

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Wellpark College of Natural Therapies
Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 16 January 2015

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Final Report

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:	Wellpark College of Natural Therapies (Wellpark College)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	6 Francis Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Field trips and some massage classes are held at Kawai Purapura, 14 Mills lane, Albany
First registered:	1 July 1996
Courses currently delivered:	Bachelor of Naturopathy (Level 7) (three years full-time); Diploma of Nutrition (Level 6) (two years full-time); Diploma of Herbal Medicine (Level 6) (three years full-time); Diploma of Ayurvedic Lifestyle Management (Level 5) (one year full-time); Diploma of Therapeutic Massage (Level 6) (18 months full-time); Diploma of Yoga (Level 5) (one year full-time); Diploma in Yoga Therapy (Level 6) (one year full-time); Diploma of Aromatherapy (Level 6) (one year full-time); Certificate in Relaxation Massage (Level 5) (six months full-time)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes for students 18 years and over
Number of students:	Domestic: 244 (175 full-time, 69 part-time); 33 Māori, six Pasifika International: 17
Number of staff:	19 full-time, 29 part-time academic staff; eight full-time and four part-time administrators

Scope of active accreditation:	As above
Distinctive characteristics:	Wellpark College is the only tertiary provider in New Zealand to offer NZQA-accredited diplomas in herbal medicine, yoga and yoga therapy. Wellpark College receives government funding for these programmes. The Bachelor of Naturopathy was delivered for the first time in 2010. Students on the existing Diploma of Naturopathy were bridged into the degree programme.
Recent significant changes:	In October 2013 there were a number of resignations. Several key appointments were made in 2014, including the general manager and the head of faculty of herbal medicine.
Previous quality assurance history:	The last external evaluation and review by NZQA in 2010 found Wellpark College to be Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment. The most recent degree monitoring report in 2013 noted that there were no outstanding issues arising from the 2012 degree monitoring report as all the recommendations had been addressed. The 2012 degree monitoring report included the recommendation to review the inclusion of Unitec papers in the degree. This review has occurred and Wellpark College has decided to discontinue its memorandum of understanding with Unitec. In 2015 Wellpark College will deliver all the courses in the degree. In August 2014 a Category 2 programme change for the name of the Bachelor's degree (to Bachelor of Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine) was approved by NZQA.
Other:	Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited is wholly owned by Prema Charitable Trust and governed by a four-member board of directors, which reports to the Prema trust board under its deed of trust. The trust's educational aims are: to develop and deliver educational programmes for natural therapies; to establish research into natural medicine; to foster excellence in natural therapies education and practice; and to provide community education in natural therapies. The trust's vision is that natural therapies will become a respected and

integral part of the health care system, that all people will have access to natural health care, that prevention rather than cure will be the prime motivation behind all health care, and that natural therapists will play a respected and integral role in society. The purpose and vision is supported by the values of: aroha (love and caring for all); rangimarie (peacefulness in all activities); mahi tika (appropriate activity that respects others); and pono (fostering the truth that we are all connected).

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy (including student support). The programmes selected were:

- Diploma in Yoga (Level 5)
- Bachelor of Naturopathy (Level 7)

The Diploma in Yoga was selected as it has high student numbers and was reviewed at the last external evaluation and review in 2010, thereby providing a comparison of outcomes over time. The degree was selected as it is the highest level of qualification offered and two groups have completed, the first in 2012 and the second in 2013. These two programmes account for 50 per cent of the students currently enrolled at Wellpark College.

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.

A team of two evaluators spent 2.5 days on the Grey Lynn site at Wellpark College. The evaluators met with the college principal, academic leader, accounts manager, management team; conducted a teleconference with the board chairman; interviewed a sample of on-site students across both programmes including students from all three years of the degree programme; and spoke by phone to graduates of both programmes. The evaluators also interviewed support staff and spoke with a sample of external stakeholders, including employers.

A range of documentation was reviewed, including: the self-assessment provided prior to the evaluation, the degree monitoring reports for the last three years, student evaluations of tutor and programme content, minutes of board and staff meetings, and a comprehensive document called Governance and Management Report EER Documentation 2014, which detailed the processes and practices used to inform the organisation's self-assessment findings, actions taken as a result of these findings, and whether these actions had led to ongoing change or improvement.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited**.

