



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

# External Evaluation and Review Report

Vision College Limited

Date of report: 13 November 2023

# About Vision College Limited

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*Vision College (previously Activate Training Centre) is a Christian provider offering programmes at sites in Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch. Programmes range from level 1 literacy and numeracy to degrees. A strategy to grow international enrolments is underway. International students are currently enrolled in a level 2 agriculture certificate.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	21 Ruakura Road, Hamilton
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 943 students (364.21 equivalent full-time students – EFTS) in 2022; 260 Māori, 86 Pasifika, and 221 disabled students  International: two students (1.17 equivalent full-time students) in 2022; international student numbers have increased in 2023, with a year-to-date total of 119 (43.45 EFTS) at the time of the EER.
Number of staff:	42 full-time and 22 part-time staff
TEO profile:	<a href="#">Vision College Limited</a>
Last EER outcome:	At the last EER in 2019, NZQA was Confident in the educational performance of Activate Training Centre Limited (now Vision College) and Confident in the organisation’s capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bachelor of Counselling (Level 7) [114022-1]</li><li>• International student support and wellbeing (Certificate in Farming Skills (Level 2) [117805-4])</li><li>• New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1) [120473-3] and Certificate in Foundation Skills – Ultimate 2.0 [125148-3]</li></ul>

MoE number: 8895  
NZQA reference: C52172  
Dates of EER visit: 8-10 August 2023

# Summary of results

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*Vision College delivers valued outcomes for students engaged in programmes from level 1 literacy and numeracy through to diploma and degree study. Recent management changes have enhanced oversight of educational outcomes and helped develop a strong, values-based organisational culture. Embedded self-assessment is leading to ongoing change and important positive impacts for learners.*

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| <p><b>Confident in educational performance</b></p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students gain skills and knowledge and apply them in work and everyday life. Course and qualification completions are trending upwards. Learner progress is well understood and real-time reporting supports improved outcomes.</li><li>• Students are engaged and invested in their own success and the success of others. The quality and value of learner outcomes is high, with personal growth and confidence an intentional component of achievement in all programmes. Many graduates are employed in roles that are relevant to their programmes.</li></ul>   |
| <p><b>Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vision College engages well with stakeholders to support the development of relevant programmes linked to employment opportunities.</li><li>• Vision College is committed to improving cultural awareness and working towards parity of achievement for Māori and Pasifika learners. Current initiatives are showing some positive impact on learner support and engagement. More time is needed to see the effect on parity of learner achievement.</li><li>• Leadership is effective and data-led. A strongly values based culture celebrates success. Self-assessment is embedded at all levels of the organisation and leads to improvements in processes and outcomes.</li></ul> |

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Overall student achievement is good. Positive personal and social outcomes are important measures of achievement for foundation-level students. Counselling and international students have consistently high rates of course and qualification completion (see Table 2, Appendix 1). Course and qualification completions significantly reduced in 2022 due to the increase of student withdrawals resulting from the ongoing impact of Covid-19. In all programmes, most students who are retained in the programme succeed.</p> <p>There is a persistent parity gap for Māori and Pasifika learners. Recent ongoing activities focusing on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and enhancing cultural understanding are embedded across all campuses. Organisational initiatives include a student voice system, a cultural team, intentional recruitment of Māori and Pasifika teaching and support staff, and the use of external cultural advisors. Staff and students are using te reo and whakataukī and tuākana-tēina approaches in classrooms. Vision College acknowledges that these initiatives are a work in progress and yet to show a positive impact on parity for Māori and Pasifika students.</p> <p>Standards-based assessment results are reliable and underpinned by robust internal moderation, with improved external moderation outcomes year on year since 2018.</p>
Conclusion:	Vision College has highly effective systems for monitoring and responding to achievement trends. Targeted actions and interventions help to maintain good course completion rates. Activities intended to improve Māori

