

Farm4Life – inspiring a new generation and making farming attractive

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Introduction

Farm 4 Life is a visionary online education platform created by Tangaroa Walker that showcases farming, in particular dairy farming, to people who might otherwise not consider a farming career or who are employed on a farm and are looking to upskill or reskill.

By leveraging digital technology and engaging viewers with free, modern, and entertaining content, Farm 4 Life is reaching tens of thousands of people within New Zealand and around the world. In doing so, Tangaroa is inspiring a new generation of farmers and portraying farming as an attractive career option.

This report looks at how Farm 4 Life is achieving its vision and how learners, employers, and the wider education system can benefit by engaging with the programme. It also considers elements of Farm 4 Life's delivery model against the Food and Fibre Vocational Excellence Framework.

Creating a vision for the next generation of farmers

The dairy industry, like many others, is struggling to attract and retain new workers. An aging workforce and the impact of closed borders mean the industry needs to attract and hold onto workers, especially younger workers to sustain its workforce and grow. To do this, the industry must find new, innovative, and engaging methods that appeal to young people in particular. The Farm 4 Life programme is designed to achieve just this but in a way which also accommodates the older learner.

Having successfully run a 500-cow dairy farm and amassed a substantial social media following, Tangaroa is a living example that if you work hard and keep at it you can achieve anything. More than that, you can help and inspire others to do the same.

In 2012 Tangaroa won the inaugural Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer award. This award led to him travelling the country talking to young people about the dairy industry. He quickly realised however, that this method of attracting young people into farming was limited. People would be inspired for a short time then move on, back to exploring vocations they were more familiar with.

Driven by the desire to still reach out and inspire young people, Tangaroa created, via social media, farming videos, showcasing the day-to-day reality of dairy farming. From there, Farm 4 Life has evolved.

Tangaroa now has a social media following of over 250,000 followers across multiple social media platforms, a proven influencer. He and business partner John Schol have subsequently developed and launched the Farm 4 Life HUB.

Farm 4 Life HUB is an application-based online learning environment that anyone can access regardless of their situation. The aim is to bring best practice farming methods to anyone, anywhere who has the interest and motivation to learn and provide people with the experience they need before they need it.

Starting during the 2020 lockdown, Tangaroa and John mapped out a blueprint and software wireframe for their online content over a six-month period. The result is a production plan for 6,500 videos over the next few years that covers not just dairy farming but all aspects of farming, delivering the skills and knowledge young people need to get started in the industry using an innovative online platform.

The learning platform for the Farm 4 Life HUB has different features designed to meet the needs of the learner and/or employer/tutor. Examples include:

- the production of short form courses on an “as needs basis”
- employers/tutors to monitor employee’s/students’ progress
- employers/tutors to drag and drop already existing video content that aligns with upcoming farm events/curriculum
- the use of evaluation and verification mechanisms to allow for the award of qualifications
- the merging of HUB content to align with existing industry qualifications.

Tangaroa and John have developed the HUB to be learner friendly and interesting as well as flexible enough to meet the demands of work and employers. The primary objective, however, is keeping people engaged in learning.

So, how do you make farming attractive?

It is the delivery of the content that makes Farm 4 Life HUB unique and ‘cool’ for younger people. It uses lots of videos and grassroots humour.

Tangaroa is the front man for the HUB, and many of its videos. His delivery style is distinctively Kiwi with a relaxed mix of humour and language making him instantly relatable to his audience. He delivers information in a way that makes it easy for people to understand what it is they need to do and why, while still following industry best practice.

It isn’t only about farming; Tangaroa is open about his wider life and early struggles. In 2021 he wrote a book, *Farm for Life: Mahi, Mana and Life on the Land*¹ that details his own life and work journey. Through his videos we also get a glimpse into his family life. These positive interactions with his whanau; his wife and children show him as a role model for more than just how to farm – they’re also about whanau, parenting, lifestyle, and the fruits of his success in the industry in terms of the lifestyle he leads.

His ability to connect to people has also led to him advocating for better mental health interventions for farmers and young people. Through his videos and social media, he discusses and normalises conversations about mental health and the stresses and challenges many are facing day to day. Equally, he provides a glimpse into the rewards and lifestyle advantages of his chosen pathway that can provide insight and inspiration to young people to imagine “that could be me one day”.

