

Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Zealand Institute of Fashion
Technology Limited trading as
NZ Fashion Tech

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 16 December 2013

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MoE Number: 9979

NZQA Reference: C12616

Dates of EER visit: 29, 30 and 31 October 2013

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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:	New Zealand Institute of Fashion Technology Limited trading as NZ Fashion Tech (Fashion Tech)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 1, Massey University House, 90 Symonds Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	<u>Auckland Central campus</u> Level 2, 110 Symonds Street, Auckland <u>South Auckland campus</u> Level 1, 22 Amersham Way, Manukau <u>West Auckland campus</u> for the Certificate in Garment Technology only Suite 2, 1/F, 3091 Great North Road, New Lynn <u>Wellington campus</u> Level 5, Plimmer Tower, Lambton Quay, Wellington
First registered:	1 July 1995
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in Garment Technology (Foundation) (Level 3)• Certificate in Pattern Design (Level 3)• Diploma in Fashion Technology (Level 5)
Code of Practice signatory?	Yes, for learners 18 years of age and above
Number of students:	Between 200 and 250 domestic students each year; around one or two international students each year

Number of staff:	21 full-time; three part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	As per courses currently delivered
Distinctive characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialises in fashion technology programmes • 25 per cent of learners are Māori; 18 per cent are Pasifika • 14 per cent of learners are male; 86 per cent are female
Recent significant changes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellington campus commenced delivering the Diploma in Fashion Technology programme in 2011 • South Auckland campus moved from Papatoetoe to Manukau City in July 2013 • The head office restructured in 2013 – the role of programme leader was split into academic leader and tutor leader. A new personal assistant role was established to support the directors
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>A previous external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted in 2009. NZQA was Highly Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Fashion Tech.</p> <p>There were no concerns arising from external moderation over the last four years.</p>
Other:	Fashion Tech receives SAC (Student Achievement Component) funding from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management and strategy

Other focus areas selected were:

- Certificate in Pattern Design (Level 3)

This programme was selected as it was not chosen as a focus area in the previous EER. As the intermediate programme between the foundation certificate and the

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level 5 Diploma in Fashion Technology, the Certificate in Pattern Design also allowed the evaluation team to gain some insight into the success of the other two programmes.

- Satellite campuses: South Auckland and Wellington

The South Auckland and Wellington campuses were of particular interest to the evaluation team, as both have undergone significant changes since the last EER – South Auckland campus moved from Papatoetoe to Manukau City in 2013, while the Wellington campus commenced delivering the level 5 diploma in 2012. The evaluation team also wished to explore the alignment of the satellite campuses to the Auckland campus, which is the largest site in terms of student numbers and situated closest to head office.

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 focus areas and agenda being finalised, the lead evaluator met with the directors in person at head office to agree on the focus areas and logistics of the on-site visit.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators. The team was joined by an observer from the NZQA Quality Assurance Division, who did not participate in the decision-making process. The on-site visit was for three days, during which the head office, Auckland Central, South Auckland and Wellington campuses were visited.

During the on-site visit, the evaluation team interviewed the directors, academic leader, tutor leader, enrolment leader, seven tutors and 23 learners (including the only international student) selected from across all three programmes. A wide range of documents was reviewed on site. Several stakeholders were contacted by phone as part of the evaluation process.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **NZ Fashion Tech**:

