



# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Newton College of Business and  
Technology

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 May 2011

# Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction .....	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review .....	3
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	3
Summary of Results .....	5
Findings .....	7
Recommendations .....	14
Further actions .....	14
Appendix .....	15

MoE Number: 8437  
NZQA Reference: CO4103  
Date of EER visit: 16 and 17 February 2011

# 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

Location:	Newton, Auckland
Type:	Private Training Establishment
First registered:	1995
Number of students:	International: 89 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Nine full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diploma in Computer Networking and Security (Level 6)</li><li>• National Diploma in Business (Level 6)</li><li>• National Diploma in Computing (Level 5)</li><li>• National Diploma in Business (Level 5)</li><li>• Diploma in Film and Television (Production) (Level 5)</li></ul>
Sites:	One
Distinctive characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently only international students</li><li>• Over 90 per cent of students come from India</li><li>• Over 80 per cent of students are male</li></ul>
Recent significant changes:	Diploma in Film and Television (Production) (Level 5) will start in 2011.  National Diploma in Business (Level 6) will start in 2011.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in November 2008, Newton College of Business and Technology (NCBT) met all but two requirements of QA Standard One, the quality standard then in force.

The two requirements not met related to financial reporting timeframes not being met.

Other:

Signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The external evaluation and review examined the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International student support.

The following focus areas were also identified for inclusion in the scope of the external evaluation and review:

- National Diploma in Business (Level 5)

Approximately 70 per cent of the students study for this qualification. The college is intending to provide level 6 of this diploma as an additional pathway for students.

- Diploma in Computer Networking and Security (Level 6)

This course started in April 2010 and provides an insight into the college's planning and implementation processes for new courses. These processes will be more important in the future because the college is planning to introduce three more new courses in 2011.

## 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 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 evaluation team consisted of two evaluators who visited the site over two days. The following people were interviewed by the evaluation team: the board, the chief executive officer, five managers, most members of staff, and a range of students, graduates, and external stakeholders.

Newton College of Business and Technology has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Newton College of Business and Technology**.

The students at Newton College of Business and Technology (NCBT) consistently achieve excellent results. The overall qualification completion rates in 2009 and 2010 were 95 per cent and 94 per cent respectively. All the students met by the evaluation team were very pleased with their level of success and the outcomes being achieved. A high rate of employment is achieved for students after they have graduated. This rate has been over 90 per cent for the last few years and in 2009 was 96 per cent. A high rate of part-time employment is also being achieved for the students while studying.

NCBT puts considerable emphasis on ensuring that its programmes match learner and stakeholder needs. Before developing its new level 6 Diploma in Computer Networking and Security course, NCBT researched the skills demand for employment in the information technology sector. The college discovered from the industry that computer programming had a less secure future as a career than networking and security. Consequently, the new course emphasises networking and security. The college is conscious that it is operating in a competitive environment and successfully differentiates its courses based on sector needs. For example, in the National Diploma in Business course, NCBT places less stress on the financial aspect and more stress on the customer service aspect than the courses of many of its competitors.

The students interviewed by the evaluation team said they appreciated the contribution of their tutors to their learning. They acknowledged their tutors' experience and high expectations of performance. The tutors are very well qualified and put considerable effort into ensuring they keep up to date with changes in their specialist fields.

All the students and ex-students spoken to by the evaluation team appreciated the support provided by NCBT. The induction process is thorough and consists of five modules which range from explaining the organisational side of the college to introducing the students to Māori culture and how to keep safe and healthy. The holistic approach taken is appreciated by the students and they feel part of a large "family".

The board reinforces this caring approach by actions such as the decision to retain staff rather than retrench during the recent economic downturn, when new enrolment numbers dropped. Many of the board's decisions are imbued with an admirable ethical standard, as illustrated by the partial refunds made to the few students who withdrew from courses. The board and management are very effective in the way they develop and promote new courses. A good example is the Diploma in Film and Television (Production) which will be starting later this year. This course recognises the growth in the "Bollywood" films being produced in New Zealand and bases the course on the associated new careers becoming available and the fact that most of the college's students come from India.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Newton College of Business and Technology**.

NCBT reviews its achievement rates by benchmarking them against national figures for private training establishments. The achievement data is gathered systematically, analysed, and presented in graphical form to relevant meetings which use it as the basis for discussion. NCBT recognises the importance of keeping in contact with its ex-students. Many have close ties with their ex-tutors which they find useful in furthering their careers. In exchange, the college informally receives feedback on the relevance of courses and areas where updating is required.