It is this relatability that is key to the success of Farm 4 Life – as such, Tangaroa himself is the ‘secret sauce’ that can bring together Farm 4 Life ambassadors and industry experts to co-create best practice video content. This programme does not work without Tangaroa as its star. There is some risk associated with Tangaroa as the ‘star’, this risk is addressed further in this paper.

It’s worth noting that in the age of social media, Farm 4 Life is nationally scalable, since the ability to distribute digital content to anyone with a device and an internet connection means Farm 4 Life is instantly scalable.

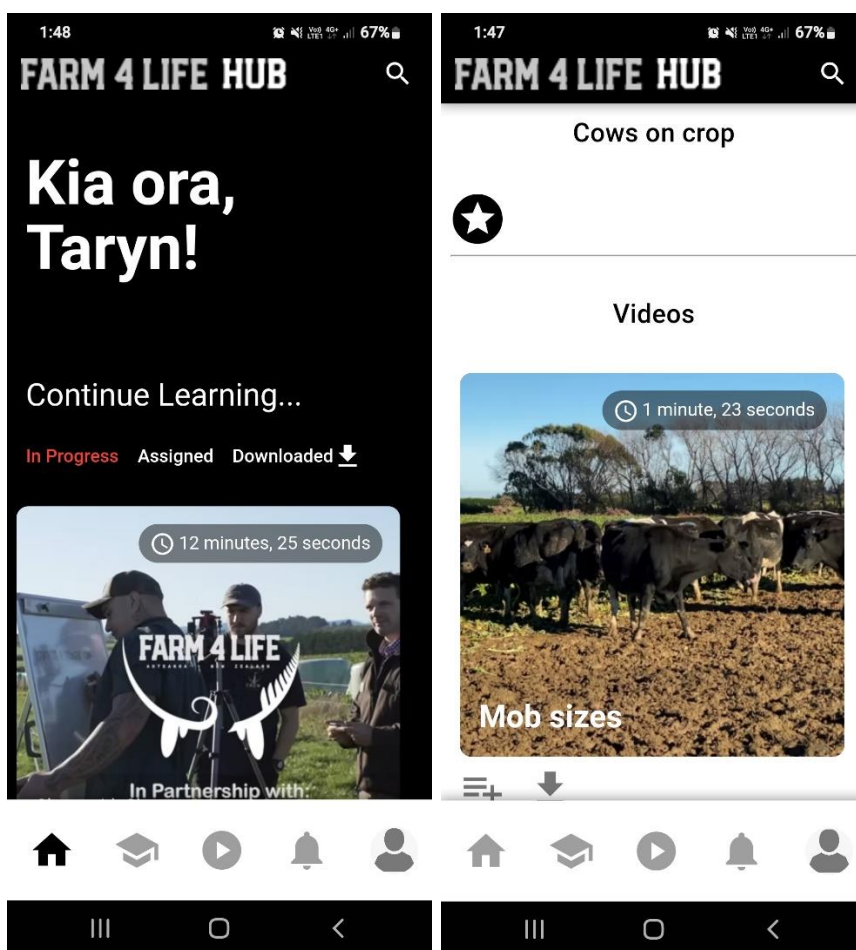
Tangaroa’s mission is to make farming exciting and accessible to as many people as possible while meeting real time industry needs. Through his own journey he understands that these types of resources are desperately needed to reach people like him who struggle to learn via traditional means. The Farm 4 Life model teaches young people (and anyone with an interest) the critical skills and knowledge they need to get started and succeed in the farming industry in a way that engages them in that learning.

¹ Walker, Tangaroa. *Farm 4 Life: Mahi, Mana and Life on the Land*. Penguin Group (NZ), 2021.

How to use the HUB App

The HUB App (founded in 2020) is slick, intuitive, and attractively designed. It is easy to use and well produced with a video library that is continually growing. There are approximately 1200 videos on the HUB to date, with more to come and it has attracted a total of 600 subscribers in its first 18 months as a paid subscription model. Since releasing the App and moving to a Freemium model in July 2022 (see Subscription and cost, p5 below), their user sign up has exploded and are now approaching 4000.

To make it easy to navigate, the HUB is split into modules each covering a particular topic. Topics include how to use farming equipment and machinery, how to work with animals, health and safety, people and well-being and back office. While these videos mainly feature Tangaroa, he also includes experts from the industry.



