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External Evaluation and Review Report

AG Challenge Limited

Date of report: 14 November 2019

About AG Challenge Limited

AG Challenge offers programmes across farming, construction and animal care in the Manawatu-Whanganui region. Programmes are funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) through the Youth Guarantee and SAC funding streams.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	312 No. 3 Line, RD 12, Okoia, Whanganui
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 167 – 88 Māori (53 per cent); 79 other (47 per cent)
Number of staff:	20 full-time equivalents; nine part-time
TEO profile:	See: AG Challenge Ltd on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In 2015, NZQA was Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of the PTE.
Scope of evaluation:	<p>The scope represents 46 per cent of total student enrolments and focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificates in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (Levels 1 and 2) (BCATS) <p>The certificates consist of two NZQA-approved programmes titled Future Generation of Building and Construction Trades (Introductory) and Future Generation of Building and Construction Trades 27 Weeks. The programmes were replaced by the Vocational Pathways Construction and Infrastructure (Level 2) in 2019. Twenty-four students were enrolled in 2018 and 14 in 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next Generation – Carpentry (Level 3) <p>This was selected as it replaces the previous level 4 programme. The achievement of BCITO¹ unit</p>

¹ Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation

standards contained in the programme lead to the New Zealand Certificate in Construction Trade Skills with strands in Allied Trades, Carpentry, and Joinery (Level 3), owned by Ara Institute of Canterbury – 37 students were enrolled in 2019.

- Next Generation – Rural Animal Technician (Level 5)

This programme was first introduced at the beginning of 2018. Three students were enrolled in 2018 and 10 in 2019.

Agriculture, Dairy and Veterinary Nursing programmes were not included in the scope as they were evaluated at the previous EER.

MoE number:	9294
NZQA reference:	C35648
Dates of EER visit:	20 and 21 August 2019

Summary of Results

Programmes are relevant and develop students' industry skills to enable graduates to progress to further study or employment. However, achievement is variable across programmes and students. Early results of self-assessment changes show some improvements.

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| Not Yet Confident in educational performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualification achievement has been below targets, particularly for lower-level programmes. Achievement for Māori students is still significantly below non-Māori students.• Programmes match students' needs with relevant activities and pathways to help with progression to further study or employment. |
| Confident in capability in self-assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is value for students who complete a programme and progress to further study or employment. However, few lower-level students are achieving these outcomes. The value for these students is re-engaging in education and achieving some literacy and numeracy skills. There is greater value for level 4 and above graduates in gaining practical skills to find employment in the rural and building sector.• Student support is improving. Low retention rates indicate that some students were not previously engaged with the learning. However, the organisation has implemented strategies that are showing initial improvements in satisfaction and achievement.• Self-assessment lacks sufficient analysis to show how activities have led to improved outcomes. However, better completions in 2019 indicate that changes in key areas of support and teaching resulting from self-assessment activities are leading to improvements. |

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The 2018 TEC EPI qualification completion rate of 33.3 per cent for BCATS Level 2 students was below the TEC target of 40 per cent. The TEO enrolment figures report that 24 students enrolled in BCATS Level 1 and 2 qualifications in 2018, of whom 12 completed the programme and eight (33.3 per cent) achieved the level 2 BCATS qualification. Māori student achievement at level 1 was 0 per cent, and 21 per cent for the level 2 in 2018.</p> <p>The level 4-7 qualification completion rates were also significantly below the 80 per cent TEC target, at around 56 per cent for 2018 and 57 per cent in 2017. The level 4 Carpentry programme was marginally higher with 63.6 per cent qualification completion. A high number of withdrawals contributed to the high non-completions.</p> <p>The 2019 data to date shows improvements in completions. The first intake of the Vocational Pathways Construction and Infrastructure level 2 had 50 per cent of students completed the qualification. The PTE reviewed some processes in 2018, which have led to the higher results. However, without comprehensive analysis it is difficult to see how the changes are improving parity of achievement between Māori students and non-Māori. Success is seen in literacy and numeracy for those who completed assessments. All made a gain in at least one area in literacy, and 80 per cent in numeracy.</p> <p>In 2018, all three students completed the Rural Animal Technician programme. The 10 students enrolled in 2019 are on track to complete.</p>
Conclusion:	Overall, qualification achievement has been low. The data shows improvements in achievement. However, the PTE's self-assessment lacks a narrative to provide explanations for the data.

