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External Evaluation and Review Report

Wellpark College of Natural Therapies
Limited

Date of report: 2 May 2019

About Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited

Wellpark College is a not-for-profit, tertiary education provider currently offering a Diploma of Yoga and a Bachelor of Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine. In late 2018, Wellpark completed a campus relocation from Grey Lynn to Kawai Purapura in Albany, where they share the campus with the Prema Trust, owners of the college.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Kawai Purapura, 14 Mills Lane, Albany, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 121 full-time students in 2018 – 12 per cent Māori; 3 per cent Pasifika. Most students are female. International: 10 full-time students in 2018 (five at the time of the on-site visit)
Number of staff:	15 full-time and 11 part-time
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited
Last EER outcome:	January 2015: Highly Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment
Scope of evaluation:	Diploma of Yoga (Level 5) one year full-time; Bachelor of Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine (Level 7) three years full-time. The Diploma of Nutrition (Level 6) (two years full-time) was being taught out and was not selected for this evaluation.
MoE number:	8341
NZQA reference:	C32021
Dates of EER visit:	26-28 February 2019

Summary of Results

Wellpark College is a well-led and soundly performing PTE. Students achieve well in both focus area programmes. Programme design and teaching is strongly student-centred and holistic. Although the 2018 campus relocation was well managed, there were unfavourable impacts on students.

Confident in educational performance

and

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Students at Wellpark achieve well. Pass rates are consistently strong across all student groups and are appropriately assessed.

Benchmarking and relevant monitoring of achievement is ongoing. There were some limitations in the understanding of the achievement data by management.

Relevant sector groups¹ recognise the relevance of course content and graduates' skills. However, there is limited evidence of graduate outcomes data gathered over time to show an effective transition to intended roles.

The focus area programmes follow a well-structured curriculum. Programme review and academic quality-related documentation is high in both quality and effective use for both monitoring and review. Research also informs teaching.

Programme design and teaching is strongly student-centred and holistic; some students and graduates described their experience at Wellpark as 'life-changing'.

Wellpark maintains links with key stakeholders from complementary health sectors, industry and iwi. This informs teaching currency and protocols at the park-like Kawai Purapura campus.

Governance, leadership and teaching at Wellpark is effective. Continuing staff turnover² has affected students at times.

¹ Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists of New Zealand; New Zealand Association of Medical Herbalists; Massage New Zealand; Yoga New Zealand and Yoga Australia.

² As also noted in the 2014 EER report.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at Wellpark achieve well. Completion rates are generally consistent across all student groups – 87 per cent and 85 per cent in 2016 and 2017 averaged across all programmes.⁴ Course completions exceed 90 per cent in the diploma and 80 per cent in the degree (see Appendix 1). When all of Wellpark’s programmes are considered, there is some variability in qualification completion rates, particularly for Māori students.</p> <p>Benchmarking of performance occurs year-on-year against selected comparable PTEs, using the PTE sector median; performance is compared across different learner groups.</p> <p>Achievement is monitored throughout the year, including at academic board and post-delivery meetings. Average grade analysis also occurs. Internal and external moderation occurs according to a planned schedule which covers all courses, although there was some lack of clarity around how long that cycle takes. Re-sits, plagiarism and the authentication of student work are well managed; the evaluators had no concerns about the validity of data.</p> <p>A significant number of students withdrew from their programmes at Wellpark in 2018. The reasons for this vary and are known to Wellpark and recorded for analysis. However, this is of concern and needs to be reduced.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Most students pass their courses and gain a qualification. Achievement is well monitored, as is the quality of assessment. There were limitations in the use or full understanding of some aspects of the achievement data presented to the evaluators.</p>

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation’s activities.