- When compared with the PTE sector median of 85 per cent, the course completion rates of Fashion Tech learners have been exemplary (consistently above 90 per cent) for the Certificate in Pattern Design and Diploma in Fashion Technology programmes since 2011; and were satisfactory (consistently above 80 per cent and improving to the 90 per cent range) for the Certificate in Garment Technology programme over the same period.
- When compared with the PTE sector median of 82 per cent, the qualification completion rates of Fashion Tech learners have been exemplary (consistently above 90 per cent) for the diploma programme since 2011; and were satisfactory (consistently above 80 per cent and improving to the 90 per cent range) for the Certificate in Pattern Design programme over the same period.
- Learners acquire relevant, up-to-date and adaptable fashion industry skills and knowledge, as well as transferrable skills such as time management, self-confidence and communication skills, which facilitate a seamless transition into employment – over 70 per cent of diploma graduates gained employment in the sector within two months of graduation.
- Fashion Tech has a wide range of systems and processes, such as regular meetings, regular programme reviews and commitment to professional development, to ensure consistent delivery of teaching to a very high standard.
- Fashion Tech is considered a ‘standards-setter/standards-keeper’ by the fashion industry and is actively leading the Targeted Review of Qualifications (TRoQ) process for garment manufacturing qualifications.
- While some achievement rates for Māori are slightly lower, this does not overshadow the very positive overall performance of the institute (see Findings 1.1).

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **NZ Fashion Tech**:

- There is clear and very strong, demonstrable evidence that a reflective culture is embedded across all levels of the institute, promoting proactive self-assessment and continuous improvement, as well as a strong sense of alignment of all activities with the institute's vision.
- There is evidence that a wide range of systems and well-documented self-assessment processes are in place, such as regular learners' evaluations, that identify and respond to any issues within the institute in a timely fashion.
- There is room for improvement in the organisational understanding of the relatively lower Māori achievement rates (see Findings 1.1). Nevertheless, the overall effectiveness of self-assessment remains consistently high.

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 rates are high as demonstrated below.

		<u>Retention</u>	<u>Completion rates²</u>		<u>Destination³</u>	
		'Drop-outs'	Course	Qualification	CPD/Diploma	Employment ⁴
2011	CGT*	12.3%	87.7%	69.3%	60.1%	5.6%
	CPD*	5.7%	94.3%	81.6%	43.9%	24.4%
	Diploma*	6.5%	93.5%	90.3%	-	79.3%
2012	CGT	16.1%	83.9%	77.6%	71.7%	5.8%
	CPD	3.4%	96.6%	83.9%	43.8%	23.3%
	Diploma	5.9%	94.1%	94.1%	-	71.9%
2013 ⁵	CGT	7.2%	92.8%	78.3%	71.4%	10.4%
	CPD	9.3%	90.7%	90.7%	N/A ⁶	53.8%
	Diploma	The 2013 course was still in progress at the time of compiling this report				

*CGT (Certificate in Garment Technology); CPD (Certificate in Pattern Design); Diploma (Diploma in Fashion Technology)
Source: data supplied by Fashion Tech

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 Expressed as a percentage of those who enrolled in the course.

³ Expressed as a percentage of those who completed the course.

⁴ Only employment outcomes relevant to the programmes of study are included – i.e. jobs related to the fashion industry.

⁵ Year to date only – i.e. only for Certificate in Garment Technology and Certificate in Pattern Design programmes completed during the first half of 2013.

⁶ Graduates to enrol in the 2014 diploma programme – no enrolment data available at this stage.

Based on the above table, it is observed that:

- Course completion rates are consistently above 80 per cent for the Certificate in Garment Technology and consistently above 90 per cent for the Certificate in Pattern Design and Diploma in Fashion Technology programmes⁷
- The combined destination rate has improved over the last three years for the Certificate in Garment Technology, and is at least consistent over the same period for the Certificate in Pattern Design.⁸

When compared with the PTE sector median figures published by the TEC, Fashion Tech is performing better across the two completion indicators.⁹ Achievement rates are validated through internal and external moderation on assessments. There have been no concerns expressed by external moderation authorities (the industry training organisation¹⁰ and NZQA) over the last four years.

Beyond the statistics, learners are also acquiring relevant workplace skills through their studies at Fashion Tech. The evaluation team observed a strong sense of self-confidence among most learners interviewed, and was impressed with their demonstrated maturity and ability to articulate ideas and perspectives clearly. The evaluation team understood that these, among other skills mentioned throughout this report, are part of the training learners receive at the institute.

