

Report of External Evaluation and Review

National School of Aesthetics

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 July 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:	National School of Aesthetics (NaSA)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	134 Antigua Street, Addington, Christchurch
First registered:	1 March 1991
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diploma in Beauty Therapy and Applied Aesthetics (Level 5)• Diploma in Spa Therapies (Level 5)
Code of Practice signatory?:	Signatory to the code but no current international students
Number of students:	Domestic: 66 equivalent full-time students. Approximately 15 per cent of the students identify themselves as Māori.
Number of staff:	9.75 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology domains
Distinctive characteristics:	NaSA has had the same owners since it opened in 1985. It offers the International Therapy Examination Council (ITEC) and Comite International d'Esthetique Et De Cosmetologie (CIDESCO) international qualifications. In 2012, 76 per cent of the students were aged between 17 and 24.

There are four students on the Diploma in Spa Therapies programme.

On average, 67 per cent of NaSA's students from 2004 to 2012 came from Christchurch.

The maximum class size is 12.

Recent significant changes: The June 2011 Christchurch earthquake resulted in heavy damage to the original premises which were later demolished.

NaSA moved into new permanent premises in January 2012.

Student enrolments have dropped as a result of the aftermath of the earthquakes and the consequential lack of affordable housing.

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA in 2007, NaSA substantially met the requirements of the quality standard applicable at the time. The one requirement not met related to personnel and involved some contracts in need of updating.

Other: The Certificate in Nail Technology programme has not been run since the June 2011 earthquake, when equipment was damaged. However, it is starting again in July 2013.

The curriculum is undergoing the Targeted Review of Qualifications (TroQ) process.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

In accordance with NZQA policy, the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy was included in the scope of this external evaluation and review (EER). The Diploma in Beauty Therapy and Applied Aesthetics programme was selected as a focus area because it is a well-established programme and has the highest number of enrolments.

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.*

Comprehensive self-assessment documentation was received before the EER. Discussions between the lead evaluator and the director of operations clarified the scope of the EER. The EER was conducted over two days by two NZQA evaluators at the site in Christchurch. The evaluation involved interviews with:

- The co-founders
- The director of operations
- The principal
- The student liaison officer
- Four tutors
- Thirty-three students
- Seven stakeholders, including clinic owners and graduates, via phone

The evaluation also involved a review of relevant documentation such as the investment plan, evaluation forms completed by the students, ITEC and CIDESCO observation and examiners' reports, assessment records, student destination data, self-assessment reports, minutes of meetings and other correspondence.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **National School of Aesthetics**.

NaSA's students achieve high standards, particularly considering that an average of approximately 66 per cent of the students aged between 17 and 24 entered NaSA with a level 2 qualification or below as their highest qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. In 2012, for example, a course completion rate of 87 per cent and a qualification completion rate of 82 per cent were achieved. The success was repeated in the international ITEC and CIDESCO examinations in which 97 per cent of the units taken were passed by NaSA's students.

High employment outcomes are achieved. Between 2003 and 2012, 93.3 per cent of the students who could be contacted were either employed or studying for a higher qualification. A wide range of other valuable outcomes are also achieved, including a rise in the students' self-esteem and a positive example being set to other members of the students' families. The students and the stakeholders recognise these significant achievements and gave positive feedback along these lines to the evaluation team.

The programmes are focussed on the needs of the learners with a particular view to securing positive employment outcomes. There is a consequent emphasis on developing meaningful relationships with the owners of beauty clinics and on the importance of gaining international qualifications. NaSA has both excellent resources and staff. A beauty salon is replicated at the school, along with a range of the necessary specialist equipment. The staff members are a cohesive team, willingly sharing resources and teaching approaches.

The school benefits from the high levels of involvement of its co-founders, whose passion and commitment serve as the glue binding the different parts together. NaSA has survived the challenges posed by the earthquakes and has emerged as a resourceful, experienced and supportive training organisation.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **National School of Aesthetics**.

Self-assessment is embedded at NaSA. The processes have existed for a number of years and the staff members continue with the routines as a matter of course. The evaluation team saw instances of self-assessment occurring during its conversations with staff, such as when discussions revealed a possible weakness in recording changes made in response to self-assessment. The need to close a gap was recognised and a solution was proposed.