Throughout the courses, NCBT recognises the overriding importance of continually checking that it is meeting student needs. It assesses students' individual learning at the end of each module and this allows the tutors to keep in touch with each student. This type of contact strengthens the value of the data discussed in the quarterly programme review meetings for each course and reinforces the continuous effort to check what is happening and to try to make improvements. Students are also asked to provide feedback at the end of each module. This involves students evaluating the materials and resources as well as the performance of the tutors. Tutors are encouraged to take action as a result of these evaluations. Tutors also have many strategies to check that students are progressing at an appropriate pace, such as checklists and tutor handover forms which are supplemented by informal daily meetings, weekly staff meetings, and quarterly programme reviews. All of these methods provide staff with a chance to reflect on data and make changes when necessary. The staff members themselves are evaluated by their peers twice a year and a formal performance appraisal is conducted by the chief executive officer. These practices reinforce the pattern of self-review, ensuring that tutors continue to perform at high levels.

Although the student support team has a regular cycle of personal interviews with the students, enabling a check to be kept on their welfare, NCBT is now undertaking a more comprehensive assessment of the support services. A feedback survey was completed in the last few months of 2010 and yielded positive results. Representative case studies have also been recorded which not only illustrate the valuable guidance provided by welfare, administration, and academic staff but also form the basis for reviewing practices and for improving procedures.

Management checks the progress of the various initiatives through a series of individual project plans which are tracked by way of a master project plan and by regular reports to the weekly staff meetings. The individual project plans arise from data which has shown a need for remedial action. There is, therefore, a network of ways in which management becomes aware of the need to take remedial action or the opportunity to take proactive, innovative action.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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**.

The students at NCBT consistently achieve excellent results. The overall qualification completion rates in 2009 and 2010 were 95 per cent and 94 per cent respectively. The specific rates for the National Diploma in Business (Level 5) course were 94 per cent and 95 per cent for these two years. Although there are no final achievement rates or outcomes for students yet on the new Diploma in Computer Networking and Security course, there are many indications that a high level of educational performance is being achieved. One student returned to India, but 26 of the 27 original students on the course are succeeding and the first of them will be graduating in April 2011.

All the students met by the evaluation team were very pleased with their levels of success being achieved. The team met one graduate who had succeeded in securing a job as a human resources advisor with a major retail chain, even though her business course only covered a five-week human resource management module. The retail chain felt that the knowledge imparted of New Zealand employment legislation and current human resource issues was of a high level.

Another illustration of the high levels of achievement in the Diploma in Business course was the expansion of a retail grocery business into the wholesale side of the business based on changes suggested by an employee taking the NCBT course. These changes involved cutting out intermediaries by becoming a wholesaler and importing items at a lower cost.

NCBT reviews its achievement rates by benchmarking them against national figures for private training establishments available on the Tertiary Education Commission website. It also uses its membership of the Indian Education Group to compare learner achievements with those of similar institutions that cater for Indian students. All the achievement data is gathered systematically, analysed, and presented in graphical form to relevant meetings which use it as a basis for discussion. NCBT keeps in close contact with many of its ex-students and uses this contact to check that the skills and knowledge being imparted are useful in the workplace.

---

<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.

## 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**.

One of the main measures of the value of the outcomes for stakeholders is employment. A high level is achieved for NCBT students after they have graduated. The rate of employment has been over 90 per cent for the last few years and in 2009 was 96 per cent. A high rate of part-time employment is also being achieved for the students while studying. For example, by December 2010, out of the 19 students who started the National Diploma in Business in February that year, 15 had successfully gained a part-time job, one was still looking for part-time employment, one was returning to India, and the employment status of the other two was unknown. The college takes a proactive stance through its regular job alerts and close contacts with firms seeking part-time employees.

The college frequently checks the relevance of its courses with a stakeholder interview questionnaire which researches what certain firms are looking for in NCBT students. This knowledge of employer needs helps the college to achieve high rates of employment for its graduates. The courses are clearly providing the skills and background knowledge that enable the students to successfully settle in New Zealand.