The evaluation team sighted evidence of frequent collection and analysis of data to inform decision-making, performance monitoring and continuous improvement. Achievement data is broken down by course, ethnicity and campus for internal benchmarking and staff performance management. The evaluation team noted with interest the completion rates for Māori and Pasifika learners, as shown in Table 2.¹¹

⁷ TEC targets for course completion rates are 75 per cent for level 3 programmes and 80 per cent for level 5 programmes.

⁸ The applicable TEC target for progression from a level 3 programme to a level 5 programme is 10 per cent.

⁹ The 2012 median is 85 per cent for course completions and 82 per cent for qualification completions.

¹⁰ The most recent external moderation was carried out by the Apparel and Textile Industry Training Organisation (ATITO) in 2012 – ATITO has now been subsumed into Competenz.

¹¹ Ethnicity break-down only available since 2012.

Table 2: Completion rates for Māori and Pasifika learners							
		Overall		Māori		Pasifika ¹²	
		Course	Qualification	Course	Qualification	Course	Qualification
2012	CGT	83.9%	77.6%	75.7%	64.9%	78.9%	71.4%
	CPD	96.6%	83.9%	94.4%	66.7%	100.0%	86.7%
	Diploma	94.1%	94.1%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	80.0%
Source: data supplied by Fashion Tech							

The course completion rate for Māori in the Certificate in Garment Technology programme and the qualification completion rate for the same ethnic group in the Certificate in Pattern Design programme are lower than the overall rates for 2012. The institute is aware of this phenomenon, and in 2013 arranged for an internal professional development session delivered by Ako Aotearoa on Māori cultural awareness. At this stage, it is unclear about the linkage between this initiative and improvements in achievement rates for Māori, if any. Fashion Tech could achieve a better understanding of this through analysis, and there is also room for improvement in developing a strategy for lifting Māori achievement rates.

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 **Excellent**.

Fashion Tech is delivering value to its key stakeholders. These include, but are not limited to, learners, the fashion industry and the TEC.

Learners gain relevant and desirable skills for working in the sector. Such skills are identified as well as regularly reviewed and updated via frequent discussions with the industry, and through the wide networks of all staff and the two directors, who have been working in the fashion industry for over 40 years. The evaluation team noted evidence of a strong preference by the industry for employing Fashion Tech's graduates. Learners also have access to various competitions and shows, such as the Red Cross Upcycle Challenge, the Kleenex® Cottonelle®¹³ Paper Dress Challenge and the institute's own graduation shows, which help develop learners'

¹² The base number is too small for Pasifika learners in the diploma programme, and this has had a major impact on the percentage (in context – four out of five learners completed the diploma programme and gained the qualification).

¹³ Registered Trademarks Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. ©2013 KCWW

passion, creativity and resilience as well as exposing them to the industry, as the outcomes of these events are highly publicised within the sector. As part of Fashion Tech's self-assessment, the institute tracks graduates' destinations. These and other mechanisms inform the institute of the relevance of the course content and the employability of its graduates.

The TEC's SAC funding for Fashion Tech has sustained, and on occasions increased, for the past eight years - an acknowledgement of Fashion Tech's high performance in meeting and exceeding its targets.

Having said the above, there is room for improving capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question. For example, until very recently, the reasons for early withdrawals were not recorded. This weakness has been self-identified by Fashion Tech, and the institute has recently begun exit interviews for learners who withdrew prior to course completion. Another example is that Fashion Tech does not record all anecdotal information gathered from stakeholders through formal and informal discussions, meaning that valuable intelligence may be lost over time. This has once again been self-identified and the institute is in the process of implementing client relationship management software to fill the gap. The evaluation team is satisfied that the identified weaknesses are insignificant given the context and are being managed effectively.

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 **Excellent**.

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

Learners' needs are well met. The evaluation team heard evidence of entrance tests to programmes for establishing literacy and numeracy competencies, interviews to ascertain passion and to manage expectations, as well as mechanisms to confirm, including medical checks where applicable, prospective learners' suitability to operate machinery. The screening process ensures that only the right types of learners with a reasonable chance of success in completing the course as well as working in the fashion industry are selected. Beyond technical skills, the institute also trains learners on the required work behaviours, such as time management skills, which are all relevant to working and surviving in the fashion industry.