The information sent by NaSA in advance of the EER was indicative of the quality of the organisation's self-assessment. Data had clearly been collated and analysed. It had then been used as the basis for decision-making designed to make improvements whenever possible. The effects of the changes were then investigated and amendments made until the desired results were achieved.

Many examples were cited of improvements effected by the cycle of self-assessment. Feedback from the examiners for the international qualifications drove a tightening of the standards for students' uniforms. Feedback from clinic owners was the driving force behind the inclusion of sales training in the programmes. The reception area at the school used for clinic days had a range of beauty products and the students were expected to develop their sales techniques. NaSA also effectively uses achievement data to gain a better understanding of its own performance. It compares its completion rates with those of other, similar providers and has set benchmarks for the purpose of comparison.

Considerable store is set by the students' evaluation forms which are completed twice a year. When self-assessment revealed weaknesses in the forms, research was undertaken and a new one was developed. A series of amendments followed when more self-assessment revealed possible further improvement. The upshot has been a comprehensive evaluation form that is used to reveal areas for corrective action rather than purely as an endorsement of current practices. There is therefore a good understanding of the part played by self-assessment and how the findings from it can be used to make comprehensive improvements.

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**.

NaSA consciously strives for high standards of academic achievement. One of the co-founders is still actively involved in overseeing the academic staff, demonstrating the commitment of the organisation's leadership. The students recognise this and have succeeded in achieving high standards over a number of years.

The Diploma in Beauty Therapy and Applied Aesthetics comprises three embedded qualifications involving certificates in facial therapy, body therapy and epilation. From 2003 to 2012, NaSA's students' pass rates for the three certificates averaged 94.2 per cent. These high figures contributed to the high course completion rate of 87 per cent and high qualification rate of 82 per cent achieved in 2012. The 2012 pass rates were typical of those achieved from 2007 to 2010 and were slightly higher than the 2011 rates which were adversely affected by the earthquakes. The success was repeated in the international ITEC and CIDESCO examinations in which 97 per cent of the units taken were passed by NaSA's students.

Such results are particularly significant as many of NaSA's students have not achieved academic success before they start at the school. Over the period 2006-2012, 65.7 per cent of the students aged between 17 and 24 entered NaSA with level 2 or below as their highest qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, yet they left with a level 5 qualification.

NaSA keeps comprehensive and accurate records of such data and displays a good understanding of it. The school was conscious, for example, that one of the downsides to its lowering of the entry criteria in 2011, in order to compensate for the dislocation caused by the earthquakes, was a drop in its completion rates. NaSA benchmarks its rates with other providers in its sector and with the PTE sector as a whole. The school also has a good understanding of the reasons why a few students do not complete the qualification. These include domestic issues, personal financial issues and students underestimating the workloads involved. Steps are taken to alert all students to such issues and different approaches are taken to deal with each set of circumstances. This is a very effective use of the comprehensive data that is collected.

¹ 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 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**.

The management team at NaSA has a clear view of what it wants to achieve in terms of outcomes. The primary goal is to produce graduates ready for the workplace. The co-founders unapologetically place considerable emphasis on the international qualifications as they know they are the key to securing employment overseas and also to some extent in New Zealand. From 2003 to 2012, 93.3 per cent of the students who could be contacted by NaSA were either employed or studying for a higher qualification.

The suitability of NaSA's graduates for immediate employment in clinics was attested by a number of clinics contacted by the evaluation team. A typical response was that of a clinic that has employed many graduates from a range of providers, yet prefers NaSA's graduates as they have better knowledge and are more likely to have international qualifications. The students are also conscious of the very good reputation of NaSA and frequently cited this as the reason why they chose the school.

However, NaSA recognises that a much wider range of outcomes is produced by the course. These include not only outcomes for the students, such as a rise in their self-esteem and increased empathy, but also for their families, such as the positive example being set for other members of the students' families, particularly for the children who are shown the benefits of study.

NaSA strengthens the value of the outcomes by maintaining ongoing relationships with the graduates and the clinics in which they are employed. In many cases, the relationships are with the same person as many of the clinics are owned by graduates. NaSA keeps some of the clinics informed of the progress with the TroQ process and hosts visits from other graduates who give product demonstrations.

