



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Vet Nurse Plus Limited



Date of report: 15 September 2023

About Vet Nurse Plus Limited

Vet Nurse Plus offers boutique-style, personalised learning and one-on-one learner support at two Auckland campuses. The programmes prepare graduates for employment as veterinary nurses, with learners spending one day a week in veterinary clinics at level 5 and two days at level 6.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Unit 8 / 2 Bishop Dunn Place, Botany South, Auckland
Eligible to enrol intl students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 2022 – 88 students (85 equivalent full-time students); 14 Māori, six Pasifika and eight disabled students
Number of staff:	Six full-time and four part-time staff
TEO profile:	Vet Nurse Plus Limited
Last EER outcome:	In 2019, NZQA was Highly Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) [2490]; and New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6) [2491]
MoE number:	7841
NZQA reference:	C53507
Dates of Virtual EER visit:	25-27 July 2023

Summary of results

Vet Nurse Plus is meeting most student and stakeholder needs for veterinary nurse training. Learners gain practical experience in veterinary clinics that often leads to graduate employment. Strong connections with veterinary practitioners ensure the programme is current and relevant. The PTE collects comprehensive data which is used to understand achievement and student outcomes. This data could be further analysed to inform programme design, delivery and student support.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Most students achieve well, progressing from level 5 to level 6 and into employment. Feedback from employers confirms that graduates' skills and knowledge meet industry expectations.
- Further analysis of achievement data would provide insight into individual, cohort and whole-of-organisation student progress and opportunities for improvement.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Vet Nurse Plus uses feedback from students and other key stakeholders to make some improvements to the programme. More purposeful analysis of this valuable feedback would identify trends and inform decision-making around delivery, support and resources.
- Students learn in inclusive environments. The experienced teaching team has current industry knowledge and a good understanding of adult teaching and learning principles.
- An experienced board and effective small leadership team supports educational achievement and meets the strategic direction established by VetPartners Ltd, the parent company. An advisory board provides a direct connection to industry to maintain programme currency.
- Vet Nurse Plus is effectively managing its compliance obligations.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students gain relevant knowledge and practical skills that prepare them for work in the veterinary and animal care sectors.</p> <p>Course completion achievement overall is at or above the sector median, ranging from 83 to 100 per cent for 2019-22. Qualification rates for the same period range from 78-95 per cent for the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing and 72-85 per cent in the New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology.² Lower course and qualification achievement in 2022 was attributed to high withdrawals due to Covid-19 and associated health and mental health issues. There is no significant gap in parity for Māori and Pasifika students, and students with an identified disability achieve well.</p> <p>Vet Nurse Plus comprehensively monitors student achievement and withdrawal data. However, the PTE could further analyse results and withdrawals to identify targeted improvements to programme delivery and student support.</p> <p>Achievement data is underpinned by sound assessment and moderation practices.</p>
Conclusion:	Overall student achievement is strong, with good progression from level 5 leading to completion at level 6. A more systematic analysis of student progress and withdrawal data would strengthen self-assessment.

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

² Achievement data is included in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 1.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology and the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing deliver highly valued outcomes for students and stakeholders. Clinic placements provide real-world opportunities to demonstrate competence in a range of skills.</p> <p>Eighty-eight per cent of students progressed from level 5 to level 6 during 2019-22. Very high numbers of graduates (91 per cent) from 2019-22 gained employment within six months of graduating with the New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing.</p> <p>Clinic placement partners value the students as members of their teams. Placements also enable the clinic to recruit suitable veterinary nurses directly from the programme. There was a high level of agreement among employers that they would continue to employ Vet Nurse Plus graduates, reflecting confidence in the programme delivery and outcomes.</p> <p>The key stakeholder, VetPartners, sets the PTE's strategic goal: to provide quality veterinary nurses to meet high employment demand in their clinics and the wider veterinary sector. This organisational relationship prioritises alignment of Vet Nurse Plus programmes with veterinary clinic needs.</p>
Conclusion:	The most important needs of Vet Nurse Plus partner clinics, the veterinary sector and students are well met through ongoing engagement with a relevant, practical programme. Systematic feedback processes provide confidence that courses are aligned with current veterinary practice and that graduates are work-ready.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Programmes are designed for students who want to enter the animal care and veterinary workforce. Students work in clinics from early in their level 5 study and apply theory and practical skills for more than 650 clinical hours within the programme. Clinical co-ordinators support students in the clinic, and monitor student progress through regular communication with veterinary clinic staff. Advisory board³ meetings inform programme improvement and resourcing to maintain currency with industry needs.</p> <p>Tutors are experienced veterinarians or veterinary nurses. All have adult education and training qualifications or are engaged in current study. Tutors share their knowledge, experiences and resources and team-teach, which enhances their teaching practice and delivery, and supports consistency across delivery sites.</p> <p>Programme review is ongoing and enables the PTE to make improvements to meet emerging needs as identified in feedback gathered systematically from students, staff, partner clinics and employers. An example of this is the introduction of a drug calculations support station and a scheduling change so that animal handling hours are covered prior to the first clinic placement to better prepare the students.</p> <p>Assessments include written assessments, portfolios and case studies, which are peer-marked to ensure consistency across sites. The markers use software to check academic integrity where appropriate. Task books and practical logbooks for clinic placements incorporate observations and feedback from clinic staff to attest to student competency in practical activities.</p>

³ Chaired by the Vet Nurse Plus general manager, membership comprises: two practising veterinarians, one practising veterinary nurse, two Vet Nurse Plus clinic co-ordinators. The Vet Nurse Plus operations manager is in attendance.