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

	and Pasifika achievement rates are showing some early impacts.
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## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students gain employment relevant to their programmes. They develop confidence and apply the real-world skills they are learning to work placements and everyday life.</p> <p>Work experience enables students to apply practical skills and to develop confidence in workplaces. Placements also provide value to employers through additional staffing and the current knowledge that learners bring with them.</p> <p>Strong relationships with stakeholders provide instant feedback on learner capability and insight into the value of the programmes. Employers noted that work placements improved their successful recruitment of suitable candidates.</p> <p>Foundation skills students progress from Quickstart<sup>2</sup> into level 1 study with most graduates of level 1 also completing the level 2 programme and gaining NCEA.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Vision College has established a safe learning environment and a culture that celebrates success and achievement. This enables students to succeed with enhanced wellbeing that prepares them for their next steps in life. This culture is underpinned by organisational values that support students to identify and achieve personal goals in a way that best matches their needs.</p> <p>Graduate destinations are tracked and understood and support the PTE’s understanding of valued outcomes within programmes. The PTE is planning more</p>

<sup>2</sup> Quickstart is an Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programme funded by the Tertiary Education Commission.

<sup>3</sup> National Certificate of Educational Achievement

	comprehensive collection and analysis of graduate and stakeholder feedback on the benefit of the education.
Conclusion:	Valued outcomes for students include preparation for work, self-confidence and growth in self-efficacy that supports students to set a path towards their aspirations. Processes for understanding the value of outcomes for industry and other stakeholders are being extended and refined.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are well served by relevant programmes delivered in an inclusive learning environment. In a student survey<sup>4</sup>, participants were confident that they would complete their programme, and the overall rate of satisfaction with programmes was 89.91 per cent.</p> <p>Programme review is ongoing and informed by comprehensive data reporting. Annual reporting and monitoring processes are used to review degrees, and cohort meetings with a brief report are used for shorter-duration programmes.</p> <p>Feedback from staff, students and stakeholders is incorporated into review processes to ensure content and resources are current and engaging. Improvements are made as needed while maintaining adherence to programme approval and accreditation requirements. The Certificate in Farming Skills continues to be reviewed to ensure international students can complete programme requirements within the seasonal needs of farmwork.</p> <p>Engagement with stakeholders is effectively managed in a range of ways, through placements, local advisory committees and open regular communication recorded by managers. In addition to providing insights for programme development, this feedback helps Vision College to</p>

<sup>4</sup> October 2022 student survey

	<p>understand how well programmes meet the needs of graduates, whānau and industry.</p> <p>Assessment in lower-level programmes is competency based using unit standards to assess a mix of theory and practical skills. Moderation is overseen by campus managers and reported to the academic quality committee. Where moderation identifies the need for improvement in assessment practice, this is provided.</p> <p>Some moderation issues identified by NZQA monitoring in the New Zealand Diploma in Software Development (Level 6)<sup>5</sup> have been addressed by changes to academic quality processes and a newly approved programme. External moderation in the counselling degree identified some variability in assessor judgements that need to be addressed to ensure confidence in learner results.</p> <p>Recent changes to the programme portfolio have reduced the number of degrees offered. Vision College needs to develop and maintain a culture that supports degree-level staff to engage in academic practice and research activity, so that degree programmes continue to meet requirements.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Relevant programmes are delivered by teaching staff who develop strong relationships with students founded on respect. Students express satisfaction with the teachers and programmes, and stakeholder feedback informs programme development and delivery.</p>

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<sup>5</sup> This programme was in its final intake in 2021.



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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are supported at all stages of the learner journey in a learning environment founded on Christian values. In a recent survey, 80.4 per cent of students agreed that they 'feel safe in the classroom (i.e. no racism, discrimination or bullying)'.</p> <p>Teaching staff develop strong relationships with their students based on mutual respect. Learning journey conversations use Te Whare Tapa Whā<sup>6</sup> as a framework to provide regular check-ins on learners' progress towards personal and learning goals, with a focus on wellbeing.</p> <p>The cultural strategy has introduced appropriate practices that honour Māori values and te Ao Māori in classrooms and other activities. These initiatives are supported by the cultural and learner wellbeing teams and have received positive feedback at the student voice meetings.</p> <p>Campus managers monitor real-time reporting on attendance and assessment progress. The findings are discussed at team meetings to ensure interventions and support are provided to students who are not meeting expected progress measures.</p> <p>Student feedback is gathered through biannual surveys, conversations with staff and within formal structures like student voice. Findings inform programme improvements and feed into the development of strategy and action plans.</p> <p>Teaching staff are recruited with a focus on diversity and commitment to the Vision College values to ensure students are supported to succeed. Team culture within classes is strong, and students develop lasting friendships. New pastoral care roles provide important support to tutors who are the main point of contact for students who come with complex needs.</p>