The user experience

Each participant has their own user profile which lists all the modules they or their employees will be working through. These can be customised to suit individual needs, for example upcoming seasonal work or areas where the participant needs upskilling.

Participants then work through each topic within the module. Following each 'how to' video there is a short quiz that checks the participants understanding. This is detailed in the participants learning library so that progress can be tracked by the individual (and their employer if part of work-related learning).

The HUB also allows for the reinforcement of learning, by providing content 'on demand'. For example, if a participant happens to be out on a job and isn't sure how to complete an activity, they can quickly search for that topic and watch/rewatch the video. This means they don't have to stop and ask anyone, they can just watch/rewatch the video and get on with the job.

Subscription and cost

The HUB currently has two subscription options – the Freemium option for individuals and the Premium option for one or more people employed on a single farm.

The Freemium option, as the name suggests, is free to anyone who wants to subscribe. By signing up, participants get access to all the videos, lessons, quizzes, and everything else in the HUB, including membership to a Facebook group for added peer support. It is primarily through this subscription model that Farm 4 Life aims to attract the majority of its participants. Their aim is to have their first 5000 subscribers to the HUB App by 30 September 2022.

The Premium option is geared towards employees and costs \$20 per month for each participant. The employer has access to further videos such as leadership tutorials and additional functionality, for example, they can select specific videos to help upskill their employees and support their learning and development. Employers can then track when these videos have been viewed.

Learning support is available in both Apps with future support in development. Currently participants can message Farm 4 Life with any questions, and they will be supported as necessary across both Apps. Future support will be integrated into both the freemium and premium models.

Also in development are automated learning tools for both the Freemium and Premium users.

The Freemium model will get Dal (Daily Automated Learning) - a fictional character that will deliver a suggested video to view on a frequency basis decided by the user.

The Premium user will get Sal (Seasonal Automated Learning) - a fictional character that will deliver videos to employees based on the farming year.

Bespoke and future HUBs

Farm 4 Life features several different App interfaces depending on individual or team needs. Some are currently available, such as the HUB and others are planned for future offerings.

HUB elements currently available include:

- HUB Starter – 150 introductory videos aimed at attracting anyone to farming, including some specifically aimed at engaging school-aged learners and Māori and Pasifika.
- HUB Induction – introductory videos to give individuals a taste of what working on a farm looks like in the first 90 days. This aims to support the industry with retaining workers and provides a realistic view of what farming involves.
- HUB School and HUB Scholar – these allow for both a student-led, and tutor-led view. These HUBs are currently being used by, free of cost, students studying with Telford and students in two Manawatu high schools.

Future development plans include HUB industry short courses – this will be Farm 4 Life's bespoke offerings to organisations. It will offer a more flexible option allowing for the creation of one off or on-going courses using both existing and custom-made videos.

Currently in development are additional sections that will contain:

- Induction videos for overseas workers immigrating to New Zealand, and
- Mātauranga Māori values and how they can be applied in modern farming practices

They are also thinking about how to address literacy and numeracy issues within the industry by creating:

- Text to voice and voice to text. This will form part of their educational offering to help support learners who struggle with reading and writing, and
- The creation of interactive literacy and numeracy learning modules to help support the large number of farm workers with low literacy and numeracy skills.

Farm 4 Life within the formal education system

Farm 4 Life and Telford pilot programme

While Farm 4 Life provides training videos there is no accredited qualification specifically attached to the programme. Therefore, to give farm workers the opportunity to gain a qualification while on the job Farm 4 Life teamed up with Telford, Southern Institute of Technology's agricultural campus.

The pilot programme is currently underway and uses videos from Farm 4 Life matched against the Certificate in Farming Systems and Equipment (Level 3) Dairy strand. This means 50 students working on dairy farms can gain a qualification while they work.

Students are supported through the programme by tutors and a programme manager who assist with any issues or questions that arise.

Mapping to a nationally recognised tertiary qualification provides legitimacy for the Farm 4 Life programme while providing an exemplar for a digital delivery innovation supporting the formal system. Findings from the pilot could potentially inform other opportunities for Farm 4 Life within the wider tertiary system, including through the emerging Te Pūkenga network of provision.

Manawatu secondary school pilot programme

Farm 4 Life is already considering ways to connect its model of learning to the compulsory sector to inspire school students to be exposed to and think about a career in farming.