Key reasons for this include the following:

- Wellpark College consistently increased its overall course completion rates from 2011 to 2013. During this period completion rates have been comparable with and most often better than those of other organisations offering complementary medicine programmes (refer Findings 1.1 Table 4)
- Qualification completions during the period 2011-2013 have been over 90 per cent, which is also comparable with, and at times higher than other organisations providing complementary medicine programmes.
- Bachelor of Naturopathy and Diploma in Yoga graduates are well prepared for work and/or further study. In 2013, 87 per cent of degree graduates were employed or self-employed, and 13 per cent were unemployed or employed in an unrelated field. In the same year, 80 per cent of yoga graduates were employed or self-employed and 20 per cent were unemployed or employed in an unrelated field (refer Findings 1.2).
- Wellpark College compares itself with similar providers to measure the effectiveness of its teaching and learning. In 2012 this involved benchmarking against six New Zealand organisations offering similar programmes, for course completions, qualification completions, student progression and student retention. The results indicate that Wellpark College compares favourably on all these indicators. Course completion, retention and graduate destination data all improved between 2011 and 2012, indicating that Wellpark College was effectively addressing issues that had an impact on these performance indicators (refer Findings 1.1).
- Wellpark College staff are highly engaged, well qualified and professional. They are passionate about natural therapies and enthusiastic about their teaching practice. There are high levels of student satisfaction with the teaching, resources and programme content overall.
- There has been a successful strategic plan to develop the research capability within the school. The degree monitoring reports confirm that, since 2010, teaching on the degree programme has become better informed by the increasing quality and volume of research in which degree staff participate (refer Findings 1.4).

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited**.

Key reasons for this include the following:

- Wellpark College has self-assessment processes that are comprehensive and robust, involve all staff and have led to changes and improved outcomes for students. Information to inform changes is gathered from a range of stakeholder groups through the use of graduate destination and student satisfaction surveys, industry consultation, retention and completion rate analyses, performance review of staff, peer evaluations of teaching staff, degree review monitoring and clinic client feedback. Examples of changes made as a result of this information include increased e-learning modalities, provision of additional academic support, and the introduction of a full-time librarian to assist students with research.
- A comprehensive needs analysis brought about by a changing environment has led to changes in staffing, developing clearer job descriptions for staff, reviewing management structures, and reviewing programme delivery.
- Wellpark College is well aligned with the Tertiary Education Strategy, with a focus on the participation of under 25-year-olds, increased Māori and Pasifika enrolments, and increasing participation of international students. The college offers scholarships to BEST Pacific Institute students to give Pasifika students greater opportunities.
- Any gaps or issues that required clarification by the evaluation team were able to be discussed with management, who could reference the extensive self-assessment documentation for an explanation of the issue, the action taken, and the review of the action taken. This in-depth knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the college's business indicated that highly effective self-assessment was occurring.

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**.

Wellpark College consistently increased course completion rates in the Diploma in Yoga between 2011 and 2013 (see Table 1). This increase has been brought about by greater support for students. On the Bachelor of Naturopathy course completions have been steady with 2013 being an aberration due to several students who withdrew or deferred their study for personal reasons.

Table 1. TEC course completions: Diploma of Yoga and Bachelor of Naturopathy, 2011-2013			
	2011	2012	2013
Diploma in Yoga (Level 5)	79% 43 students	86% 37 students	87% 30 students
Bachelor of Naturopathy (Level 7)	83% 60 students	84% 79 students	78% 73 students

Learners complete courses and gain qualifications that enable them to undertake further study or employment. Retention and graduate destinations all improved from 2011 to 2012 (Table 2).

Table 2. TEC data on student retention and employment outcomes, 2011-2013				
	2011	2012	2013	
Student retention (degree)	73%	76%	N/A	
Student retention (levels 5-6)	72%	82%	N/A	
Graduate destination (employment or progression to higher-level study)	73%	89%	N/A	

However, retention rates for 2013 may be lower due to an issue with year 1 naturopathy degree students in 2013. The causes were determined to be personal issues for some subjects, student workload, over-assessment and group dynamics. Wellpark College remedied the situation by reviewing the curriculum, amending assessments, and providing student support and tutor development. The NZQA degree monitor in 2013 was satisfied with the explanations and planned improvements.

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

Māori course and qualification completion rates for 2011-2013 and across programmes compare well with TEC sector medians (Table 3). However, Pasifika rates are highly variable. Wellpark recognises these factors and has taken steps to address them, such as providing extra support to students who cannot attend class because of family circumstances, and by offering scholarships to Māori and Pasifika students who might otherwise be prevented from studying due to hardship.