⁴ Tertiary Education Commission EFTS weighted course completion rate; 2018 data is yet to be confirmed but is similar.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The Bachelor of Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine provides a recognised credential to practise as a naturopath/medical herbalist in an unregulated sector. The Diploma of Yoga provides the community with trained yoga teachers. There is an implicit contribution to the health and wellbeing of the wider population by graduates.</p> <p>Relevant sector groups recognise the relevance of course content and graduate skills. There is limited evidence of graduate outcomes gathered over time by Wellpark to show an effective transition to intended roles. A survey administered at graduation time yields useful quantitative data. This is supplemented by anecdotal information gathered through teachers' networks.</p> <p>Wellpark is working with the sector and graduates to try to bridge the gap between graduating with the naturopathic and herbal medicine degree and the suitable, extended clinical experience needed to establish a sustainable practice. Wider efforts to gain more acceptance of naturopathic and herbal medicine is also occurring, and Wellpark is involved with that internationally. A stakeholder said there was very strong demand for naturopathic services in New Zealand. Graduates interviewed have entered the workforce in a combination of relevant self-employed and employed roles.</p> <p>Opportunities for full-time work as a yoga teacher are limited. However, graduates teach and often supplement this with other work and personal/professional interests. Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funding and participation targets were met by Wellpark in 2018.</p>
Conclusion:	Graduates have gained useful skills and knowledge which can contribute positively to the wider community. The evidence that they gain relevant, sustainable employment is somewhat modest.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The focus area programmes follow a well-structured curriculum and students achieve well (as per 1.1, 1.2). Programme review and academic quality-related documentation is high in both quality and effective use. Wellpark maintains links with key stakeholders and has well-informed advisory groups. These elements contribute to maintaining the quality of existing programmes, quality teaching and developing new qualifications. However, when conducting needs assessment for new programmes or programme changes, a wider health sector viewpoint should be sought.</p> <p>Self-assessment (as reflected in, for example, annual programme reviews, moderation planning and reporting) is detailed, embedded within the academic calendar, and involves all staff at key points. Suitable records are maintained and used in self-assessment. These include attendance, extensions of assessment hand-ins, deferrals of study, and withdrawals. The evaluators suggested that with the reduced size of Wellpark⁵ there may be an opportunity to refocus or resize the self-assessment, particularly in relation to this key evaluation question. The turnover of key role holders has been a limit on effectiveness.</p> <p>An arrangement with a large aged care organisation is providing opportunities for students to gain applied practice, as does the public clinic at Kawai Purapura. Facilities and resources for learning (including those online, the library and the clinic and yoga rooms) are of a suitable quality, and there have been improvements with the campus relocation. Self-assessment records summarise these and numerous other, credible improvements year on year.</p>
Conclusion:	Wellpark has the academic capability to deliver its programmes. Students benefit from the knowledge of their teachers, exposure to wider research and practical activities.

⁵ There were 261 students at the last EER in 2015, and around 120 at this EER.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wellpark demonstrates a strongly student-centred and holistic approach to education, which some students and graduates described as 'life-changing'. Key components under this question include intensive on-campus weeks for off-campus students, clinical practice components, and yoga practices. These components are key to keeping students engaged, and the students interviewed valued them highly.</p> <p>Teachers work to create and manage healthy classroom dynamics, including strategies for integrating on and off-campus learners in all activities. After some technical disruptions to sound systems, and a 'default to lecturing' in some instances, teachers are evolving their practice to suit blended delivery and students' learning needs. This is well evidenced.</p> <p>Academic skills are built from early in the programmes, with non-formal but compulsory online modules, academic clinics with the librarian, and one-to-one contact such as for the review of assignments. There are suitable measures to ensure the authenticity of student work. Support services include counselling and a dedicated Code of Practice support role. More specific attention should be paid to tracking and monitoring the progress and satisfaction of international students as a unique cohort.</p> <p>Student remarked on the visibility and approachability of the principal; academic staff are also approachable and contactable and communications have improved in 2019.</p> <p>Student feedback is regularly sought by a well-administered, scheduled survey. Examples of responses to this feedback were noted. Attendance monitoring is rigorous. At-risk students are supported and learning contracts used as required.</p>
Conclusion:	Ongoing feedback is sought from students; services provided are utilised and valued; the increasing maturity of the blended learning approach includes attention to engaging well with all students and monitoring their progress. Self-assessment around all these aspects is strong and convincing.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There is a strong continuity of governance, effective leadership, and clarity around the ethos and future direction of Wellpark. Governance, management and academic board meetings show a connection but also an appropriate separation between governance and operational or educational decisions. Closer insight into and monitoring of educational achievement and graduate outcomes by the board of directors may be warranted.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance of the programme portfolio and the upgrading of facilities seems both logical and necessary. So does the investment in blended learning technologies and self-assessment to monitor and improve its use to foster an informed pedagogical focus. The PTE anticipates and responds well to the need for change. The new campus environment is evolving as building work is completed, but it is already a significant asset and adds value to both the student experience at Wellpark and the Prema Trust's activities at Kawai Purapura.</p> <p>There is ongoing engagement with sector groups. Engagement with Ngāti Whātua iwi is similarly ongoing and constructive. Academic leaders from Wellpark have also been involved in the formation of the World Naturopathic Federation.</p> <p>Resources are invested in staff development, and this also links to the research strategy. Although activity dipped with staff departures and the move of location, research has been occurring, is supported by management, and is embedded into the degree. Staff turnover has been an issue. Crucial to sustainability will be stabilising staffing, launching the newly developed and NZQA-approved programmes, and rebuilding student numbers.</p>
Conclusion:	There is a positive, ongoing, academic conversation and reflection on teaching effectiveness and all other aspects of the PTE's operation at Wellpark. In 2018 there were delays in reporting results, and communication with students at some points of the change process was weak.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance management at Wellpark is sound. The mechanisms for achieving or managing this are perhaps less tangible than might be expected. There is a possible overreliance on the principal's ongoing monitoring, and less of a structured or planned regime of compliance management. That said, processes for monitoring compliance include the risk assessment and management matrix used by governance; delegation to the principal for NZQA responsibilities, and delegation to the finance manager for TEC responsibilities; and the management team and academic board meetings which discuss these matters.</p> <p>Conformity with the NZQA-approved programmes is effectively overseen through the academic board. Examples include: Type 2 changes being NZQA approved as required; monitoring of authenticity of student work and grades; monitoring attendance and self-directed learning; responding to degree monitors' findings. Teaching hours and student contact time also appear well monitored and managed. The most recent TEC audit report identified only minor issues, which have been addressed.</p> <p>Wellpark College monitors and annually reviews compliance with the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016. There has been a change in staffing in this area of responsibility. The evaluators identified some dated information in the 'offer of place' letters and a gap in information in the student information handbook. Checks of student files raised no concerns, and English language requirements were met or exceeded by the five international students enrolled. International students approach Wellpark directly, so there is minimal exposure to agents and any associated risks.</p>
Conclusion:	Compliance management is sound, based on maintenance of all NZQA and TEC requirements. The mechanisms for achieving or managing this are perhaps less tangible or formally documented than might be expected. Strengthening Code of Practice oversight is needed.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Bachelor of Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine (Level 7)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>For the 2018 year, the course completion rate of 83 per cent for all students, averaged across all three years of the degree (95 per cent for the 10 Māori students, and 100 per cent for the two Pasifika students) met TEC requirements.</p> <p>The most recent NZQA degree monitoring report (2018) 'commended the principal and senior staff for their ongoing commitment and dedication to providing a high-quality degree programme in naturopathic and herbal medicine', and recommended self-monitoring status.</p> <p>The report also stated that Wellpark 'has a strategic plan for research and has established formal research links with the Australian Research Centre in Complementary and Integrative Medicine at the University of Technology Sydney, and also with Endeavour College of Natural Health in Australia'.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>The degree programme is being delivered well. The technical problems encountered with blended delivery have been largely resolved. The newly recruited programme leader (who is well advanced in his PhD research) and other new teaching staff will need time to embed and ensure that the planned and ongoing research activity is as useful to the programme as intended. The introduction of a clinical programme leader role is a notable advance, as is the co-location of all students on the one site from 2018.</p>