NaSA keeps accurate destination data, obtained from a range of resources including Facebook, phone calls and emails, and uses it to assess the value of its courses. The school also has constant feedback from the clinics about its graduates. Typical of the feedback from the clinics was the comment from one owner who visited other training providers in her job and, 'noticed the quality of workmanship from students and how NaSA far surpasses all of these! NaSA has a fantastic way of approaching the client, the skin and body'. The feedback usually affirms the quality of the programmes but on occasions provides the school with an opportunity to improve. One such example was the call from some clinics for the students to be given more training in selling beauty products. This resulted in the inclusion in the programmes of encouragement for the students to talk to clients

about their skin care regime, demonstrating how NaSA uses its self-assessment to improve its courses. The school-based client days that are run on a regular basis also provide effective self-assessment as the survey forms filled in by the clients at the end of their treatments provide feedback used by NaSA to improve the performance of the students.

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**.

The management team at NaSA has wide experience of the industry. The programmes are focussed on the needs of learners, clarifying these in the interviews that take place before the students enrol. The assessment sheets used in the interviews record each student's prior knowledge of the beauty industry and the challenges they envisage they will face. This information is used by the school to identify the particular needs of each learner.

NaSA concentrates on the basics rather than the latest trends. This opens the school to the charge of not being up to date, but NaSA recognises that a conservative approach is needed to meet the demands of the international qualifications, and its constant communication with clinics ensures that it is in close contact with developments in the industry. The new premises are luxurious, replicating a beauty salon and providing a range of modern machines along with modern techniques such as hot stone massage. In this way and others, NaSA matches its courses to the needs of the industry.

The school adapts some of its activities to ensure they are providing the maximum benefit. The client days, for example, are a weekly event in which the feedback from each client is collated for each day. A complete visit to a beauty salon is replicated, including reception, caring for the client, providing specialist treatment, giving advice to the clients and selling products. The feedback is then given to the class for use in self-assessment and for the implementation of remedial measures when necessary. This feedback has an important role as many of the clients can compare their visits with those they make to commercial clinics.

NaSA also uses the visits of product specialists to improve its performance. The specialists show the students how to use their range of products and at the same time give feedback to the school about sections of the programmes that could be improved. NaSA also receives useful feedback from ITEC and CIDESCO examiners who visit to conduct the examinations. The report on the latter organisation's examinations in December 2012 had a section referring to the implementation of recommendations from the previous report, along with comments stating where improvements could be made. In the report, the comments related to

students wasting products and not listening carefully to instructions. These will be checked during the next examination, serving as an indicator for NaSA to check in future. The school refers these recommendations back to the weekly meetings of tutors and ensures they are used to improve practice.

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**.

NaSA benefits from an experienced, stable and well-qualified teaching staff. Most of the tutors already have a Certificate in Adult Education and the new tutor is undertaking study towards it. The tutors meet each morning and hold more formal meetings each Friday afternoon where issues are discussed. Minutes are kept of the meetings and they reveal that updates to documents in the CIDESCO knowledge base and routines for facial massage were among the issues discussed at recent meetings. Each item in the meeting is scrutinised by one of the co-founders who ensures actions take place when required.

The tutors freely share resources and teaching approaches and frequently teach together. Most of them can teach across different subjects and some of them are specialists as well. There is a good mixture of theory and practice which is appreciated by the students. The lessons take place in the mornings and the students can use the afternoons to continue with their studies at the school where they can receive one-to-one help from a duty tutor. The students can also use the equipment to practise certain treatments, enlisting the assistance of the duty tutor when needed. These features demonstrate that the teaching is highly effective at NaSA, offering a variety of approaches and opportunities to ensure the material is understood. The relationships between the students and the tutors are positive and the former expressed how helpful the tutors are.