	2011	2012	2013	TEC sector medians
Māori course completion	86%	74%	81%	85%
Māori qualification completion	89%	77%	N/A	80%
Pasifika course completion	62%	59%	65%	85%
Pasifika qualification completion	90%	50%	N/A	80%

Wellpark College compares itself with similar providers to measure the effectiveness of its teaching and learning. In 2012 this involved benchmarking against six New Zealand organisations offering similar programmes for course completions, qualification completions, student progression and student retention. The results in Table 4 below indicate that Wellpark College compared favourably on all these indicators in 2012. The figures for 2013 are comparable.

PTEs/EPIs 2012 comparisons	Course completions	Qualification completions	Student progression	Student retention
Wellpark College	85%	100%	N/A	80%
South Pacific College	91%	100%	N/A	61%
Massage College	83%	100%	5%	57%
Lotus Centre	67%	50%	0%	68%
College of Naturopathic	64%	37%	44%	42%
College of Chinese Medicine	90%	70%	67%	85%
School of Acupuncture	86%	100%	N/A	81%

Learners acquire useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities, including learning to learn and self-management. They do this through a range of individual and group project work where they monitor their own and others' abilities to work with and without direction. Part of the curriculum for the Yoga students consists of running yoga classes for groups. These classes help develop

confidence and empathy within the students, which are essential attributes for when they graduate. Employers commented favourably on these attitudes in the Wellpark graduates they have employed.

Wellpark College's self-assessment includes comparing its achievement rates internally from year to year and externally with similar providers. The results of these comparisons indicate that Wellpark is consistently meeting the academic needs of students very well.

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 consistently improve their well-being and enhance their abilities and attributes as a result of their study at Wellpark College. Students are 'transformed' by their studies and experiences with yoga, nutrition and naturopathy. They experience improvements in attitudes and personal health and these positives outcomes are shared with family, friends and the wider community. Communities benefit from the voluntary work undertaken by the students, for example green prescriptions (where doctors suggest patients participate in healthy living options, such as therapeutic massage, in addition to medical treatments).

Graduates need to market their skills in the community to find employment and/or establish a clinical practice. Table 5 below shows that Wellpark graduates find employment within their area of specialisation. This indicates that they are well prepared and work-ready and that the programmes offered at Wellpark College are relevant to learners, employers and communities.

Table 5. Wellpark College data comparing graduate destinations across all programmes and between the Diploma of Yoga and Bachelor of Naturopathy				
2013 Wellpark graduate destinations (averages)	Employed or self-employed	Moved to higher-level study	Employed in a related field/moved to higher study	Unemployed or employed in an unrelated field
Graduates across all programmes	83%	8%	92%	7%
Degree graduates	87%	0%	87%	13%
Diploma of Yoga graduates	80%	0%	80%	20%

Wellpark graduates add value to their businesses because they are realistic about employment options in the natural therapies field, have excellent interpersonal skills, and are highly motivated to do a good job for their employer and clients.

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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Students undergo a comprehensive interview process, prior to being admitted to a programme of study, which is used to gauge their suitability and commitment to the programme. A small number of students withdraw from a course within the time allowed for return of fees. For the degree these figures were: 2011 (three), 2012 (three) and 2013 (four). A number of students also defer their study for a range of personal reasons: 2011 (one), 2012 (two) and 2013 (five). Measures have been taken to identify and provide greater support for at-risk students (refer Findings 1.5).

Some concerns regarding recognition of prior skills have been identified by Wellpark and are currently being assessed to see how this can be improved to help students coming from other organisations.

Programme planning is informed through feedback from a range of stakeholders, including students, graduates, staff (many of whom are current practitioners), community organisations, employers (for perceptions of work-readiness), degree monitoring by NZQA, and feedback from clinic clients. The Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) 2011 – which measures engagement of students and asks students about course design and content, teaching, support mechanisms and personal development – showed that Wellpark College students had high levels of satisfaction. It also showed desired areas for improvement such as electronic support for learning and submission of assignments, and careers advice. Wellpark College responded by extending the provision of online learning support to all the courses in the degree and introducing a system for checking on plagiarism for all written assignments in 2013. These measures have been effective in assisting students to, for example, access resources off site and submit assignments directly online. In addition, there have been no instances of plagiarism recorded since introducing the checks.