Working with The New Zealand Rural Games Trust and Westpac Agri Futures, Farm 4 Life has helped launch a pilot programme for two Manawatu schools, Feilding High School, and Palmerston North Boys High School. Funding from the Ministry of Primary Industries funded the production of the videos and the students used HUB Scholar, making the programme free to the schools.

The students have access to the HUB to support their learning while also working with Agri-teachers to learn how to use farming equipment. The pilot programme is one year long, and students work towards achieving NCEA level 1 and 2 credits. At the end of the year the students showcase what they've learnt and are given the opportunity to meet other food and fibre experts.

This is an example of how Farm 4 Life can be used by secondary schools to open up farming opportunities to young people and give them a taste of what a career in farming could be like.

Farm 4 Life at a national level

These types of pilots provide a blueprint and considerable potential for how food and fibre can be promoted within the formal system. There is a potential for Farm 4 Life to work alongside the Ministry of Education to develop more of these types of programmes.

There is an opportunity for the Ministry to include Farm 4 Life videos and platform across the schooling sector to support curriculum delivery, especially considering there is a nationwide shortage of food and fibre teachers. Farm 4 Life could help fill a learning resource gap, not just as a careers resource, but to underpin mainstream curriculum delivery.

A food and fibre ‘celebrity’ - the next ‘Nano Girl’?

Tangaroa’s personality and delivery style are what make Farm 4 Life such a successful model. He understands how to engage with his audience and can breakdown skills and knowledge so that it’s easily understandable and accessible.

Being able to talk to young people and inspire them is a talent. Having Tangaroa as a food and fibre ‘celebrity’ would help promote the industry to the next generation and hopefully attract more people into farming. Using his style, Tangaroa could do for food and fibre education what Michelle Dickinson i.e., Nano Girl² has done for STEM education.

However, having Tangaroa as the face of Farm 4 Life is a potential risk to the programme. If Tangaroa leaves as the front man for Farm 4 Life then the question becomes, can the programme continue? The risk of this can somewhat be mitigated by the sheer number of videos available and for the most part the information should remain viable over time. It may be necessary for updates to be made as new and improved farming methods come into practice. However, many of the tutorials are already hosted by industry experts and other Farm 4 Life ambassadors so if Tangaroa were to leave, there is already a precedent for other people to carry-on producing content for Farm 4 Life.

Reviewing Farm 4 Life against the Food and Fibre Vocational Excellence Framework

Shortly after establishment, the Food and Fibre Centre of Excellence (FFCoVE) undertook a ‘Taking Stock’ Project which included producing a Vocational Excellence Framework. Across a series of processes and programmes underpinning vocational education, the Excellence Framework provides a benchmark for the sector and providers to assess elements of their delivery model and strive for excellence in design and delivering Vocational Education and Training (VET) services.

The development of the Framework was based on the results of an international best practice literature review, and the rubrics then validated with Aotearoa New Zealand industry and VET providers.

We have applied this Framework to the Farm 4 Life programme and have focused on five rubrics³ we think are most relevant to Farm 4 Life. These rubrics are:

- Work-based learning
- Digital distance learning
- Under served learners
- Adult learners and career changes
- Ākonga Māori

The Framework provides a reference for excellence in the VET system however, it is not a precise evaluation tool. Because Farm 4 Life delivers education content but isn’t a registered education provider it doesn’t fit precisely into the Framework and its rubrics in particular the quality and compliance-based measures. The results of the Framework evaluation therefore provide an indication of excellence only as opposed to a definitive evaluation of excellence. It may also be useful for Farm 4 Life to use the Framework as a self-evaluation tool if they wish to do so.

² Nano Girl is the stage name for scientist and educator Dr Michelle Dickinson. Dr Dickinson uses live storytelling combined with immersive science experiments to promote STEM subjects and educate young people.

³Appendix One contains the Excellence Framework and relevant rubrics.

Our review of Farm 4 Life against the Framework found a majority of Good and Excellence ratings. This programme rates highly in work-based learning, digital distance learning, adult learners and career changers and Ākonga Māori rubrics.