<sup>6</sup> Sir Mason Durie, Te Whare Tapa Whā: <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>

Conclusion:	The learning environment is safe and inclusive. Students are supported well by tutors, pastoral care staff and management. Student voice is a strength, contributing feedback directly to the chief executive as chair of the cultural and learner wellbeing teams.
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### 1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Organisational purpose and direction is clear and well communicated to staff and students. Strategy is reviewed annually, and directly aligns with the Tertiary Education Strategy, forming a framework that purposefully drives activities, reporting and self-assessment activity. Board members have relevant and diverse experience to support the mission of changing lives through learning.</p> <p>Reduced domestic and international student numbers during Covid-19 caused financial pressures and a review of the programme portfolio. The school of music closed in 2022 and a restructure resulted in staff redundancies and a new organisational structure.</p> <p>Despite these recent challenges, staff feel valued and supported in positive team cultures at all campuses. Annual staff surveys show rates of staff satisfaction are above targets (80 per cent) for key measures in 2022 and 2023. The survey is used to identify planned changes where targets are not met, and improvement is evident for some important measures of value in 2023.</p> <p>The new chief executive<sup>7</sup> has introduced new systems that collect and use comprehensive data to drive evidence-informed decision-making and innovation. Reporting and documentation is a strength, with an effective two-way information flow between the board, management and the classroom. Staff and managers use real-time data to understand achievement and use the information to improve educational outcomes.</p>

<sup>7</sup> The chief executive was appointed following the 2019 EER.

	<p>Academic leadership is sound, and staff at all levels are supported with scheduled professional development focused on the needs of the business while also allowing for further study for personal professional development.</p> <p>Vision College has a clear understanding of how well it is doing, and what needs improvement. Reflective practice is an everyday activity for staff and students and leads to ongoing improvement.</p>
Conclusion:	The PTE uses data insightfully to support evidence-based decision-making. The embedded Christian values and engaged leaders at campus and programme levels ensure staff are meeting student needs and students are achieving good educational outcomes.

### 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance accountabilities are well managed through documented processes. An annual calendar is used to monitor annual reporting and submissions. Management and staff handbooks provide support alongside professional development sessions to ensure staff are aware of their compliance obligations.</p> <p>Improvement in moderation activity is evident with a new quality manager in place, a review of the quality management system underway, and professional development and clear guidance for staff.</p> <p>A thorough, insightful and ongoing review of the Code of Practice<sup>8</sup> guides student support activity through a published action plan. A range of staff monitor and lead activities to identify and remove barriers to learning and support student wellbeing.</p> <p>Staff at all levels of the PTE are aware of requirements relevant to their roles. Campus and deputy campus</p>

<sup>8</sup> The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

	<p>managers maintain a keen focus on requirements such as delivering to approved hours, assessment and moderation processes, health and safety (particularly in the farm skills programme) and police vetting of staff and students. The homestay co-ordinator ensures accommodation meets appropriate standards.</p> <p>International student files are well managed, and the rules and requirements relating to entry and enrolment are understood.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Comprehensive reporting is in place, which gives confidence that compliance is discussed and monitored regularly at staff, management and board meetings.</p>

# Focus areas

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

## 2.1 Bachelor of Counselling (Level 7)

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students complete courses, gaining relevant skills and knowledge that prepare them well for practice as counsellors. Course completions remain high. Qualification completion rates for 2019-2021 cohorts are projected to be between 89 and 100 per cent by the end of 2024.</p> <p>Students also gain self-confidence and self-knowledge, leading them to better understand the requirements of a counselling context. Clinical placements are well supported with clear guidelines and support by the clinic team and external supervision.</p> <p>Students have a strong voice, with feedback leading to improvements in the programme. An example is a change that was made to better prepare students for a final panel assessment, with improved outcomes for students in the next cohort. The local advisory committee, provides an industry perspective that informs changes in the programme.</p> <p>Programme review is thorough, and lecturers meet regularly to discuss learner progress and identify support needs. The teaching team has a range of backgrounds, with most lecturers involved in current counselling practice including supervision.</p> <p>Some research projects are underway, but research outputs have been low for the past few years. This is an area for focus for the next few years to ensure an ongoing research culture is maintained that meets NZQA's expectations of research appropriate to the nature of the degree programme.</p> <p>Resourcing and support to maintain the academic and research integrity of the programme is essential to meet ongoing programme approval and accreditation. This is</p>

