

Report of External Evaluation and Review

The New Zealand College of Massage
Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 October 2015

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MoE Number: 9611
NZQA Reference: C18819
Date of EER visit: 30 June and 1 July 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:	The New Zealand College of Massage Limited (NZCM)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 January 1995
Location:	Building C, 382-386 Manukau Road, Epsom, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Westpac Stadium, 105 Waterloo Quay, Wellington 66B Wharenui Road, Christchurch
Courses currently delivered:	Certificate in Relaxation Massage (Level 4), Bachelor of Health Studies (Massage and Neuromuscular Therapy) (Level 7)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 181 EFTS (equivalent full-time students); 9.6 per cent Māori, 5.6 per cent Pasifika, 27.7 per cent under 25 years of age. Auckland has 50 per cent of students, Wellington 30 per cent and Christchurch 20 per cent. International: 15 students, all on student visas
Number of staff:	16.7 full-time equivalents (10 full-time, 12 part-time)
Scope of active accreditation:	Certificate in Relaxation Massage (Level 4), Diploma in Health Sciences (Therapeutic Massage or Reflexology) (Level 6), Diploma in Health Sciences (Massage and Sports Therapy) (Level 6),

Bachelor of Health Studies (Massage and Neuromuscular Therapy) (Level 7)

- Distinctive characteristics: NZCM provides student clinics where students have the opportunity to 'practise' the real-life and transferable skills required in the industry. This is particularly important as many graduates will be self-employed or work in clinics with others. Both situations require well-developed business skills.
- Recent significant changes: Since 2011, NZCM has been part of NZIS (New Zealand Institute of Sport) and has undergone change management to address future viability. NZIS and NZCM share premises in Auckland and Christchurch. NZCM also has custom-built premises in Wellington.
- Previous quality assurance history: At the most recent external evaluation and review in 2011, NZQA was Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of NZCM. There were no recommendations.
- Other: At purchase, in 2011 NZCM had 94 part-time staff. This was identified as an issue and was addressed by employing as many full-time staff as possible. Many students were also part-time, some taking as long as six years to complete a qualification. This was addressed by moving from part-time to full-time enrolments.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected included the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy.

The programme focus areas selected were the Certificate in Relaxation Massage (Level 4) and the Bachelor of Health Studies (Massage and Neuromuscular Therapy) (Level 7). The certificate is the lowest-level qualification offered and has the largest number of enrolments. It is also offered at all three sites. The Bachelor's is the highest-level qualification and is only offered from the Auckland site. Students can pathway from the diploma to the degree. The degree focus area included research requirements. International student support was reviewed as part of key evaluation question 5, *How well are learners guided and supported?* The Certificate in Relaxation Massage, the Bachelor of Health Studies (Massage and Neuromuscular Therapy) and research were also all included in the 2011 EER, providing a point of comparison between 2011 and 2015.

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-eeer/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.

A team of two evaluators visited the Auckland site over 2.5 days. The team met with the three members of the governance and management team (the chief executive, quality assurance director, and strategic director), eight tutors across the two programme focus areas, a selection of students from across the two programmes, including six of the 15 international students, and a range of industry stakeholders (some by phone post-visit). The team also met the chairman of the academic advisory board face to face and another member by phone teleconference.

An international expert from Canada provided a big picture view of NZCM by Skype. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the self-assessment document, the strategic and business plans, the 2014 Degree Programme Monitoring Report, student evaluations, programme reviews, moderation meeting outcomes, student clinic evaluations, staff files (including professional development plans), course outlines, minutes of a wide range of meetings, a sample of domestic and international student files, and samples of individual learning plans.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **The New Zealand College of Massage Limited**.