- For the digital distance learning rubric, the Farm 4 Life HUB performs well against Access and Systems attributes. It can remove barriers to participation by increasing access and opportunity to learn, thereby leading to better outcomes. It provides a user-friendly learning environment, adapting its content and design, and can create opportunities to reflect on lessons and share practices.
- For the work-based learning rubric it measures well against the Access, Skills and Competencies and Innovation attributes. It provides an opportunity for employers and employees to access wider learning opportunities, it is flexible, and enhances career progression leading to full time permanent employment for the learner.
- For the Adult and Career Changers rubric, Farm 4 Life measures well against Participation and Systems. It provides flexibility and discrete learning and can be done in modules while recognizing prior experience and learning.
- In terms of Ākonga Māori Farm 4 Life fits mostly into the good category across all indicators. Having Tangaroa as the presenter provides Māori with a role model and someone who inherently understands their needs, values and worldview. Farm 4 Life are also having preliminary discussions with several Iwi with the view of developing bespoke courses aimed specifically at Māori and Pasifika students. They are also developing a dedicated section to Mātauranga Māori values and how they can be related back to and incorporated into modern farming practices. Once these are initiatives are in place Farm 4 Life will likely rate as Excellent across this rubric.

Where Farm 4 Life rates as acceptable is in areas more geared towards compliance, for example quality assurance practices. They have indicated that they intend to bring themselves in line with these compliance requirements as they partner more and more with registered providers. They do note however, that they intend to continue to “challenge the limiting nature of the status quo requirements” for example government required compliance, where it doesn’t align with the intent of their programme.

Pastoral care and literacy and numeracy

Pastoral care support and literacy and numeracy are important indicators of excellence and is imbedded across the Framework rubrics. Farm 4 Life has some mechanisms in place to meet these indicators but for the most part these are still being developed and integrated into the models.

Support and pastoral care: subscribing to the app gives you access to a Facebook support group and there is a messaging function as part of the website with options to message Farm 4 Life with questions. Other forms of support and pastoral care are in development and will be available to learners in the future, for example further Facebook based community support pages which will include moderators and access to industry experts that can answer any questions.

Literacy and numeracy: Farm 4 Life is designed for those learners that find reading and writing difficult. The current video-based model provides a mechanism for those learners to gain knowledge and skills through listening and watching and application on the job. It doesn’t yet have measures in place to identify literacy and numeracy needs or means to improve them, however they recognize that this is a significant issue for the farming industry. Farm 4 Life is currently exploring technology-based solutions to support literacy and numeracy as part of their future development plans.

What are the opportunities for the sector?

Overall, Tangaroa and his Farm 4 Life model is well planned and executed, and in many ways, is ahead of what little competition exists. We are left thinking much less about how Farm 4 Life can fit with the formal education system, as much as how much the formal education system needs to do to keep up with the likes of Farm 4 Life. Having said that, clear possibilities to augment formal delivery using Farm 4 Life (or Farm 4 Life-like) material could be developed.

250,000 followers is an impressive number and the reasons Tangaroa (and John) has achieved that following are also clear. Farm 4 Life has a clear business plan and considerable ambition to further develop the HUB as well as the ability to generate aspiration, skills and wider wellbeing. John and Tangaroa have a clear vision and understanding of this product and its value and potential. Furthermore, there are laudable and achievable plans for how Farm 4 Life can showcase farming as an awesome career option, while challenging how learning can be done better across the farming industry.

Again, we hope that new delivery and resourcing models in the reformed vocational system can be brought to bear on programmes that can offer this much change for producing significant skills and cultural outcomes. We see the opportunity for the VET system is to:

1. adapt to better leverage the potential of Farm 4 Life, and/or
2. work with Farm 4 Life (with appropriate capital investment) to offer more functionality to the VET system.

We have identified further opportunities for the formal system to utilise and benefit from what Tangaroa and John have created. These are outlined below.

Benefits in linking Farm4Life with the formal education system and industry needs

There are certainly benefits in expanding Farm 4 Life further into the formal education system by partnering with government agencies and continuing to be involved in the schooling sector. The Telford and Manawatu pilot programmes show that Farm 4 Life is already engaged with the formal sector and there is potential to do more. They have already mapped some of their content to formal tertiary qualifications and some of their videos to NCEA levels 1 and 2 credits. Linking further to the New Zealand curriculum via the Ministry of Education and/or tertiary qualifications via further tertiary providers, would afford Farm 4 Life some formal legitimacy.