The perceived value of the integration of natural therapies with other health care options, and the adoption of a more holistic approach to health care has increased employment options for Wellpark College graduates. This development is supported by employers contacting Wellpark College to access graduates for their businesses. These businesses range from alternative health care employers to community organisations such as district health boards and health centres.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

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 and staff, with both staff and students indicating that the facilities and resources are excellent. The academic staff at Wellpark College are qualified and experienced practitioners with relevant teaching qualifications. Teacher performance is reviewed regularly and staff benefit from ongoing professional development, including assistance with upskilling qualifications. Research has become a major focus of the organisation and staff receive support to attend conferences and conduct research.

Both teachers and students are excited and passionate about sharing knowledge and passing this knowledge on to others, particularly through engagement with local communities. Moderation practices are sound and effective. They demonstrate that assessments are at the correct academic level and that the marking is fair and consistent.

Students are able to apply knowledge in a variety of contexts as they progress through study and undertake clinical practice. The majority of learners described their learning experience as transformational, both academically and personally. These comments were also evidenced in written evaluations of the programmes and tutors and in the collated data provided by Wellpark College. However, a small number of degree students were dissatisfied with staff availability and the late return of assessments. Wellpark College were able to demonstrate that these issues had been identified, actions taken, and the results of these actions reviewed. Also, the 2013 NZQA degree monitor's report was satisfied with the planned improvements, and the 2014 student feedback indicates that the issues have been resolved satisfactorily.

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**.

Guidance and support at Wellpark College is informed by a clear purpose and vision and the underlying values of aroha (love and caring for all); rangimarie (peacefulness in all activities); mahi tika (appropriate activity that respects others); and pono (fostering the truth that we are all connected). These values guide the teaching and learning, inform student practice with their clients, and create a culture of acceptance and positive regard for all. Feedback from a range of stakeholders, and the experiences of the evaluation team on site, showed

behaviours that supported these values, such as active listening, acknowledging others' points of view, and appreciating the contribution that everyone can make to improving guidance and support for learners.

These aspirations are practically expressed by focused academic support, including one-to-one academic support sessions, an academic writing programme, and lunch time tutorials to help students with academic writing and referencing. In response to student feedback, a librarian was employed to provide technical support and research assistance, a research club was developed, and more comprehensive support services were put in place. Dedicated support staff liaise with academic staff to ensure poor attendance and late assessments are followed up promptly, as Wellpark's self-assessment showed that these issues are often the early signs that a student is not coping with the demands of study.

Management is committed to government strategies that identify 'at-risk' groups such as Māori, Pasifika and international students, and has responded by identifying student at-risk groups at Wellpark College. Student achievement for these groups is tracked closely and individual support offered when issues are identified.

Student support at Wellpark College is comprehensive, targeted and effective. It is monitored by excellent record-keeping that details any actions taken and the follow-up to these actions. If issues arise that require external expertise, students are referred to the appropriate specialists.

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**.

Wellpark College governance and management personnel and structures are designed to support the shared belief, passion and commitment to natural therapies and the passing on of this knowledge to students. These goals are achieved through the strategic plan that outlines priorities and describes the mechanisms to achieve these priorities. Student achievement levels, internal and external benchmarking, and employment rates indicate that Wellpark College is meeting these priorities very well.

The Board of Governors has two external non-executive directors who ensure the ongoing financial viability of the organisation and give an objective viewpoint to the value of the resources available to the organisation. It is able to make the difficult decisions necessary when the need for change arises.

Some of these decisions led to a recent restructure which has enhanced support to learners by clarifying staff roles, targeting learner support, and adding academic

rigour through providing more focused academic leadership. Student and staff satisfaction levels indicate that these changes have been positive, have led to improvements in communication, and have enhanced educational achievement. A decision to move from part-time to full-time staff recognises the importance to Wellpark College of staff who have the time to commit to the organisation, and reflects the college's commitment to staff.

Wellpark College has responded well to changing needs. For example, when the relationship with a polytechnic to deliver papers leading to the degree did not prove advantageous to students, there was a comprehensive review and a decision made to bring all degree provision back inside Wellpark College. This decision led to a review of Wellpark College resources and the need to increase them to meet the needs of degree-level students. When the degree monitor's report recommended that more 'critical thinking' was required in the degree papers, these changes were made promptly. A Māori representative was added to the board to ensure a balance in the viewpoints and expertise.

Wellpark College has clear separation between governance and management functions. The well-managed restructure has led to a number of improvements, including greater clarity of roles, better communication between staff, and improved service to students. Any issues that arose on site at the external evaluation and review had already been identified in Wellpark College's comprehensive self-assessment, and appropriate actions had been taken to resolve them.

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: Diploma of Yoga (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**.

2.3 Focus area: Bachelor of Naturopathy (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**.

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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