- NZCM has detailed knowledge of learner achievement across all programmes and across all three sites. It uses this knowledge to inform strategies to successfully address any identified gaps in learner achievement.
- In 2012, as a result of analysing learner retention and progression data, NZCM changed from enrolling students in full diplomas and degrees (locking the student into study for three years) to a staircased approach, where the learner completed each qualification in turn. This provided the learner with exit points after each qualification. As a result, qualifications are gained earlier, learners can move to employment sooner, and they only pay for the qualification they are currently enrolled in.
- NZCM interviews learners at each stage to gauge their ability and circumstances, ensuring that only learners who are capable of completing each level are enrolled. This policy has raised retention rates from 57 per cent in 2011 to 72 per cent in 2013 and 79 per cent in 2014. Similarly, rates of progression between qualifications have increased from 5 per cent in 2012 to 24 per cent in 2013 and 39 per cent in 2014. Learners can also exit early with a qualification.
- NZCM meets the Government's tertiary education priorities by contributing to young people under 25 years of age gaining qualifications at level 4 and above, as level 4 is the lowest available level of study.
- There are increasing numbers of Māori and Pasifika learners participating at higher levels. Māori participation increased from 9 per cent in 2010 to 15 per cent in 2014, while Pasifika participation increased from 3 per cent in 2010 to 9 per cent in 2014.
- Learners acquire skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities, including self-management skills. Feedback from graduates showed that they rated the NZCM experience highly – particularly the quality of the teaching, the work-relevant courses (including work placements and clinics), and the tailored individual support.
- In 2013, 90 per cent of graduates found related employment (including part-time or self-employment) and in 2014 this figure rose to 96 per cent. This indicates that NZCM graduates are 'work-ready' in both skills and knowledge and key workplace interpersonal qualities, such as good timekeeping and ability to work in a team.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **The New Zealand College of Massage Limited**.

- NZCM is a focused and proactive organisation with a deep and authentic understanding of learner-centred education. This is enhanced by previous management experience in developing NZIS, thoughtful and informed industry knowledge, and strong and effective ongoing engagement and responsiveness to learners and relevant industry stakeholders.
- The chief executive has gathered a team of highly effective governors, managers and staff who share a passion for people, teaching and learning and understand the power of modelling the behaviours they strive to see in their graduates.
- The transition of NZCM into the NZIS group was managed thoughtfully and skilfully, with an appropriate balance maintained between people and resourcing considerations.
- Shared functions such as human resources, finance and the student management system and academic advisory board functions ensure consistency of approach across NZIS and NZCM without creating a negative impact on the distinctive and important features of each organisation.
- Synergies between NZIS and NZCM have resulted in productive collaborations where learners volunteer with major sport and community organisations such as national and regional football teams. These relationships have led to a greater understanding of the value of massage therapy and have resulted in some employment opportunities.
- Resources are allocated to support learning, teaching and research. NZCM delivers about 70 per cent of the training in massage therapy across the New Zealand tertiary education sector. To ensure that it remains relevant and aligned to international trends, the PTE has actively sought international partnerships with, for example, the Canadian and American massage therapy associations, to improve the range and relevance of its programmes and to inform research planning.
- NZCM is a leader in the massage sector at both local and international levels. This leadership is supported by an active and competency-based board that meets regularly and invites outside expertise to ensure robust and forward-looking decision-making. The board balances innovation and continuity and both challenges and supports the management team.
- Self-assessment activities are authentic and robust and are understood and valued by all. Self-assessment ensures that programmes are relevant and reflect changes in subject content, teaching practice and technologies.

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 **Excellent**.

Course completion rates have improved significantly in recent years, and qualification completion rates have remained steady as a result of ongoing self-review recommendations, specifically the recommendation to limit part-time study options for learners. This change was made because it was difficult to monitor learners effectively as some were taking up to six years to complete a qualification.