For industry, Farm 4 Life could play a role in attracting and retaining people in food and fibre. If the industry (and government) is serious about how to safeguard and grow this work force, then engaging with these types of programmes is key. By meeting a new generation where their learning needs are, Farm 4 Life can inspire and encourage more people choose a career in farming and grow the industry's capability and appeal.

Given the programmes flexibility and portability (i.e., it can be accessed anywhere at any time) Farm 4 Life can be used by farmers and employees in real time while on the job. It means those new to the industry have a tutor in their pocket and with them out on the farm. Employees don't have to leave the farm to go on courses, and learning can be done and reinforced using practical and update to date information. It can also assist farmers who have been in the job for years by supporting them to upskill or reskill.

Conclusion

Farm 4 Life is a prime example of how an innovative solution can inspire a new way of thinking about and delivering learning for an industry. Driven by the desire to grow better, more skilful, and capable farmers Farm 4 Life has developed a model that, if adopted by the sector formally, could see more workers – especially young people – attracted and retained in the industry.

The Apps have been designed to engage learners and support knowledge and skill acquisition while being simple to use and convenient to access. Tangaroa's delivery means learners are more likely to want to open the App and enjoy the learning experience; it is his personality and style that makes the programme engaging to be part of.

When compared against the Vocational Education Excellence Framework, Farm 4 Life performs reasonably well against the identified rubrics. However, there is some room for improvement.

We recommend to the Food and Fibre CoVE that Farm 4 Life:

- Consider using the Excellence Framework as a self-evaluation tool to help identify any gaps or improvements to its programme.
- Consider other opportunities for Farm 4 Life within the wider tertiary system, including the Te Pūkenga network of provision.
- Continue to develop pastoral care, literacy and numeracy and other support options for learners.
- Consider partnering with the Ministry of Education to promote Farm 4 Life and Tangaroa as a face of food and fibre education in New Zealand with a view to integrating relevant content into the curriculum to support food and fibre education.

These suggestions however do not take away from the vision Tangaroa and his team have set out to do.

The programme caters for those learners who don't find traditional forms of education easy to navigate or access. It also supports farmers and employees in working together on developing the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully operate in a farming environment. In doing this, Farm 4 Life could play a key part in attracting and keeping people in the farming industry.

The opportunity for the sector therefore is to work with Farm 4 Life around legitimising how the programme can connect more to the formal system and potentially how to utilize Tangaroa as a food and fibre celebrity and face of farming education in New Zealand. Ultimately this could lead to better promotion of farming in general – and dairy farming in particular – as an exciting and attractive industry where worker's skills and knowledge are developed providing career pathways that lead to improved outcomes for all.

Appendix One: The Food and Fibre Vocational Excellence Framework

The following tables include the rubrics used to measure Farm 4 Life programme against the Excellence Framework.

For more information on the Taking Stock Literature Review please refer to the Food and Fibre CoVE website:

<https://foodandfibrecove.nz/knowledgebase/ffcove-kb/vocational-education/taking-stock-literature-review/>

Work-based Learning

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Participation Work-based learning encourages participation from employees and placement students by addressing barriers, particularly amongst underserved learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solutions to participation barriers are sought, when a barrier is identified (e.g., academic opportunities to upskill in numeracy and literacy). Pastoral care is provided to nurture confidence and connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to participation are monitored by employer and training advisors. Employer and training advisors are highly skilled in pastoral care. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to participation are actively addressed by employer and training advisors (e.g., prior learning is assessed for tailored offering; hybrid offerings available across learning institutions to suit learners' circumstances). Employer and training advisors are particularly skills in pastoral care for underserved learners.
Access Employers are committed to upskilling employees and actively facilitate work-based learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees have opportunity to access wider learning opportunities (e.g., digital resources). 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes are facilitated through the employer and supported by external training advisors. Programmes are flexible to meet learners' circumstances. Programmes are assessed using quality assurance processes. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes are actively facilitated through employer and supported by external training advisors. Partners with external training advisors.
Skills and competencies Work-based learning develops technical competency, wider employability, career progression, and industry permeability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees develop technical competency aligned with on-the-job tasks. Programme aligns with minimum standards of practice. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees achieve quality assured and industry recognised credentials. Employees upskill in soft skills. 	<i>As for Good, plus.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee career progression enhances industry permeability.