	<p>particularly important when counselling is the only degree programme delivered at Vision College.</p> <p>External moderation has indicated some areas of concern in assessment judgements, and it would be helpful to see how this is used to improve assessment practice.</p> <p>Engagement with stakeholders and cultural advisors appears to be effective in supporting organisational learning and ensuring currency of the programme. The PTE is seeking cultural advice and using information gained to make needed change for improvement.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Self-assessment is an embedded business-as-usual activity supported by the reflective practice of the teaching team. Students generally achieve well and gain employment. Stakeholder engagement through the local advisory committee is improving with the current programme management. A focus on developing a strong research culture and support for academic development of staff will be essential to the successful future of this degree.</p>

## 2.2 International student support and wellbeing

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>All international students at the time of the EER were enrolled in the Certificate in Farming Skills programme. This includes a three-week practical on-farm experience and opportunities to gain employment at graduation.</p> <p>Students are well prepared prior to their arrival. A comprehensive orientation helps students to settle into New Zealand life and to understand the importance of health and safety as part of farming life. Students achieve well and most graduates gain employment following their three-week placement.</p> <p>A maximum of 20 students are well supported in inclusive classrooms by two tutors – one tutor with farming experience and one who supports learners’ language, cultural and pastoral care needs.</p>

	Feedback from students, tutors and farm placement partners informs programme change and improvement.
Conclusion:	International students receive comprehensive information to support them while they are learning. They are supported to find homestay and other types of accommodation, and to understand aspects of New Zealand culture and farming life.

### 2.3 New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1 and Level 2)

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students gain unit standards that contribute to NCEA awards and achieve NZQA qualifications in a supportive and inclusive learning environment.</p> <p>Course and qualification completions reduced during the Covid period, largely due to students withdrawing to support whānau and to gain employment. Improvement is evident in 2023 year-to-date rates of assessment completion.</p> <p>Most students progress from level 1 to level 2 programmes prior to moving on to higher-level study or employment. Pathways Awarua is incorporated into self-directed learning, and literacy and numeracy gains are significant for students in a 60-credit programme.</p> <p>Regular weekly unit standard assessment enables teachers to understand individual learner progress and gives students a sense of achievement throughout the programme. Tutors intentionally support student success through celebrating achievement of different types – attendance, confidence, engagement and unit standard credits.</p> <p>Tutors are well led, meet regularly and work together to share experience with tutors from all campuses. A project to develop lesson plans collaboratively created roadmaps that are available for all tutors to use. These provide consistency along with the ability for tutors to personalise them to suit different learning and teaching needs.</p>

Conclusion:	The foundation programmes offer students opportunities to gain confidence and work-ready skills that prepare them for their next steps in a safe and inclusive learning environment. Achievement is strong.
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# 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 Vision College Limited:

- Develop a culture that supports degree programme staff to engage in research activity and academic practice, and explore the development of relationships with other providers who offer similar provision.
- Continue to engage positively with strategies to enhance cultural competence and work towards achieving parity for Māori and Pasifika learners.

# 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 1

**Table 1. Enrolments/student numbers – domestic only**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (as at 20/9)
All Vision College	860	1014	1167	943	1053
Foundation L1	173	184	207	161	239
Foundation L2	26	113	140	158	183
Bachelor of Counselling (Yr 3)	17	12	13	13	16

**Table 2. Course completion rate (%)**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
All Vision College	71.98	70.17	68.73	76.19
Foundation L1	65.26	58.71	63.56	63.48
Foundation L2	60.81	56.32	57.09	57.93
Bachelor of Counselling (Yr 3)	87.67	100	92.94	95.14

**Table 3. Course completion rate (%) Māori and Pasifika**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Māori learners	62.34	53.83	58.65	61.99
Pasifika learners	56.31	59.07	54.72	67.83
Non-Māori, non-Pasifika	78.70	78.26	74.86	75.19

# Appendix 2

## 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 fraud<sup>9</sup>*
- *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.*

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<sup>9</sup> 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 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.*

*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 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.*

*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 2021. 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](http://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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