



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Fire and Rescue New Zealand

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 May 2011

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Location:	56 Mill Street, Onga Onga, Central Hawke's Bay
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1998
Number of students:	Domestic: Since registration as a PTE, more than 9000 students have taken Fire and Rescue New Zealand's courses, with two to four courses delivered each week, nationally. Each course has about 12-14 participants. International: N/a
Number of staff:	Two Full Time and Four Part Time Staff.
Scope of active accreditation:	Fire and Rescue New Zealand is accredited to deliver unit standards that include areas of safety, fire safety, first aid, and emergency response.
Sites:	One
Distinctive characteristics:	Fire and Rescue New Zealand provides a range of programmes relating to fire safety, first aid, and emergency response across a range of environments, using both theoretical and practical instruction. It delivers short courses, many of which are three to four hours to one day in duration, such as the First Aid and Fire Safety courses currently delivered on contract to the Department of Corrections. Most other courses are of two to three days' duration, many of them delivered on contract to rural fire authorities or local/regional councils. Clients may also be other private enterprises such as transport operators.

Courses designed for particular client needs may focus on one or a combination of aspects of fire, rescue, safety, or first aid. Examples of these elements include: Workplace Fires/Fire Extinguisher, Building and Fire Warden, Pre-Hospital Care, Rural Fire Fighting, On-site Evacuation Drills, Workplace Rescue, Structural Fire-Fighting, Resuscitation & First Aid, Working at Heights, Industrial Fire-Fighting, Automatic External Defibrillator, Breathing Apparatus, and Marine Fire Fighting.

Although course aims will vary according to the client's needs, all courses are delivered in a practical, hands-on mode, generally combining both fire safety and first aid instruction in the context of the particular scope that has been negotiated with the client. The First Aid and Fire Safety Recertification programme for Department of Corrections staff, for example, sets out to meet the recently reviewed and revised first aid training requirements of NZQA (effective from 1 December 2010). Within these courses Fire and Rescue New Zealand also teaches select strategies for responding to and suppressing fires, particularly in the context of a prison environment.

Assessment within each short course is based on New Zealand Qualifications Framework criteria for specific assessment standards, and longer courses may require evidence of successful completion of pre- or post-course theory or practical requirements.

Recent significant changes:	None
Previous quality assurance history:	The previous quality assurance visit by NZQA was an audit in 2006. At that audit, Fire and Rescue New Zealand met all requirements of QA Standard One, the standard then in force.
Other:	Although Fire and Rescue New Zealand is based in the Central Hawke's Bay area, courses are delivered nationwide, most often at the client's site. Courses for the Department of Corrections, for example, are delivered at all prisons according to an annual schedule that has been determined by agreement between the TEO and the client. Courses for district councils are delivered at particular fire stations within council-administered areas.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of Fire and Rescue New Zealand included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

The following focus area was selected because it is currently the main course offered by the TEO:

- First Aid and Fire Safety (initial and re-certification courses) for Department of Corrections staff.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand is a small training provider, and the two focus areas above were sufficient to give the evaluators an accurate representation of the whole organisation.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

The external evaluation and review team spent two days (12 hours on site) conducting the EER at the organisation's head office at Onga Onga, Central Hawke's Bay. During the visit, the evaluation team met with the captain/managing director (who is also the lead tutor) and talked, either face-to-face or by telephone, with two other tutors, students, and a range of other stakeholders, including the national assessor for the Prison Services GTE, the national manager (Learning and Development) of the Department of Corrections, the central region catering manager for Inmate Employment Internal Services, and two Corrections staff currently participating in a course at a prison.

Other stakeholders spoken to included a teacher who had participated in a first aid recertification course at a school, a driver development trainer for a transport company, the deputy chief fire officer for a rural fire brigade, and the national moderator of the Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation (FRSITO).

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Fire and Rescue New Zealand**.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand develops its programmes in-house, in consultation with industry and the relevant standard-setting bodies. It sets high standards for its own staff in terms of skills, qualifications, and ongoing professional development, and has systems in place for the maintenance of competency in the fields of fire and rescue, emergency response training, and first aid. It has impressed its clients with the custom-designed first aid and emergency response equipment used in course delivery. For example, replica prison cell doors have been built for teaching emergency responses to locked-cell events such as fire or prisoner self-harm. These may be set up outside for fire or emergency break-in practice. The TEO has now purchased four automated external defibrillators (AEDs), 28 training AEDs, and four BullEx live-fire extinguisher training systems, and has built four trailer-mounted live-fire (stove-top, oven and cell-door) simulators for use on all courses, as a result of evaluations by both staff and learners.

