual strengths of staff are identified and used to the organisation's benefit. Weekly meetings, monthly tutor-only days and quarterly management meetings serve as open, fit-for-purpose communication channels to facilitate the sharing of information and discussion among staff on educational, operational and business performance matters. The evaluation team found the overall management culture of VETEL

exemplary, and its efficiency and effectiveness is not often seen in similar private training establishments.

VETEL is a reflective organisation and has a very good self-assessment strategy in place. A range of self-assessment practices is in operation, such as regular meetings, reviews and 'self-assessment snapshots', which combine and give effective tracking of educational achievement and progress towards funding targets. Statistical data could be better used to identify organisational trends that warrant the development of a strategy towards minimising barriers for success and lifting educational performance at the organisational level (as opposed to an individual learner level). This will supplement VETEL's learner-centric approach and supplement its good self-assessment system.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: Māori learners

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

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

For the Youth Guarantee programmes, learner achievement and the value of outcomes to Māori learners and their whānau are excellent, as discussed throughout this report.

The evaluation team has some concerns about the Training for Work programme, in terms of meeting the needs of the Māori learners (or indeed all learners), given the inconsistent use of individual learning plans and four-weekly evaluation on the programme, as well as the lack of clarity to the learners in the learning outcomes and how they are to be assessed, as discussed in Findings 1.3 and 1.4.

However, given that the majority of Māori learners are in the Youth Guarantee programmes, the evaluation team factored the ethnic composition of the learner cohorts into consideration (in 2014, 76 per cent of Youth Guarantee learners were Māori, whereas only 26 per cent of Training for Work learners were Māori) and weighed the performance for this focus area accordingly.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that **Valley Education and Training Enterprises Limited:**

- Adopt some of the better practices in the Youth Guarantee programmes to the Training for Work programme, such as in the areas of assessment practice, feedback to learners, tracking and monitoring learner progress and the use of individual learning plans.
- Align practices on the Training for Work programme between the Kopu and Whitianga campuses.
- Ensure the right level of resourcing and support is given to academic staff who hold other administrative responsibilities, taking into account fluctuations in demand on different programmes.
- Continue to improve moderation practices as per the improvement plan.
- Measure the literacy and numeracy levels of learners at the completion of studies.
- Explore ways to further support Māori learners on the Training for Work programme to bring its success rate to a level similar to non-Māori learners.
- Reflect on how its data (including achievement and graduate outcome data) can be further used to identify performance trends at an organisational level.
- Consider whether there are benefits in exploring teaching strategies around multi-level learners in the same classroom, given the nature of continuous intake at VETEL.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

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

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

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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