Table 1. Comparative educational performance data across PTEs, wānanga and institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) (using the TEC's course completions data)

Provider sub-sector	Course completions 2011	Course completions 2012	Course completions 2013	Course completions 2014 (NZCM data only)
NZCM	76%	83%	82%	88%
All PTEs	86%	85%	86%	84%
All ITPs	79%	79%	80%	Not available
Wānanga	80%	81%	81%	Not available
Lotus Holistic Centre	78%	67%	78%	Not available
Wellpark College	82%	85%	83%	Not available

In 2012, as a result of analysing learner retention and progression data, NZCM changed from enrolling students in full diplomas and degrees (locking the student into study for three years) to a staircased approach where the learner completed each qualification in turn. This provided the learner with exit points after each qualification. As a result, qualifications are gained earlier, learners can move to employment sooner, and they only pay for the qualification they are currently enrolled in. NZCM interviews learners at each stage to gauge their ability and circumstances, ensuring that only learners who are capable of completing each level are enrolled. This policy has raised retention rates from 57 per cent in 2011 to 72 per cent in 2013 and 79 per cent in 2014. Similarly, rates of progression

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

between qualifications has moved from 5 per cent in 2012 to 24 per cent in 2013 and 39 per cent in 2014.

NZCM’s quantitative and qualitative self-assessment has identified that learners who entered at certificate level and staircased into diploma-level study had significantly better hands-on skills and knowledge.

NZCM meets the Government’s tertiary education priorities by contributing to young people under 25 years of age gaining qualifications at level 4 and above, as level 4 is the lowest available level of study. Between 2012 and 2013, NZCM learners in this category increased by 5 per cent, and between 2013 and 2014 by 7 per cent. There are increasing numbers of Māori and Pasifika learners participating at higher levels. Māori participation increased from 9 per cent in 2010 to 15 per cent in 2014, while Pasifika participation increased from 3 per cent in 2010 to 9 per cent in 2014.

Table 2. Educational performance for priority groups (under-25s, Māori, Pasifika)

	Under 25			Māori			Pasifika		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
NZCM course completions	84%	82%	92%	88%	80%	81%	80%	61%	76%

While course completions are tracking well for most priority groups, the Pasifika figures were a concern. NZCM has addressed this by using the expertise of its parent PTE, NZIS (a Pasifika provider), and by appointing Pasifika staff who have taken up roles where they can influence pastoral care.

NZCM has detailed knowledge of learner achievement across all programmes and across all three sites. It uses this knowledge to inform strategies to successfully address any identified gaps in learner achievement. The three sites share a database that can be accessed by all staff from any site. This enables staff to enter learner results and monitor learners’ progress in their own and others’ classes. This is supplemented by daily meetings where learner attendance and progress is closely monitored to ensure early interventions are made where required.

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**.

Learners acquire skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities, including self-management skills. Feedback from graduates showed that they rate the NZCM experience highly – particularly the quality of the teaching, the work-relevant courses and the tailored individual support. Out-of-school activities such

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as the annual NZIS sports exchange, student clinics and community placements provide opportunities to contribute to the local and wider communities.

The growth of the medical massage sector has led to learner work placements with diverse organisations such as hospices, hospitals and voluntary organisations. This raises the profile of NZCM and the field of therapeutic massage, and exposes learners to a wide range of possible employment options. Stakeholder feedback consistently indicated that learners are well prepared for these placements and add value to the client experience.

In 2012 a decision was made to establish a clinic in Christchurch to support the provision of massage therapy training in the South Island and to provide a service to Christchurch residents in need of support and stress management. NZCM was able to share a site with NZIS, adding to the efficiency of this provision.

Synergies between NZIS and NZCM have resulted in productive collaborations where learners volunteer with major sport and community organisations such as national and regional football teams, and with relay and running events. These relationships have led to a greater understanding of the value of massage therapy by sports groups and resulted in some employment opportunities. In 2013, 90 per cent of graduates found related employment (including part-time or self-employment) and in 2014 this figure rose to 96 per cent. This indicates that NZCM graduates are 'work-ready' in both skills and knowledge and key workplace interpersonal qualities, such as good timekeeping and the ability to work in a team.