The TEO works closely with stakeholders, including rural fire authorities, the Department of Corrections, other clients such as schools (for fire safety and first aid training) and transport operators, to tailor courses to meet particular learner requirements. Learner evaluations that were seen by the evaluators, and the past and current learners who were interviewed, all expressed personal satisfaction with the quality of the training received. The Department of Corrections stakeholders who were interviewed spoke very highly of the value of the First Aid and Fire Safety course for the learners.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand is actively involved in positive community initiatives such as the pro bono delivery of a first aid course to the staff of the local rural primary school. Over three months, the staff of the TEO voluntarily built a fire engine for a local rural fire brigade. TEO staff members have, over at least five years in the past, worked voluntarily with at-risk youth. This demonstrates the organisation's commitment to positive community involvement.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Fire and Rescue New Zealand**.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand has plans for improvements, which have been identified through a process of self-assessment. An example is the plan to further improve the methods of seeking learner evaluation after course delivery. Given the fact that the captain/managing director is also the lead tutor of the TEO, work pressure has meant that some self-assessment improvement plans, such as the re-institution of a formal stakeholder network, have not yet been fully implemented. Self-assessment activities are still being developed as this TEO is moving away from its previous reliance on external audit towards a more proactive self-assessment mode of operation.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand has good systems in place to review its activities through formal and informal channels. These include student evaluations and regular moderation and programme review. Tutor evaluations are submitted after each course, and regular staff meetings occur for debriefings about recently delivered courses.

Stakeholders all spoke positively about the open lines of communication they have with Fire and Rescue New Zealand and the captain/managing director in particular, and the responsiveness of the TEO to any suggestions for improvement. FRSITO has received assessment results regularly for moderation and visits the TEO regularly for moderation discussions. The next visit is scheduled for early in 2011. When another tutor is employed (as currently planned), there will be more time for the managing director to re-institute an advisory committee and to improve post-course evaluation strategies.

There is confidence that the organisation has the capability to review and respond to identified needs of stakeholders to improve any aspects of the training if required.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Fire and Rescue New Zealand has developed training methods, including training guides tailored to the needs of particular client groups, and customised training equipment, to ensure that learners achieve to the highest possible level within the allotted time for each course. For optimisation of learner achievement, Fire & Rescue New Zealand insists on maintaining suitable group sizes, generally about 12-14 learners at any one time. This is to ensure that best value is achieved from training equipment and that attention can be given on a one-to-one basis as needed.

All students complete the short courses. As only a small number of students over the 12 years since registration have not completed a longer course, the achievement rate is very high. The high achievement rate is also associated with the fact that all learners are engaged in courses that are employment-related. For example, Department of Corrections staff are required to maintain their first aid certification. Rural fire authorities have provided opportunities for volunteer or employed firefighters to raise their fire-fighting and first aid skills and qualifications. The current and past students who were interviewed spoke very positively about the relevance of the training to both their employment and their personal lives. The simulated oven fires within the First Aid and Fire Safety course were specifically mentioned in this regard. How well learners achieve was reflected in both the competence they gained and refreshed and their confidence using their skills in an emergency.

All courses are unit standards based, with all assessments at level 3 or above moderated by FRSITO. Training guides are submitted to FRSITO each year for pre-assessment moderation. First aid assessments are moderated by NZQA. All students have the opportunity to be reassessed while on their course. Any students who do not complete longer-course assessment requirements on-course are followed up post-course, until assessment requirements have been met.

Department of Corrections managers who were interviewed expressed a high level of satisfaction with learner achievement. For example, the Department of Corrections national manager (Learning and Development) stated that delivery is consistent and is fully meeting the department's need to have 3,500 custodial staff with current first aid certification.