	High rates of student satisfaction are evident in course evaluations undertaken at the end of each semester. Average satisfaction scores range from 8.4-9.5 for 2019-22. This feedback is used to understand course delivery and any variation across sites.
Conclusion:	Relevant, practical programmes meet the needs of students and employers. Student and stakeholder feedback is used effectively to assure the quality and utility of programmes and to identify required improvements.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>A thorough interview and enrolment process provides clear information about study at Vet Nurse Plus and requires students to observe in a veterinary clinic for three days prior to starting their programme. Literacy and numeracy skills are assessed during orientation to identify potential support needs for individual students. A tutor with expertise in dyslexia and other learning disabilities is available to provide specialised support.</p> <p>Academic and pastoral support is mainly managed using tutors assigned to provide one-to-one support to students in scheduled meetings. Students felt supported by this approach and noted that it helps them to succeed. Students provide formal and informal feedback and are comfortable speaking to tutors or management staff about any concerns or issues.</p> <p>Tutors also offer just-in-time support through formative and summative assessment feedback, and responsive academic support including additional practical lab sessions where a need is identified.</p> <p>A more targeted and systematic approach to learner support may prove to be more effective and sustainable as Vet Nurse Plus continues to grow, using what is known about challenging points in the programmes such as first placement. This activity would be informed by a more</p>

	<p>comprehensive self-review of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Students) Code of Practice.</p> <p>Vet Nurse Plus has identified the need for increased support for Māori and Pasifika. The PTE has tried to attract higher numbers of Māori and Pasifika students, and relationships are currently being developed with local marae. These initiatives are at an early stage. They should be continued, along with an intentional approach to increase the cultural competence of staff and students.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Vet Nurse Plus provides a supportive learning environment for its students based on strong peer and staff-student relationships. Information about student progress could be further analysed and used to identify targeted approaches to ensure learner support is effective as Vet Nurse Plus grows.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Strong connections between Vet Nurse Plus and its owner, VetPartners NZ Ltd, provide a clear purpose and strategic direction, along with support from specialised operational functions like human resource management and administrative services. VetPartners Ltd also provides veterinary expertise and employment opportunities through links with all VetPartners veterinary clinics. Board member experience includes veterinary practice, governance and strategy development.</p> <p>The Vet Nurse Plus general manager is also group general manager at VetPartners NZ and a board director. This connection facilitates clear communication and ensures matters of importance are shared with Vet Nurse Plus to inform planning and programme delivery.</p> <p>Operational leadership is strong, and the Vet Nurse Plus operations manager engages with external agencies including NZQA and Muka Tangata (workforce development council) to provide input into qualification development. Productive relationships are also maintained</p>

	<p>with other providers who offer the qualification through collaborative external moderation and professional development.</p> <p>Recruitment and development of staff is effective, leading to supportive team cultures at the Botany and Albany sites. Resources are appropriate and equipment supports student and clinic expectations. The general manager recently met with individual tutors to discuss issues or concerns. Introducing this as a regular process would provide systematic feedback on the effectiveness of management.</p> <p>Student numbers are growing, and a review of the current model of self-assessment is needed to ensure effective self-assessment is embedded throughout the organisation. Key to this is more purposeful use of currently available data to identify improvements and monitor the impact of improvements on educational performance.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Vet Nurse Plus leadership, staff and resources effectively support strong educational achievement. The PTE produces graduates who contribute to providing quality veterinary services in New Zealand. Organisational self-assessment needs to be strengthened to maintain strong educational performance as Vet Nurse Plus continues its planned growth.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The operations manager manages the PTE's important compliance accountabilities, with oversight by the general manager and reporting to the board.</p> <p>Appropriate processes for managing compliance responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of legislative requirements relating to animal welfare and ethics through a memorandum of understanding with the University of Auckland animal ethics committee. • Regular reporting to the Ministry for Primary Industries. • Detailed health and safety reporting to the board. • Police vetting, and fitness-to-practice definitions. • Tertiary Education Commission reporting requirements. • Ongoing review and documentation of assessment and moderation practices. • Timely submission of attestations to NZQA. • Documentation and review of organisational policies and procedures.
Conclusion:	<p>Vet Nurse Plus has a good understanding of its important compliance accountabilities and is managing these effectively.</p> <p>Responsibility for compliance is shared across two management roles, with reporting to, and oversight from the board.</p>

Focus areas

2.1 New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5) [2490]

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6) [2491]

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good

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 Vet Nurse Plus Limited:

- Review the current self-assessment model to:
 - Ensure data is used effectively throughout the organisation to understand and support student achievement.
 - Identify and implement strategies to improve student achievement.
 - Include staff at all levels of the organisation in self-review activities including the Code self-review.
 - Monitor the impact of improvements on educational outcomes and performance.
- Develop staff capability to use data effectively to understand and guide the business in all aspects of operations, and at all levels.
- Identify and implement steps needed to develop cultural competency within the organisation while enhancing Māori and Pasifika participation and achievement.
- Investigate ways to enhance learner support processes to implement targeted and systematic interventions that are scalable as Vet Nurse Plus grows.

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. New Zealand Certificate in Animal Technology (Level 5)

Year	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Completed	Progressed to L6	Employed	CC rate	QC rate
2019	65	10	55	43	11	85%	75%
2020	51	5	46	40	14	90%	82%
2021	54	5	49	40	15	91%	85%
2022	53	9	44	34	15	83%	72%
2023	50	8	-	-	-	84%	

Table 2. New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Level 6)

Year	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Completed	Employed	CC rate	QC rate
2019	32	3	29	24	91%	84%
2020	42	4	38	33	90%	81%
2021	42	0	42	35	100%	95%
2022	40	5	35	35	88%	78%
2023	38	0	-	-	100%	-

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 fraud⁴*
- *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.*

⁴ 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 2022, 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 excluding universities, and*
- maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 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, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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/>.

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