2.2 Focus area: Diploma of Yoga (Level 5)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	As stated under the key evaluation questions and Appendix 1, Table 2 below.
Conclusion:	The programme is unique (it is reportedly the only formal, government-funded yoga teaching diploma in the world), and provides a supportive context for those seeking to gain expertise in yoga to a level where they may teach others. As the programme will expire at the end of 2019, there is a focus on working with stakeholders and NZQA about the feasibility of developing a new, replacement qualification.

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 Wellpark College of Natural Therapies Limited:

- Reduce student withdrawals and staff turnover.
- Ensure that student workload and assessment submission timeframes are subject to ongoing monitoring and review.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with achievement data as well as the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016, to understand and use it according to the requirements of their role.
- Consider ways of getting better longitudinal information on graduate outcomes to evidence the value of the programmes.
- Consider whether there may be an opportunity to refocus or resize some components of self-assessment to ensure efficiency, sustainability and impact.
- Consider constructing a compliance management register to complement the existing risk management register.

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. Bachelor of Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine summary performance

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Course completion (all students) – student number in brackets	91% (64)	89% (66)	76% (71)	83% (70)
Course completion (Māori)	79% (9)	87% (9)	56% (16)	95% (10)
Course completion (Pasifika)	91% (3)	100% (3)	100% (4)	100% (2)
Course completion (under 25yo)	100% (25)	100% (23)	79% (28)	84% (22)
Course completion (international)	100% (4)	100% (3)	79% (3)	75% (4)
Qualification completion rate (all students)	64%	76%	89%	Not yet confirmed
Withdrawals/deferrals ⁶	3	10	1	4

Table 2. Diploma of Yoga summary performance

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Course completion (all students) – student number in brackets	98% (8)	98% (15)	80% (5)	88% (17)
Course completion (Māori) – student number in brackets	100% (4)	36% (5)	0 (1)	83% (3)
Course completion (Pasifika)	n/a	0 (2)	n/a	n/a
Course completion (under 25yo)	57% (5)	72% (7)	100% (2)	100% (3)
Course completion (international)	75% (2)	100% (5)	100% (1)	100% (2)
Qualification completion rate (all students)	74%	40%	80%	82%
Withdrawals/deferrals*	3	10	1	1

⁶ Wellpark states that withdrawals within the first '8 days' may have been included and some students may identify under more than one group, leading to double counting. Data source: Wellpark College student management system.

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 fraud⁷*
- *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.*

⁷ 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 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

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 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, 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 2016. 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). 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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz