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# External Evaluation and Review Report

SPELD New Zealand Incorporated

Date of report: 7 December 2022

# About SPELD New Zealand Incorporated

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*SPELD NZ<sup>1</sup> is a not-for-profit organisation established 50 years ago, providing education programmes and a range of professional services with the aim of supporting individuals with specific learning disabilities (SLD).*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	14 Erson Avenue, Royal Oak, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students (2022):	26 students/18.86 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) on the NZQA-approved programme, New Zealand Certificate in Teaching Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities (Level 5) (NZCTISLD) (ID 124372) (Ref: 2760-1)

One Māori student, two disabled students

#### **Non-NZQA programmes:**

111 students – Introduction to Specific Learning Disabilities (two-day course) (ISLD); 14 Māori students, one Pasifika and one disabled student

50 students – Probationary Teacher Practicum (two years) leading to registration as a SPELD NZ teacher. One Pasifika student, five disabled students

13 students – SPELD NZ Assessor Certificate in Diagnostics and Practicum (seven months). One disabled student

159 students – Kōwae Ako – six-hour, self-directed online learning capsules.

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<sup>1</sup> The objectives of SPELD NZ include: Promoting opportunities for people with SLD to access educational opportunities which cater for their individual needs; promoting public awareness of SLD and of the need to train teachers and other specialists in relevant techniques to help individuals with SLD; promoting training and the status of specialists in SLD for the benefit of the community; providing assessment, tuition and other support for the benefit of those with SLD and the community.

Number of staff:	Seven full-time and three part-time support staff; five part-time teaching staff
TEO profile:	See <a href="#">SPELD NZ</a> on NZQA website.  Graduates of the NZCTISLD undertake a two-year probationary teaching practicum prior to gaining registration as a SPELD NZ teacher.  SPELD NZ does not receive funding from the Tertiary Education Commission and relies on membership, fundraising and highly committed volunteers to support the work of paid employees.
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Highly Confident in the capability in self-assessment of SPELD NZ at the previous external evaluation and review (EER) conducted in June 2018.
Scope of evaluation:	Programme design and delivery: New Zealand Certificate in Teaching Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities (Level 5), and Introduction to Specific Learning Disabilities (two-day, non-NZQA course).  This comprises SPELD NZ's only NZQA-approved programme, and a non-assessed workshop with high student numbers.
MoE number:	7670
NZQA reference:	C48851
Dates of EER online enquiry:	11 and 12 October 2022

# Summary of results

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*SPELD NZ provides evidence-based, research-informed programmes that comprehensively meet the needs of students, SPELD NZ professionals (assessors and teachers), and the wider SPELD NZ community. The programmes enhance educational opportunities for learners with specific learning disabilities (SLD).*

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## **Highly Confident in educational performance**

SPELD NZ has strong course and qualification completions. Most graduates continue their study with SPELD NZ to gain registration as SPELD NZ teachers.

Students achieve personal and career goals through completion of relevant qualifications or professional development that enhances their skills and knowledge to support learners with SLD.

Graduates, whānau/families and learners with SLD attest to the ongoing value of programmes that improve the educational opportunities for learners with SLD.

## **Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment**

SPELD NZ effectively uses feedback from students, staff and external stakeholders<sup>2</sup>, in combination with national and international research, to ensure programmes, activities and services maintain their relevance.

The organisation is well managed, and staff are committed to the organisation's aims and values. The strategic purpose is clear, with consistent, effective and ongoing measurement of performance that is well communicated to all stakeholders.

Important compliance accountabilities are being managed effectively. A strong focus on ethical practice underpins all activities.

Self-assessment is well embedded throughout the organisation, and the findings are consistently used to maintain and improve performance.

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<sup>2</sup> SPELD NZ identifies stakeholders as: Ministry of Education, students and their employers, schools, early childhood and tertiary education providers, community service providers, and families or adult individuals who use SPELD NZ assessment and tuition services. SPELD NZ (the parent organisation) is also a stakeholder, as the programmes advance the achievement of SPELD NZ's strategic aims.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>3</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students achieve well in their programmes, gaining useful skills and knowledge that enable them to meet specific career or personal goals.</p> <p>SPELD NZ has strong qualification completion rates<sup>4</sup> of 90 per cent or higher in the New Zealand Certificate in Teaching Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities (Level 5) (NZCTISLD). This continues the achievement trend from the previous programme which was replaced in 2020. Moderation results confirm the validity of assessor decisions and endorse the high completion rates.</p> <p>In the past three years, all students retained in the programme have completed successfully. Reasons for withdrawals are well understood, and SPELD NZ endeavours to re-engage the small number of learners who withdraw from the programme, as their personal circumstances allow.</p> <p>Participation by Māori and Pasifika candidates is low in the NZCTISLD, with one Māori student each year since 2019, one Pasifika student in 2019, and two Pasifika students in 2021. Success and withdrawal rates for Māori and Pasifika students are comparable to those of all students. All disabled students enrolled in the past three years have successfully completed.</p> <p>SPELD NZ has undertaken relationship-building initiatives to try to increase participation by Māori and Pasifika candidates. This includes delivery of the Introduction to Specific Learning Disabilities (ISLD) to Department of Corrections staff and schools in South Auckland, and promotion of the programmes by Māori and Pasifika graduates. These activities have had</p>

<sup>3</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 1 in Appendix 1 for details.

	<p>minimal success to date, but the focus on developing relationships with Māori and Pasifika groups within the community will continue.</p> <p>The ISLD two-day workshop attracts large student numbers, with higher participation by Māori and Pasifika students. Students improve their understanding of SLD, gain confidence and feel enabled to better support family members with SLD. Education workers (teachers, teacher aides, learning support workers) apply new strategies to support learners with SLD in their workplaces, and share skills and knowledge of SLD with their colleagues and managers.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>SPELD NZ has a clear focus on the goals of the students and supports motivated students to achieve excellent results. Achievement is well understood, with moderation and reviews of assessment results checking on and validating this achievement.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students in all programmes gain relevant skills and knowledge that they use to enhance the wellbeing and educational progress of learners with SLD.</p> <p>NZCTISLD students are employed in teaching roles when they enrol on the programme, with many in specialist roles such as resource teacher learning behaviour, special education needs coordinator, or learning support coordinator. Students are able to apply what they learn immediately in their work contexts. Most graduates progress to further study and complete the SPELD NZ teacher practicum, with high rates of graduates achieving probationary registration as SPELD NZ teachers.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>ISLD students improve their understanding of SLD and develop strategies that support learners to gain confidence in their abilities and to progress with learning. This knowledge is shared with whānau and communities to support the aims of SPELD NZ to promote a broader understanding of SLD.</p>

<sup>5</sup> Table 3 provides graduate destination information.

	<p>Following completion of the NZCTISLD programme, graduates maintain relationships with SPELD NZ through continued engagement with local liaison groups and ongoing professional development.</p> <p>Feedback from learners with SLD who have been taught by SPELD NZ teachers provides supporting evidence of the long-term value of the NZCTISLD. The comparison of data from initial diagnostic and subsequent learner assessments demonstrates improved access to educational opportunities and progress by learners with SLD, confirming the effectiveness of SPELD NZ tuition.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Feedback from graduates and learners with SLD, and evidence from the SPELD NZ teacher registration/certification process confirms the value of the programmes to all stakeholders. Long-term relationships with graduates signify the importance of SPELD NZ as part of graduates' ongoing professional development.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The NZCTISLD meets the needs of students who are generally employed as full-time educators. The online programme is delivered to small groups, each supported by a dedicated kaiārahi<sup>6</sup> who is an experienced SLD practitioner.</p> <p>The face-to-face workshops for ISLD provide opportunities for students to interact with others, share their experiences of SLD, and develop networks and strategies in a supportive environment.</p> <p>SPELD NZ has regular, ongoing interaction with stakeholders through the SPELD NZ community of teachers, diagnostic assessors and members. Individual feedback from students and the SPELD NZ community adds to information gathered from programme and course evaluations, regular staff meetings and the professional standards committee to inform programme</p>

<sup>6</sup> Kaiārahi is how SPELD NZ names the teaching staff. Kaiārahi matua is the teacher with a programme leadership role.

	<p>development and broader organisational strategy. SPELD NZ's ongoing engagement with national and international experts and agencies ensures programme content and delivery is relevant and aligned with current research.</p> <p>Demand for the programme continues to be high, with more applications than places on the NZCTISLD. Return business from schools, tertiary providers and other stakeholders provides confidence that the programmes are relevant and continue to meet stakeholder needs.</p> <p>Assessment is appropriate, with a mix of formative and summative activity. Moderation assures the suitability of assessment methods and provides feedback to teaching staff for consideration and action throughout the year, and more formally as part of annual programme review.</p> <p>Associate teachers provide feedback to kaiārahi and students on their performance during NZCTISLD practicum activities. This provides an external perspective that supports academic integrity within the programme. Mentors support graduates throughout the subsequent probationary teacher practicum and prepare them for an independent<sup>7</sup> assessment process. This ensures graduates meet the required standards for registration as SPELD NZ teachers.</p> <p>A comprehensive annual programme review gathers feedback from students, kaiārahi and other stakeholders to guide course changes and updates. Delivery is also reviewed in real time on an ongoing basis, which results in immediate updates as necessary, within established procedures and programme requirements. The professional standards committee reviews proposed changes with reference to current SLD research and practice prior to implementation to ensure the programme continues to meet student and stakeholder needs.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Purposeful, regular engagement with SLD experts, stakeholders and students ensures programmes and activities meet their needs. Continued high demand for programmes and activities attests to their ongoing relevance.</p>

<sup>7</sup> The independent assessor is a member of the professional standards committee and reviews each application for registration/certification using a rigorous, criterion-based process.



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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students receive clear information about the programmes and study expectations through the website and during the application and interview processes. SPELD NZ gathers information during this period about student expectations, career goals and pathway intentions, which helps them to support the students appropriately.</p> <p>Small-group learning on the NZCTISLD helps to develop respectful relationships between kaiārahi and students, which are valued, particularly in the online learning environment. Regular one-to-one communication between students and kaiārahi provides opportunities to discuss academic progress. Students described kaiārahi as accessible and supportive and the learning environment as inclusive.</p> <p>Priority learners are supported by kaiārahi who understand their learning needs. Mihimihi and Te Reo Māori are integrated into the programmes, and whanaungatanga helps to establish supportive relationships. A Māori/Pasifika learning hub coordinator is available when needed.</p> <p>Kaiārahi are experienced SLD practitioners with extensive knowledge of the needs of neurodiverse learners. Online learning design enables students to learn in a way that meets their individual needs. Assessments are designed to reduce anxiety, and the use of assistive technologies is encouraged.</p> <p>The move to fully online delivery for NZCTISLD has increased access to learning by reducing travel and associated costs, and offering flexibility for students. Students enjoy the face-to-face workshop. However, while the programme gains consistently high satisfaction rates in surveys, students said that having the workshop earlier in the programme could help them establish relationships and support networks with peers. This feedback is being considered in the review and redesign of the programme.</p> <p>The successful two-day, face-to-face ISLD programme was attended by 111 students in 2021. It raised awareness of SLD and established effective support networks for graduates. Although limited support is needed in such a short course, students and kaiārahi positively described the inclusive</p>

	<p>environment and the careful attention given to the needs of the students.</p> <p>Students have ongoing opportunities to provide feedback, and SPELD NZ actively addresses and responds to student feedback in a timely and appropriate way. SPELD NZ's self-review of the Code of Practice<sup>8</sup> identified all outcomes as implemented or well implemented.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Students are well supported through respectful relationships with staff and kaiārahi. Appropriate information and advice supports students to meet their learning goals and succeed in their programmes. The move to online learning has increased access and flexibility for students engaged in full-time work.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SPELD NZ is a not-for-profit organisation established 50 years ago with the aim of supporting individuals with specific learning disabilities. The organisation is governed by a board of directors who have been involved with SPELD NZ for many years and are deeply committed to the values and aims of the organisation.</p> <p>Organisational leadership is effective, with a clear strategy that measures and reports on success against strategic goals in four areas: expertise and leadership, awareness, relationships with stakeholders, and sustainability. The strategic direction is effectively communicated and is understood by board members, management and staff.</p> <p>Independence from government agencies is valued in terms of SPELD NZ's advocacy role, although this demands effective fundraising and careful use of resources. Programmes are appropriately resourced while ensuring SPELD NZ's financial sustainability. The introduction of Kōwae Ako online learning capsules is an example of innovation that uses online learning tools in a cost-effective way to meet the high demand for training in SLD. The executive officer and training coordinator ensure the</p>

<sup>8</sup> The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code).