NCBT takes a close interest in the careers of its graduates. In 2010, for example, it sent out a questionnaire related to graduate destinations. The evaluation team met a number of graduates who maintain close contact with the college and these students are regularly asked to provide informal feedback. Many graduates have close ties with their former tutors which they find useful in furthering their careers. In exchange, the college informally receives feedback on the relevance of courses and areas where updating is required.

NCBT recognises the value of social media for maintaining contact with graduates. Facebook, for example, was often mentioned to the evaluation team as a mode of ongoing communication.

## 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**.

NCBT puts considerable emphasis on ensuring that its programmes match learner and stakeholder needs. Before developing its new Diploma in Computer Networking and Security course, the college researched skills in demand by employers in the information technology sector. NCBT discovered from the industry that computer programming had a less secure career future than networking and security. Consequently, the new course emphasises networking and security. The National Diploma in Business, particularly the move to level 6, shows a similar record of being based on the needs of the sector. The course was updated in January 2008 and again in March 2010 to reflect such needs.

The college finds it difficult to organise meetings of its advisory board as the members are often busy. Instead, it has been tending to informally consult particular members with knowledge of the needs of different sectors. NCBT is now moving to extend its advisory board by seeking new members in the form of employment professionals, information technology recruitment agents, graduate NCBT students, other private training establishments, immigration advisors, NCBT agents, and people from the financial sector. In this way, it is hoping to increase the quality of input from external stakeholders.

In all its courses NCBT endeavours to combine theory and practice. The activities are kept as relevant as possible and emphasis is placed on acquiring a wide range of skills which can be applied in a range of contexts. The importance of support for literacy and numeracy issues is recognised and a preference is shown for group work and action-based learning.

The college is conscious that it is operating in a competitive environment and successfully differentiates its courses based on sector needs. The National Diploma in Business course, for example, places less emphasis on the financial aspect and more on the customer service aspect than the courses of many competitors. This enables graduates to gain employment in sales, customer contact centres, or help desk positions for which there is a strong demand for people with these skills. NCBT also periodically undertakes a competitive analysis which compares its own programmes and facilities with those of its competitors.

Throughout the courses, NCBT recognises the overriding importance of continually checking that it is meeting student needs. It assesses students' individual learning at the end of each module and this allows the tutors to keep in touch with each student. This type of contact strengthens the value of the data discussed in the quarterly programme review meetings for each course. Minutes of these meetings were sighted which once again illustrated the continuous effort to check what is happening and try to make improvements. The close contact with students goes a long way towards explaining why approximately 50 per cent of NCBT's enrolments come from referrals.

Another way in which the college checks the relevance of its courses is in the success rates of its students in the Microsoft and Cisco International Preparation Courses. These are geared to cater directly to the needs of the marketplace.

#### 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**.

The students met by the evaluation team were full of appreciation for the contribution of their tutors. They acknowledged their tutors' experience and high performance levels. The tutors are extremely well qualified and put considerable effort into ensuring that they are keeping up to date with changes in their specialist fields.

The high level of student achievement already mentioned is but one indicator of the effectiveness of the teaching. The high level of student attendance is another as it signifies the importance attached to the teaching sessions. Reassessment opportunities are available for unit standard assessments, but 90 per cent of students on the Diploma in Computer

Networking and Security course pass their assessments at their first attempt, demonstrating the effectiveness of the teaching.

One of the explanations for this effectiveness is the close relationships between the tutors and the students. The latter are asked to provide feedback at the end of each module. This involves students evaluating the materials and the resources as well as the performance of the tutors. Tutors are encouraged to take action as a result of these evaluations. In some cases no action is taken, as happened at the end of 2010 when a survey identified occasional delays with the internet. The reasons for the delay were discovered and a decision was made that no improvement could take place at that stage because of the cost. However, the standard of resources and their availability, including a library, were valued by the students. After the same survey revealed a positive response to the use of role-plays for simulated workplace scenarios, a decision was made to continue with them in a new human resources module. Informal student feedback also revealed that students prefer the face-to-face teaching model rather than the self-learning model in operation at some other colleges.

Tutors have many opportunities to check that students are progressing at an appropriate pace. Checklists are kept for each student, and tutor handover forms are completed at the end of each module so that the new tutor is fully aware of any relevant issues affecting student progress. These processes are supplemented by informal daily meetings, weekly staff meetings, and quarterly programme reviews. All of these strategies not only provide staff with a chance to reflect on data and make changes when necessary, but also demonstrate the existence of an inclusive learning environment.