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**.

Learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners. Through a review involving learners, staff and the international advisory board, NZCM determined that the opportunity for students to participate in a clinic environment would considerably enhance their learning and professionalism. For example, in Wellington NZCM moved to a customised site with clinical facilities, allowing learners to work with other complementary practitioners such as physiotherapists, who were able to provide feedback to the massage therapy students. Student clinic handbooks were also developed with input from learners and staff. Formal clinic feedback from learners led to recommended actions. One example from learner feedback was the decision to provide professional grade linen and to have it commercially washed. This was a substantial financial commitment for NZCM. It has led to increased learner satisfaction with the clinic experience and is one of many examples where NZCM puts learner needs to the forefront.

Ongoing support is provided to assist learners to pursue their chosen pathways. For example, at the 'Café Club' in Wellington graduates mentor current students and pass on their industry knowledge and experience. Graduates also act as supervisors at the clinics (run by students), providing an important role in the professional development of students by sharing their current practice knowledge.

NZCM is a focused and proactive organisation with a deep and authentic understanding of learner-centred education. This is enhanced by previous management experience in developing NZIS, thoughtful and informed industry knowledge, and strong and effective ongoing engagement and responsiveness to learners and relevant industry stakeholders.

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**.

Resources are allocated to support learning, teaching and research. NZCM delivers about 70 per cent of training in massage therapy across the New Zealand tertiary education sector. To ensure that it remains relevant and aligned to international trends, NZCM has actively sought international partnerships with, for example, the American Massage Therapy Association, to improve the range and relevance of its programmes. This has led to international staff joining the teaching team, part-time secondments and professional development opportunities for NZCM staff overseas.

Staff are valued. In 2011, NZCM had 94 part-time staff. This was identified, during the transition period, as an issue that had a negative impact on course and qualification completions, the quality of delivery, and the ongoing financial sustainability of the organisation. A decision was made to invest in staff and, as a result, in 2015 there are now seven full-time staff, six staff who are 0.8 or 0.6 and a pool of about 10 contractors. This has resulted in greater commitment by the staff team, enhanced communication between staff, and a more consistent experience for learners, with resulting improvements in learner achievement (refer Findings 1.1 for details).

Teachers and learners relate effectively to one another. Classes are small, individual learning contracts are established to cater to individual differences in learner progress, and there is a balance between the theory and practical aspects of the curriculum. There is sharing of effective teaching strategies and learning resources across the sites to improve the relevance of the learner experience and outcomes. The purchase of additional resources and equipment, such as the electronic massage tables in the clinics, has also improved the quality of the learning experience for learners.

Data from students and classroom observations is used to identify organisational professional development priorities and to identify individual tutor needs. Recent professional development opportunities include guest speakers, a leadership training programme in 2014 for key staff, and off-shore attendance at conferences.

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**.

Responses to the wellbeing needs of learners are appropriate. Learners are interviewed prior to acceptance onto the course and, since 2014, given police checks due to the sensitive nature of the curriculum. They are individually tracked, monitored, encouraged and provided with academic counselling, and their learning goals are regularly reviewed.

Staff and student feedback several years ago identified the need for an on-site counselling service. NZCM engaged an on-site counsellor in Auckland and feedback has been positive about its value, both personal and professional, to learners. This service is free to the learners.

Weekly guidance and support meetings on all sites ensure that learners experiencing personal and/or academic issues are identified early. The online attendance register contributes to identifying any learners who are not attending. It can also identify trends across particular subject areas or tutors.

Learners treat the staff and campus as a second home. They assist in the direction of the organisation through student satisfaction surveys and informal feedback. Recent changes from this ongoing feedback include providing a wireless network for laptop and smart phone users.

Staff are employed understanding that they are expected to participate in extra-curricular activities, which they do willingly. Learners and staff identified that they feel part of a well-functioning family.