	<p>effective management of the programme, including student application and enrolment, student evaluations and scheduling.</p> <p>SPELD NZ recruits qualified and experienced teaching staff and supports their professional development and mentoring. Teaching staff performance is reviewed formally, along with ongoing observation and feedback throughout the year. The kaiārahi matua provides day-to-day management for kaiārahi and the programmes while the professional standards committee (a sub-committee of the board) maintains the professional standards of SPELD NZ. Staff retention is high, but there is a need to recruit more kaiārahi to meet the demand for places on the NZCTISLD.</p> <p>The SPELD NZ board and management are actively engaged in national advocacy for recognition and support of SLD within the education system, specifically for more effective direct funding for users of the available SLD services.</p> <p>SPELD NZ is a niche provider closely connected to a loyal community of stakeholders. The culture of the organisation is open, collaborative and inclusive, using a research-based approach to programme and service development that achieves better outcomes for learners with SLD.</p> <p>The organisation encourages reflection on its role, and continuous improvement is embedded in day-to-day operations. Self-assessment is led by management and is comprehensively understood and adopted throughout the organisation. The board undertakes self-evaluation using a self-assessment tool for directors. Regular communication, through the Record newsletter to SPELD NZ members, the website and notices to staff keep the organisation and SPELD NZ community informed about the strategic direction, initiatives and achievements of the organisation and members.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>SPELD NZ has strong, values-based leadership and a clear vision and understanding of its purpose and achievements. Monitoring of performance is regular, transparent and robust, resulting in highly effective support for educational achievement and related activities and services.</p>

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance is overseen by the executive officer who uses a compliance calendar to ensure obligations are met. The board receives monthly compliance reports, and stakeholders are informed as required.</p> <p>Policies and procedures that comply with the requirements of NZQA and other relevant legislation are in place. The programme is delivered as approved, with attestations and returns submitted within required timeframes. SPELD NZ engages proactively with NZQA teams to seek advice and support in activities such as programme approval and accreditation, moderation and monitoring, and consistency reviews.</p> <p>Policy and processes ensure all SPELD NZ professionals are engaged in ethical and appropriate practice. This includes police vetting for students and teachers. Adherence with codes of conduct based on the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand's code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession include relevant permissions and documentation for practicum activities.</p> <p>The policy framework is reviewed regularly by the board, and changes are made as needed when legislation or conditions change.</p>
Conclusion:	SPELD NZ has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these proactively and effectively to ensure obligations are met.

## Focus areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: Programme Design and Delivery

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>

## 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.*

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

## 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. Enrolment and completion data by course with priority learners identified**

	No. enrolled	DNC	Graduates	Māori	Pasifika	SLD
ISLD 2022	111	1	110	14.5	1	1
NZCTISLD 2022	26	0	0	1		0
ISLD 2021	334	4	330	32	5.5	5
NZCTISLD 2021	30	3	27	1	2	0
ISLD 2020	232	0	232	14	1	3
NZCTISLD 2020	27	1	26	1		1
ISLD 2019	181	0	181	23	1	1
CCSLD <sup>9</sup> 2019	27	3	24	1	1	0
Total #	968	12	930	87.5	11.5	11
% enrolled				8.90%	1.18	1.13

**Table 2. Withdrawals from NZCTISLD**

Did not complete				
Year	No.	Ethnicity		
2019	2	Māori	Pakeha	-
2020	1	Māori	-	-
2021	3	Cook Is Māori	British	Pakeha

**Table 3. Graduate destination information**

Programme information			Intended destination					Actual destination		
Programme	Year	No. of students	SPELD teacher	SPELD teacher (possibly)	PD	Career	General interest	No. of graduates	Probationary teacher registration	%
CCSLD	2019	27	22	2	21	16	17	24	20	83
NZCTISLD	2020	27	23	1	19	15	9	26	24	92
NZCTISLD	2021	30	29	1	18	15	14	27	20	74
NZCTISLD	2022	26	25	0	17	12	10	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>9</sup> SPELD NZ Certificate Course in Specific Learning Disabilities

# 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 fraud<sup>10</sup>*
- 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.*

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<sup>10</sup> 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 2021, 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 including TITOs 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 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 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, 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 2021. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.*

*External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.*

*External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)). 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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