Innovation Work-based learning responds to evolving industry and social needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes keep up with technological industry advancements. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes are responsive to evolving needs of the region or industry (e.g., appropriate technologies are utilised for assessment). 	<i>As for Good, plus.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes evolve in the way they are structured to meet the changing needs of the region or industry (e.g., micro-credentials are used, short courses provided to meet immediate needs of a region and upskill learners)
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Digital and Distance Learning

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Participation Digital solutions open up opportunities for pastoral care, connecting learners to learners, and learners to educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral care is provided as required by learners. Learning Management Systems (LMS) connect learners to course content and other learners (e.g., blogs, forums, chats) and educators. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral care to support digital and distance learning is provided through offline interactions (e.g., phone calls to address technology issues). Digital solutions enable independent, peer-to-peer connection with particular consideration to underserved learners. Appropriate digital solutions, instructions for how to implement them, and opportunities for upskilling are available to educators. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital solutions enable a learning support ecosystem (e.g., network distributed learning enabling active connections from learner to learner, and learner to educator).
Access Digital and distance learning is an accessible delivery mode, which can remove time and replace barriers to participation, increasing access to opportunity and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and distance learning, where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports onsite learning or is offered as single mode learning. Is accessible through common digital and mobile technologies, where appropriate. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and distance learning, where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports and compliments onsite learning as part of a blended programme (e.g., pushing content out to learners or encouraging sharing between peers). Is accessible through common digital and mobile technologies (e.g., mobile phones or laptops). 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and distance learning, where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is fully flexible with onsite learning as part of a blended programme. Utilises assistive technology for eligible learners.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides digital devices and connectivity to eligible learners. 	
<p>Systems Digital solutions maintain or enhance learner outcomes, whilst protecting their rights to privacy and confidentiality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secure, reliable, verifiable and user-friendly learning environment is provided. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and instructional design is adapted to suit digital platforms, maintaining or enhancing learner outcomes. • Digital technologies, where appropriate, are used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support assessment requirements (e.g., evidence of learning, point in time assessments, e-portfolios). ○ Create opportunities to capture and reflect on lessons and share practices. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological advances that enhance outcomes are communicated and shared throughout the sector (e.g., simulation to replicate real world circumstances).

Underserved Learners

Underserved learners includes all learners that currently experience inequitable outcomes including, but not exhaustively, Māori, Pacific, neurodiverse, physically disabled, learners with low literacy and numeracy; Examples of local and representative groups and organisations here include iwi, industry and employers.

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
<p>Access There is equity of access to learning programmes; time and location barriers are removed; the needs of diverse, underserved learners have been listened to, understood and acted upon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System builds towards equity of access based on targets where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tools and actions have been put in place to address barriers to enrolment (e.g., support to complete forms, provision for remedial foundation skills in numeracy and literacy, etc.). 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System consults with learners, local and representative groups and organisations to improve equity of access where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barriers to enrolments are reduced. ○ Targets are community influenced. ○ Modes of delivery are flexible to meet the needs of the learner. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System integrates input from learners, local and representative groups and organisations to achieve equity of access where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barriers to enrolment are consistently overcome. ○ Modes of delivery are fully flexible and can adapt to meet the needs of the learner.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alternate modes of delivery are available to meet the needs of the learner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The learner pathways for groups of 'like' learners are considered in programme development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programmes are developed to be learner-centric and customised to learners' needs.
<p>Participation There is equity in the opportunity of participation; the needs of diverse, underserved learners have been listened to, understood and acted upon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tools and actions have been put in place to build towards parity of participation considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barriers to learning (e.g., financial support, transport, cost of living, using assisted technologies, etc). ○ Learners' needs (e.g., cultural, physical, social, neurological). 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools and actions have been developed through consultation with learners, local and representative groups and organisations. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools and actions are actively developed and reviewed to build towards parity of participation with learners, local and representative groups, and organisations. • Connections between 'like' learners are actively facilitated.
<p>Systems Curriculum and learning environment is responsive to the needs of different underserved learner segments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers reflect on current practice and put in place tools to close the outcomes gap. • Poor quality practices in institutions or workplaces are identified. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers demonstrate progress in reducing the outcomes gap. • Learners, local and representative groups and organisations are consulted on programme design and delivery. • Outcomes are flexible and consistent with regional and national expectations. • Educators are equipped and capable to deliver for all learners' needs. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers close the outcomes gap; there is parity in outcomes between underserved learners and all other learners. • Poor quality practices in institutions or workplaces are monitored and addressed. • Learners, local and representative groups and organisations input into programme design and delivery. • Learning materials, resources and curriculum are culturally relevant and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous learning experience is considered when developing individual learner pathways. 	tailored to meet the intersectional needs of learners.
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Adult Learners and Career Changers