Students value the practice of real-life scenarios using standard equipment or realistic simulation equipment, such as the replica cell doors that Fire and Rescue New Zealand has built for the First Aid and Fire Safety courses for Department of Corrections staff. Using

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

this equipment, learners can practise with real fire-fighting and emergency management scenarios in a safe environment. Scenario assessment often takes place with students working in pairs. It is considered by the TEO that, for fire and first aid training, this paired approach is more realistic for modelling and assessment purposes. Each student is assessed individually by the assessor for each task. Reassessment opportunities are provided later in the course if necessary.

Tutors rely on repetition to ensure all learners reach the required standard by the end of the course. If the pre-course work required for assessment is not completed in advance, the learner is assessed at the course and then followed up as necessary until the pre-course work is submitted.

An issue that Fire and Rescue New Zealand has identified for improvement in self-assessment is that of post-course evaluation, in recognition that course evaluations completed at the close of a course sometimes do not measure outcomes as well as evaluations that take place after an interval of time. Ways of implementing such a practice are currently being considered. The regular staff meetings for post-course delivery debriefings, and tutor evaluations of courses are effective self-assessment strategies. There is an annual stakeholder survey that addresses, among other questions, the considered effectiveness of assessment and the relevance of the training to the learners.

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

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

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

A wide range of stakeholders has been identified by Fire and Rescue New Zealand. Stakeholder representatives who were interviewed reflected a high level of satisfaction with the delivery of courses. With respect to the First Aid and Fire Safety course for Department of Corrections staff, stakeholders said they valued the relevance of the course to prison staff and to the situations they could face in the workplace or at home. The vision of Fire & Rescue New Zealand is to provide “life-saving knowledge and skills” within New Zealand workplaces.

Examples of equipment that has been designed and built by the TEO for particular scenarios were valued by stakeholders. These included the cell doors, kitchen oven fire simulators, and the BullEx live-fire extinguisher training systems, that are designed to create a safe and controlled training setting that provides an opportunity for custodial staff to observe fire behaviour and extinguish realistic live fires that replicate actual fire conditions within a prison environment. The systems also allow for repetition, which assists both training and learning. Trainees who were interviewed commented positively on this aspect of the training.

Annual stakeholder feedback is sought by Fire and Rescue New Zealand, using electronic format. The evaluators were provided with printed copies of the 2010 Stakeholder Survey returns, which show a consistently high level of satisfaction with aspects of delivery,

including the relevance of the training and quality of teaching and assessment. A telephone conversation with one stakeholder confirmed that reservations he had expressed in his evaluation had been followed up by the TEO. Similarly, student evaluation forms were provided, all showing general or a high level of satisfaction with courses that had been delivered by the TEO. Interviews with past and current learners confirmed this satisfaction with the courses that have been developed and delivered by Fire & Rescue New Zealand.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand considers that it can improve its self-assessment practices with respect to learner evaluation of courses. Notwithstanding this, there is an effective system in place for seeking learner and employer feedback. The evaluators heard from employer representatives (e.g. Department of Corrections and a transport company employer representative) that they are very satisfied with the achievement of their staff who attend Fire & Rescue New Zealand courses. The evaluators considered that there is a consistently high value ascribed by stakeholders to the delivery of courses by this TEO.

Learners commented on the value of the training to their personal lives. They specifically noted the models of household ovens for demonstration of fires and fire-fighting in a domestic situation. Where clients request further training for their employees, Fire & Rescue New Zealand can deliver subsequent courses at a higher level, for example fire-fighting (vegetation) to level 7. These are most likely to be longer courses, with pre- and post-course assessment requirements.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

When employers approach Fire and Rescue New Zealand to request delivery of a course, a training needs analysis is initially undertaken, followed by a proposal for the design and delivery of a course. The design of any pre-course reading and post-course assessment requirements are included in the initial training proposal. Employers generally want their employees to gain specific skills to further their work-specific qualifications, or to have their first aid certificates renewed. Learners also express their need to have first aid and fire safety training relevant to their workplace and to be able to keep their first aid certification. The facility for learners to practise resuscitation using AEDs has been added to the course in response to stakeholder feedback.

The evaluators saw evidence of the initial discussions with employers about course design, and heard of their subsequent satisfaction that their needs had been met. Two current learners (Department of Corrections staff) expressed their satisfaction that the First Aid and Fire Safety course was meeting their needs. They also considered that it compared very favourably with training delivered in the past by other first aid training providers.