A significant proportion of learners at the South Auckland campus are Māori and Pasifika. The evaluation team interviewed the learners and is satisfied that staff awareness and knowledge, as well as the institute's processes, largely match the needs of these groups. There is room for improvement in understanding and lifting Māori achievement rates, which has already been discussed.

Fashion Tech commissioned an industry survey in 2012 to update its understanding and to ensure it is continuing to meet the changing needs of the fashion industry. Quarterly programme reviews are held, and the evaluation team sighted evidence of updating of course content to ensure relevance. For example, to reflect the need for a deeper understanding of garment construction and production methods as a result of shortened delivery times for off-shore production, job breakdowns and specification sheets have been given greater emphasis with more opportunities for practical experience in the Certificate in Garment Technology. This theme continues in the Certificate in Pattern Design, and greater technical depth in the use of computer software is emphasised in the diploma.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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 **Excellent**.

Teaching is highly effective at Fashion Tech. All tutors are selected on the grounds of significant background within the fashion industry and demonstrable people skills. Upon hiring, new tutors go through intensive internal training for a couple of weeks before being released onto the campuses. The institute supports ongoing professional development and contributes to all its tutors acquiring adult teaching qualifications. The institute also runs seminars internally on selected topics, such as a Māori cultural awareness session in partnership with Ako Aotearoa. Tutors are observed and receive feedback from management at least monthly, and are advised of the outcome of learners' evaluations for continuous improvement. All these mechanisms ensure the academic team is highly qualified and well supported in the delivery of fashion technology training to tertiary learners.

Training in fashion technology is hands-on and practical. The campuses adopt a workshop style layout to emulate industry reality. The evaluation team heard from learners about the abundance of opportunities to practise their skills and the feeling of preparedness they have as future workers within the industry. Tutors work closely with learners, sampling and checking a significant portion of learners' output, and provide lots of feedback through regular one-to-one meetings. The use of an individual pathway plan allows the learner to regularly reflect and record technical and behavioural goals and progress, and acts as another communication bridge between the learner and the tutor. A student representative system is in place and contributes to the development of leadership and communication skills, as well as a sense of responsibility among learners. The evaluation team is satisfied that the family-like atmosphere, the mutual respect and rapport between tutors and learners, and the processes in operation facilitate an effective learning environment.

A range of meetings are in operation to constantly reflect on the effectiveness of teaching. For example, academic staff at different campuses meet weekly to discuss a variety of topics (such as individual learners' progress and facilities), and

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are required to feed the outcomes of those meetings to head office; a programme committee meets quarterly to review course design and delivery and to discuss internal moderation outcomes (which the evaluation team sampled and was satisfied with the effectiveness of internal moderation), and also meet for internally run professional development sessions (such as first aid training). The evaluation team sighted full records of these meetings and is satisfied that the meetings, as well as the actions arising from the discussions, contribute to a highly reflective culture across management and staff at Fashion Tech.

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 **Excellent**.

Learners are well supported and guided. All campuses are appropriately resourced. Small class sizes of between 10 and 16 per tutor ensure sufficient individual attention is given. For instance, in addition to previously cited examples of one-to-one meetings and the use of individual pathway plans, tutors follow up on absences proactively and, at times, may pay home visits to absent learners to understand and help manage their circumstances. All learners are placed for work experience by tutors, catering to individual preference wherever possible. The evaluation team heard evidence at one campus that regular team-building activities such as morning tea and a morning revision 'huddle', help foster the family-like, but adult learning environment.

Regular learner evaluations are carried out. The evaluation team sighted evidence of these evaluations, the analysis of results and how they have led to changes and continuous improvement within the institute. For example, the process has been strengthened to facilitate a smoother transition, from tutor-directed learning in the Certificate in Garment Technology programme towards a greater emphasis on learner-directed learning in the diploma.