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**.

Governance and management are motivated by a passion for teaching and learning. They strive to improve outcomes for all learners, with a particular regard for Māori and Pasifika learners. NZCM is a leader in the massage sector at both local and international levels and across the wider PTE and tertiary sectors within New Zealand. The international leadership role was strongly evidenced in a Skype interview with the Executive Director and Registrar of the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada Association, who said, 'New Zealand should be very proud of NZCM. I travel around the world and they are at the top of the game'. Leadership is also evidenced by an active and competency-based board that meets regularly and invites outside expertise to ensure robust and forward-looking decision-making.

The chief executive and the senior management team are approachable and genuinely motivated to engage with staff, learners and stakeholders. For example, they are an integral part of the planning day each year where the NZIS group discusses vision, mission, organisational philosophy and expectations. Staff feedback shows that staff are more confident and feel more supported in their roles and responsibilities than they did when they were not part of the NZIS Group. The collective responsibilities across NZIS and NZCM are clear. The transition was well planned and executed. It included the redeployment of resources (including staff changes) and has resulted in an organisation that is well placed nationally and internationally to meet and lead massage therapy in New Zealand. Shared functions such as human resources, finance and the student management system and academic advisory board functions ensure consistency of approach across NZIS and NZCM, without creating a negative impact on the distinctive and important features of each organisation.

All staff spoken to by the evaluation team reported that they would and do discuss issues with any member of the governance and management teams, including the chief executive. The chief executive has gathered a team of highly effective governors and managers (some of whom are family members) and staff who share a passion for people, teaching and learning, and understand the power of modelling the behaviours they strive to see in their graduates. These factors are supported by clear policies and procedures that support learner achievement by, for example, careful recruitment of staff who fit with the vision and culture. A range of self-assessment activities that are authentic and robust and understood and valued by all ensure that programmes are relevant and reflect changes in subject content and teaching practice.

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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: International student support

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

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

NZCM is committed to growing international linkages. While international learner numbers are low, they have increased from two in 2012 to 15 in 2015. These learners are well supported and rated the college highly in evaluations of the staff and the teaching and learning experience. The interviews held with the evaluation team confirmed these impressions. Growing international linkages is assisted by input from the international advisory board.

2.3 Focus area: Certificate in Relaxation Massage (Level 4)

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 course completion rate for the Certificate in Relaxation Massage in 2012 and 2013 was 90 per cent; in 2014 it was 96 per cent, indicating a positive gain.

2.4 Focus area: Bachelor of Health Studies (Massage and Neuromuscular Therapy) (Level 7)

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 course completion rate for the Bachelor of Health Studies (Massage and Neuromuscular Therapy) in 2012 and 2013 was 87 per cent; in 2014 it was 100 per cent, albeit there were only three graduates who completed.

NZCM's research plan was developed in 2013. The plan addresses objectives such as: develop a research culture and infrastructure; develop research-capable

staff; develop research-capable students; ensure teaching is informed by research and contributes to regional and international research. These objectives are met through, for example, the staff/student 'journal club' (a research group) and the completion of the 2015 Ako Aotearoa research project called 'Motivation and Engagement of Maori and Pacific Students at PTEs: lessons for improved teaching and learning strategies'. Research is guided by the academic advisory board, the international academic advisory board, and a highly qualified research team leader who has a strong publication record. NZCM learners have had some research success with a 2012 degree graduate winning the top award from the American Massage Foundation and another graduate being highly commended. Since 2013, more staff have been upskilled through professional development opportunities – with four staff being trained in specific research software for data analysis – and being actively involved in the Ako Aotearoa research project.

NZCM's intention is to further develop the research capabilities of the organisation's staff and students in a partnership arrangement. Graduates and staff work collaboratively and use the data already collected at clinics to inform applied research topics. It is also the intention that the final assessment in the graduate programme will be published in a peer reviewed journal.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

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.

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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