Staff members are evaluated by their peers twice a year, and a formal performance appraisal is conducted by the chief executive officer. These practices reinforce the pattern of self-review, ensuring that tutors continue to perform at high levels.

## 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**.

All the students spoken to by the evaluation team were appreciative of the support provided by NCBT. Many of them likened the college to a family, and graduates reinforced this by describing how they stay in contact and come back to the college for advice on personal situations after they have finished their course of study.

The induction process is thorough and is spread over the first few weeks of a student's stay rather than being delivered in one lump session. It consists of five modules which range from explaining the organisational side of the college to introducing the students to Māori culture and how to keep safe and healthy in New Zealand. The students are also provided with help in CV preparation and interview skills. Specialist help is brought into the college in the form of the police and immigration assistance. This holistic approach is a strength and is appreciated by the students.

Students also appreciate the support they receive during informal meetings with staff and, in particular, support with their attendance and accommodation when it is required. The

support, both on the academic and welfare aspects, continues after the students have graduated.

Although the student welfare department has a regular cycle of personal interviews with the students, enabling a check to be kept on their welfare, NCBT is now undertaking a more comprehensive assessment of its support services. A feedback survey was completed in the last few months of 2010 and yielded positive results. Positive feedback has also been received from graduates on the value of the support services.

Representative case studies have been recorded which not only illustrate the valuable guidance provided by welfare, administration, and academic staff, but also form the basis for reviewing practice and for improving procedures. One case study showed the improvement gained in a student's attendance when her uncle was involved in the process. Another student was assisted with her shyness by staff coaching students who worked with her in group situations so that she could make a more effective contribution. A third case study showed the improvement in a student's attitude after giving him time away from NCBT to reflect, with the result that he returned to finish his course.

## 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**.

The effectiveness of governance and management in this respect is well illustrated by the way in which NCBT decided to retain staff rather than retrench during the economic downturn when new enrolment numbers dropped from 430 in 2007 to 160 in 2008. Such an attitude goes a long way towards explaining why most of the staff members have stayed at NCBT for a considerable time. Staff reciprocate with loyalty to the college and a level of commitment which is valued by all concerned.

Staff members also appreciate the generous support for professional development and the support from the board for the purchase of computer hardware and software. The open environment is acknowledged. An example of this approach is the way in which the suggestion of a marketing campaign for Serbian students was welcomed and is now bearing fruit in the shape of enrolments.

The board is fully supportive of the current approach to student welfare. Many of its decisions are imbued with an admirable ethical standard. An example of this is some of the partial refunds that have been made to students when the policy clearly states that after the first eight days of a course no refund will be given. Again, this response shows the commitment to the students' interests and the determination of the board to cultivate a family atmosphere.

The board, in the person of the chief executive officer, is involved in staff performance appraisal. Tough decisions are taken when necessary, as when measures had to be taken with two ineffective tutors.

The board and management are also very effective in the way in which they develop and promote new courses. The Diploma in Computer Networking and Security has already been mentioned. Another example is the Diploma in Film and Television (Production) which will be starting later this year. This course recognises the growth in the “Bollywood” films being produced in New Zealand and bases the course on the associated new careers becoming available and the fact that most of the college’s students come from India.

There is a network of ways in which management becomes aware of the need to take remedial action or the opportunity to take proactive, innovative action. The network is varied and the college might benefit if it was streamlined so that any overlaps can be recognised to ensure that no feedback can “slip through the cracks”.

Management checks the progress of the various initiatives through a series of individual project plans which are tracked by way of a master project plan and by regular reports to the weekly staff meetings. The individual project plans arise from data that has shown a need for remedial action. A project leader and team members are decided and they devise the tasks, responsibilities, timeframes, priorities, and completion dates. An individual project plan in 2010, for example, was established to improve the college’s marketing material so that it met the current institutional standards.

Management also recognises that, sometimes, plans are not required once data has shown the need for action. This is the approach taken, for example, when computer hardware has to be repaired or replaced. The action is quickly taken so that the students continue to receive the level of service they have come to expect.

## 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: International students

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

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

### 2.3 Focus area: National Diploma in Business (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**.

### 2.4 Focus area: Diploma in Computer Networking and Security (Level 6)

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

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, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

# Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.*

*In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.*

*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)).*

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E [eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz)

[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)