At the time of this evaluation, there was only one international student enrolled with Fashion Tech. The evaluation team was advised that this has not been, and is unlikely to be in the immediate future, an area where the institute grows. The institute has appropriate systems and processes in place to meet the minimum requirements of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. A recent annual internal compliance review led to a strengthening of procedures in terms of ensuring the institute sights and keeps a record of international students' travel and medical insurance. However, the evaluation team noted some weaknesses in understanding of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students at all levels across the institute, although for reasons mentioned this concern is not of significant weighting.

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 **Excellent**.

Fashion Tech is managed effectively by two highly experienced directors with backgrounds in both the fashion and industry training sectors. Applying the principle of building an education system based on a business system, the institute's operations are based on a centralised set of systems and well-documented processes. Such an approach ensures a clear communication channel between head office and all campuses, as well as alignment and delivery consistencies across all campuses. The evaluation team sighted strong evidence of the level of knowledge head office possesses on the academic progress of all learners, and of management team use of intelligence gathered by academic staff through industry links to inform programme design and review, as well as campuses' staff being informed of and/or involved in all head office decisions.

Fashion Tech has a clear vision. Its directors understand the institute's *raison d'être* and run an annual planning exercise to identify goals across the organisation in order to deliver on its vision. This goes beyond the TEC funding targets and includes the application of a bonus scheme for retention of learners as well as to help pathway learners into higher education within the institute or into full-time employment. Such financial incentives encourage staff across the institute to continuously perform and contribute towards consistently high retention and labour market outcome rates.

The directors command a high level of respect among staff, as well as across the private tertiary education and New Zealand fashion sectors. The institute has previously been recognised as Provider of the Year by NZAPEP (now ITENZ (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand)), and the directors won the NZAPEP Leadership Award in 2013. The evaluation team also heard evidence that the New Zealand fashion industry considered Fashion Tech to be the 'standards-setter/standards-keeper', and sighted abundant evidence of the partnership approach the institute adopts, such as working with industry and leading the TRoQ process in garment manufacturing qualifications. The institute demonstrates strong capability in understanding and meeting the changing demands of the sectors it operates in and is well prepared for the challenges ahead.

The evaluation team noted a highly reflective culture embedded in Fashion Tech's governance and management, promoting continuous improvements. For example, self-assessment led to a recent relocation of the South Auckland campus from Papatoetoe to Manukau City, with the objective of providing a better learning environment, reflecting the changing needs of learners. The institute has also commissioned a customised software package to manage client relations, aiming to

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formally record informal discussions with, and intelligence gathered from, its stakeholders. The institute also proactively engages external advisors, such as a management consultancy and an industry advisory group, to enhance organisational capability.

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**.

To achieve a higher rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area, Fashion Tech must, through data analysis, gain a better understanding of the relatively lower level of Māori achievement and formulate a strategy to lift that achievement. It also needs to strengthen organisational understanding of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

2.2 Focus area: Certificate in Pattern Design (Level 3)

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Satellite campuses: South Auckland and Wellington

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

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

The evaluation team is highly satisfied with the alignment across all campuses. This is facilitated through clear, consistent, well-documented processes, and centralised programmes and materials designed, driven and developed by head office.

Given the significant proportion of Māori learners, South Auckland's overall achievement rates are slightly lower than other campuses, but not by a significant margin (around 5 per cent).

The Wellington campus is not adversely affected by the distance from head office, and performance is exceptional, especially for the Certificate in Pattern Design and diploma programmes, where qualification completion rates were very close to 100 per cent for the intakes since 2011. There is a clear 'vibe' demonstrated by all participants on site, and the evaluation team was impressed by this.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that NZ Fashion Tech:

- Better understand the reasons behind the (slightly lower) Māori achievement rates and formulate a strategy to lift Māori achievement
- Strengthen understanding of the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students for key personnel initially, and eventually throughout the organisation.

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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