There is a strong self-assessment culture at NaSA. The value attached to the student evaluation form is exemplified by the thorough approach taken to revising it when self-assessment itself revealed that the existing form was providing inadequate feedback. Research was undertaken and a new, anonymous form was developed using statements rating the strength of student agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale. The feedback is analysed as a team, remedial solutions are suggested and changes are made. In the set of evaluations completed in December 2012, concern was expressed about tutor feedback on assessments, so it was decided that any student who wants more comprehensive feedback should be encouraged to make an appointment after school to see the assessor. The commitment to using the evaluation forms was further exemplified by the decision to stress the importance of the students explaining why they thought certain areas needed to be strengthened. These reasons are captured at the end of the collated evaluation results. Close attention is paid by management

to these points, and changes are quickly made, such as the one-to-one meetings between each student and one of the co-founders. The self-assessment is made even more effective by the fact that the results are emailed to all the students and many graduates.

Further effective self-assessment takes place during the review of the feedback from the international examiners. It was this feedback that prompted changes to the standard of student uniforms and to the faster access for the tutors to each international assessor's comments. Feedback has also highlighted difficulties with some of the anatomy and physiology material. Once again, NaSA has reacted by introducing weekly labelling spot tests and this has eased the problem.

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**.

NaSA provides effective support to the students. This was shown by the exemplary support provided after the earthquakes. A similarly proactive approach was taken when there were reports of impending snow in mid-June 2013. An open-door policy for students was evident to the evaluation team. The students are encouraged to maintain high levels of attendance and any lapses are investigated according to a strict policy.

Specialised counselling support is made available at short notice by NaSA and good advice is provided to the students about the demands of study and the pathways to higher courses. The students particularly appreciate the one-to-one support provided by the duty tutor in the afternoons. NaSA recognises the educational entry levels of its students. In 2012, 36.4 per cent of the students aged between 17 and 24 entered with level 1 or below as their highest qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. It is now perhaps time to review the adequacy of the literacy and numeracy support for those learners considering that they are undertaking a level 5 course.

NaSA recognises the importance of assessing its student support and includes a statement about it in the evaluation form. In the most recent evaluations, over 95 per cent of the students agreed or strongly agreed that help was available when requested. A more proactive approach was evident in the meetings between one of the co-founders and each student taking place twice a year. Issues arising in these meetings are followed up. The principal, for example, has provided additional assistance to students who have expressed concern about the anatomy and physiology section of the course. Although the concerns about literacy and numeracy are not perceived to be widespread, reflection about ways they could be alleviated would help all learners.

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**.

NaSA benefits from the hands-on involvement of its two co-founders. Although a succession plan is in place, the co-founders have important roles in ensuring a clear vision and providing excellent levels of resourcing. NaSA is a boutique school with a wide range of modern equipment and facilities that match a beauty salon. The co-founders are aware of their place in the market and the significance of the international qualifications they encourage their students to pursue. Both ITEC and CIDESCO praise the high standards at NaSA. The CIDESCO examiner's report in December 2012 stated that, 'the school has a lovely warm environment with dedicated staff – all conducive to nurturing education and building a solid foundation'.

The co-founders are also looking to the future in the form of an approach to another provider with a view to that provider running courses at certain levels while NaSA concentrates its efforts on running courses at different levels, thus avoiding duplication of resources.

Positive and proactive leadership was shown dealing with the effects of the earthquakes. The school has relocated and established what is in effect purpose-built premises. Although the performance management system could be strengthened by a more formal annual review, this does not have a significant impact as performance management occurs on a daily basis through the close involvement of management in the delivery of all courses. Professional development of the staff is generous, involving, for example, payment for a staff member to take a stone massage course. Good communication is ensured by the staff meetings taking place each morning and the weekly meetings to look after issues that require more time. Throughout the operation of NaSA, high levels of staff involvement were evident to the evaluation team.

The leadership has a good understanding of all issues at NaSA. This has been enabled by a comprehensive self-assessment system. Data is collected, collated, analysed and shared with the staff. Benchmarks are set and efforts are made to ensure NaSA's data is compared with comparable data from other providers. Reflection helped the school in the process of adapting to the effects of the earthquakes. For example, the relaxation of the entry criteria after the earthquakes was found to adversely affect completion rates, so the criteria were quickly reinstated.

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: Diploma in Beauty Therapy and Applied Aesthetics (Level 5)

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

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

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 (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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