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Participation Acknowledges demand amongst adult learners and career changers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms exist for adult learners and career changers to participate in learning. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult learners and career changers have equal opportunities to participate in learning. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to participation are mitigated (e.g., cost flexibility, learners' life-stage needs, opportunity cost of participation is minimised). • Employers recognise and nurture skill potential in employees.
Access Modes of delivery and individual learning plans cater to the specific access needs of adult learners and career changers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible modes of study and support are available to accommodate different learners' needs. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual learning plans are tailored to the needs and circumstances of adult learners and career changers (e.g., prior learning is recognised, transitional support is available for learners with limited prior academic or employment experience). 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully flexible modes of study and support are available.
Systems Programme design is flexible and adapted to suit adult learners and career changer needs and acknowledge prior experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and discrete learning is available (e.g., modular bitesize courses). 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, discrete and stackable learning is available such as modular bitesize courses that can be aggregated into larger skills packages (e.g., micro-credentials stack to become full qualifications). • Individual skills are recognised (e.g., badging framework). 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior learning and experience is recognised (e.g., connections are made and recognised between formal, non-formal and informal education systems).

Ākonga Māori (under development)

Attributes	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
<p>Systems Systems led change for Māori by Māori delivers exceptional learning experiences and aspired to learning outcomes through responsive practices and relevant provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider is aware of need to improve practices and provision to enhance outcomes for ākonga Māori, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsiveness of their practice. Relevance of the provision. Involving mana whenua, whānau, community and Māori organisation. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider understands the role of practices and provision in enhancing outcomes for ākonga Māori and prioritises addressing unmet needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with ākonga, mana whenua, whānau and community. Incorporating tikanga Māori, te reo Māori and Mātauranga as appropriate. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has put in place practices and provision that enable ākonga Māori to achieve aspired outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reciprocal relationship with mana whenua, whānau and Māori organisations. Māori pedagogy utilised across the system.
<p>Access The lifelong learning needs of ākonga Māori inform processes, practices and provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider acknowledges barriers of access for ākonga Māori: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment processes are improved Programmes have built in numeracy, literacy and financial management options. Alternate modes of delivery are available to meet the needs of the learner. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider seeks to understand and mitigate barriers to access by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring gaps in provision and uptake by level and area of study. Engaging with ākonga, mana whenua, whānau, community and industry. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has put in place provision and processes that enable equitable access for ākonga Māori. Programmes are developed that support iwi / hapū / whānau initiatives and aspirations.
<p>Participation Manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and taukana-teina are incorporated to build a sense of belonging and trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider acknowledges the unmet needs of ākonga Māori that lead to disparity in participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.g., financial support, transport, cost of living, use of assisted technologies, age of learner, industry image. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider understands the importance of cultural competency for participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manaakitanga and whanaungatanga are understood and reflected in practices. The mana motuhake of the ākonga is acknowledged (e.g. individual learning plan is developed to set up for success). Tuakana-teina is nurtured. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has embedded culturally competent processes that enable Māori to be successful as Māori.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider puts in place some practices to meet cultural needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., a strong induction to set tone and expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kanohi ki te kanohi is encouraged (if possible) as part of a flexible, multi-mode programme. • Kaupapa Māori specific services and spaces are available. 	
<p>Skills and competencies Reciprocal relationships and cultural competency ensure relevant, responsive programmes and enhance learner outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator acknowledges the importance of balancing their teaching practice with regionally specific Mātauranga Māori. • Educator knows how to access support for learner’s cultural needs. 	<p><i>As for Acceptable, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator understands the importance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporating Mātauranga Māori into their programming. ○ Building relationships with mana whenua / iwi to enable the sharing of that knowledge. 	<p><i>As for Good, plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator has a strong reciprocal relationship with mana whenua / iwi, respectful of each others’ expertise. • Mātauranga Māori content is woven with integrity into the programme led by mana whenua / iwi.