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Of 24 enrolees, eight (33 per cent) completed the BCATS level 2 in 2018, and of those graduates, six enrolled in the Carpentry level 3 programme in 2019. Previous progressions to further qualifications were also low. Employment is not an expected outcome at level 2 as the programme is designed to prepare for study at level 3 to further develop trade and employment skills.</p> <p>Of the eight (out of 14) students who completed the new Vocational Pathways Construction and Infrastructure level 2 in July 2019, six have enrolled in the new Carpentry level 3 programme. This indicates that this programme is meeting students' goals to complete higher-level trade programmes.</p> <p>Additional outcomes for students show that where students have requested, they gain a driver's licence and, for level 3 students, a Site Safe certificate, which helps with employment. Personal growth and gaining unit standards are also highly valued. However, there is little self-assessment detailing the achievement of these outcomes.</p> <p>AG Challenge has identified that it needs to better capture stakeholder feedback on graduate skills. Local iwi benefited from maintenance projects on marae in 2018, where level 1 and 2 students were learning carpentry skills.</p> <p>Two of the three 2018 Rural Animal Technician graduates are in employment. The graduates have employment opportunities through work placements they find while studying. The value for vet clinics is having keen, capable graduates to assist in their practice.</p>
Conclusion:	High withdrawal rates, and low numbers progressing to further study, detract from the value of the outcomes. Students who have disengaged from education early are achieving study and employment skills. Self-assessment is improving to understand graduate outcomes but needs to better capture ethnicity data and stakeholder feedback for analysis.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The programmes meet the needs of the students. The tutors are qualified and experienced in their subject areas, and have appropriate adult teaching qualifications.</p> <p>The new Vocational Pathways Construction and Infrastructure level 2 programme was designed to develop students' trade skills and personal communication using theory and practical learning activities. The programme enables students to progress to the Carpentry level 3 qualification, which in turn provides a pathway to the New Zealand Certificate in Construction (Level 4). The step-up from level 2 to 4 is too great for many students.</p> <p>Health and safety are taught before students begin building projects, such as house builds and furniture making. This provides them with evidence for unit standards leading to qualifications in building. Activities are also designed to help students develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The project-based nature of the programme caters to rolling intakes of students throughout the year. The organisation is developing modules to better support these projects.</p> <p>The organisation reviews all programmes annually using feedback from students, employers and tutors. The level 2 and 3 programmes' teaching and assessment materials were recently updated to reflect the latest legislation. AG Challenge has met external moderation requirements for NZQA, BCITO and Skills Org.</p> <p>Student feedback was variable about the teaching on the previous BCATS level 1 and 2. The PTE identified that the tutor needed more support, and professional development was provided along with a literacy specialist. Student feedback for the 2019 intake of the new programme shows improvement.</p> <p>AG Challenge has also made improvements to the smaller Rural Animal Technician programme, which is in its second year. The programme is based on industry need for a mostly practical programme, identified through the strong links established with the sector. The revised workbook brings together the content with space for recording evidence. Students' workplace</p>

	performance is verified on work placements. Students were highly satisfied with the teaching and structure of this programme. External moderation has been set up with another provider delivering the same programme, and Primary ITO moderation requirements have been met.
Conclusion:	New programmes are designed to meet students' need for specific skills to help them into employment or further study. Improvements have been made as a result of regular reviews and feedback from students and employers.

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Retaining students on programmes is an area for ongoing improvement. BCATS level 1 and 2 had 50 per cent withdrawals in 2018 and 42 per cent for the replacement level 2 programme in 2019. In response to the low retention rates, the PTE has introduced a two-week trial period and revised its interview process to help identify whether the students are committed and capable of undertaking the level of study.</p> <p>AG Challenge has employed three new staff with an understanding of tikanga to support Māori students, and a literacy support tutor for level 1 and 2 students. It has also allocated tutors to subjects that align better with their skill sets. The individual learning plans were revised to make it easier for students to track their own progress. The introduction of more student support is expected to improve retention.</p> <p>A direct improvement as a result of staff changes has been the increased uptake of the assessment tool for adult literacy and numeracy, from 25 per cent to 90 per cent. The tool is used to assess students' abilities at the start and again when they complete the programme. Results show that the majority gain at least one level in numeracy and all improve literacy by one level.</p> <p>AG Challenge provides transport to the rural site, as well as lunch. The students studying Rural Animal Technician in town are well supported by their tutor, who ensures they are progressing and provides support through regular contact while they are on work placement. This is contributing to consistent attendance.</p>

Conclusion:	Withdrawals are high and the PTE's understanding of contributing reasons is still in the early stages. Some success is seen from self-assessment actions in some areas.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AG Challenge regularly reviews enrolment numbers, student feedback and course completions to monitor progress towards TEC targets. These are summarised in monthly and annual reports to the board. However, there is a lack of narrative to explain the reasons for student under-achievement and analysis to identify whether changes have led to improvements.</p> <p>Organisational vision and direction have been communicated to staff along with the quality management system, ensuring that all staff understand the organisation's commitments and are involved in reviewing progress towards goals. Staff are supported with professional development, and tutor performance is managed using appraisals and appropriate strategies.</p> <p>AG Challenge does not have a clear, documented action plan for improving Māori achievement. The PTE has recruited Māori staff to provide support and increase the uptake of literacy and numeracy. Early results for 2019 indicate that this is assisting with improved retention.</p> <p>The PTE offers programmes that focus on industry need for skilled workers at all levels. It has also established relationships with other tertiary providers and veterinary employers to promote further study and employment. More comprehensive self-assessment of teaching and assessment will help to identify how AG Challenge might improve outcomes for all students. Currently, self-assessment is not sufficiently coherent to identify whether changes have had an impact and are sustainable.</p>
Conclusion:	Self-assessment activities had led to changes that have identified areas for improvement. However, achievement has been variable. The PTE has yet to demonstrate changes have led to improvements to qualification achievement and destination outcomes for all learners.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AG Challenge has identified its key compliance accountabilities and monitors the meeting of requirements monthly. It has sound processes in place to monitor assessment quality and to ensure that staff are capable. Staff and students are aware of health and safety policies and practices.</p> <p>Programmes are reviewed to ensure activities and delivery hours meet documented programme approvals. If required, changes are submitted for approval.</p> <p>AG Challenge met the latest TEC audit requirements in 2018.</p>
Conclusion:	AG Challenge has clear systems for managing its key compliance accountabilities and has no non-compliances identified.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Next Generation – Rural Animal Technician (Level 5)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 Focus area: National Certificates in Building, Construction, and Allied Trades Skills (Levels 1 and 2); Next Generation – Carpentry (Level 3)

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good

Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that AG Challenge Limited:

- Ensure staff understand programme aims and funding commitments.
- Implement a Māori strategy to improve achievement and outcomes for Māori students.

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

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 fraud³*
- *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.*

³ 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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