The evaluators considered, on the evidence provided, that there is a genuine effort made by Fire and Rescue New Zealand to match course design and delivery to the needs of learners and other stakeholders. The feedback received indicates a high level of satisfaction that

needs are being met. Student evaluations seen by the evaluators were all positive, as were the verbal evaluations provided by learners who were interviewed (two past learners and two current course participants).

With respect to the First Aid and Fire Safety course for the Department of Corrections, there is regular liaison between the TEO and the Department of Corrections to ensure that course delivery within the current contract continues to meet both employer and learner needs. Organisations are sent “joining instructions” up to four weeks before any course, to ensure that any pre-course requirements can be undertaken by learners before the course commences.

Students are encouraged to use their own languages when working in pairs, or during welcomes and introductions. Staff commented that this is particularly important and appears valued with respect to the Department of Corrections contract for First Aid and Fire Safety courses. The evaluators were informed that learners have given favourable feedback concerning the respect given by the TEO to learners’ languages and cultures.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand places high value on responding to community needs and has undertaken a number of voluntary activities that demonstrate its commitment in this regard. Examples include the building of a fire engine over three months for a rural fire brigade, the free delivery of a first aid recertification course for staff at the local (rural) primary school, and working with at-risk youth.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

A major focus of the management of Fire and Rescue New Zealand is on maintaining currency of practice in the fire and safety industry so that an effective learning environment can continue to be provided. All tutors have had significant experience in fire-fighting, in both paid and voluntary roles, and two are still active in this area. Similarly, all tutors have first aid qualifications that meet or exceed the recently reviewed and revised NZQA requirements². Professional development plans for all tutors are discussed at annual performance reviews. The job and person description for a new tutor indicated the commitment of the TEO to providing effective teaching and learning.

All tutors have qualifications in teaching adults. One relatively new tutor described her week-long induction to Fire and Rescue New Zealand procedures, including teaching, and her induction to the Department of Corrections before involvement in the current contract with this client. There is regular peer evaluation of teaching to ensure consistency among

² NZQA, effective from December 2010. “First Aid as a Life Skill: Training requirements for quality provision of unit standard-based first aid training”.

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Assessment-and-moderation/Assessment-of-standards/NZQA-First-Aid-training-requirements-3-Nov10.pdf>

the tutors, and to ensure that any necessary adjustments to teaching style or course delivery can be attended to. Records of peer evaluations are kept and are discussed between the tutor and the manager.

Learners are encouraged to use their own languages, most often te reo Māori, in the welcomes or introductions, and in any other aspects of the course if that is important. Learner feedback has referred to the value of acknowledging learners' own culture and languages, or being able to work in different languages within their small group tasks. As noted above, Fire & Rescue New Zealand keeps group sizes to generally about 12-14 learners at any one time, to ensure that best value is achieved from training equipment and that attention can be given on a one-to-one basis as needed.

When tutors are working at a distance from the TEO office at Onga Onga, there are regular debriefing and planning meetings using Skype technology. Texts and emails, as well as phone calls, keep the management and tutors in touch with each other.

External moderation of unit standards has occurred regularly, with the Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation (FRSITO) being the primary ITO. As noted above, an ITO visit to Fire and Rescue New Zealand is planned for early in 2011, at which moderation issues will be discussed.

Although the TEO currently has accreditation for assessment standards in horticulture and agriculture, no assessment against these has occurred for some time, and this accreditation will be cancelled by the TEO. The first aid unit standards have been moderated by NZQA, with assessment modifications requested by NZQA in 2009 now having been attended to by the TEO. Industry stakeholders are kept informed about assessment requirements, and, for individual training contracts, the employers or industry bodies are consulted about the particular course design, including assessment. The Department of Corrections managers who were interviewed spoke highly about the level of communication between the department and the TEO and the effectiveness of the teaching.

Prior to course delivery at any new venue or for a new client, the venue is checked for its suitability as a learning environment. As should be expected of this TEO, a thorough check is made of health and safety aspects such as egress and fire extinguishers. A post-training checklist is also used, covering course evaluation, post-course assessment requirements, and any further training needs of learners.

The general teaching routine for first aid and fire safety courses is for the presentation of initial theory (often using PowerPoint to illustrate real situations), followed by observations and practice. The equipment designed and built by the TEO for fire safety instruction and practice was positively commented upon by stakeholders.

The student evaluations that were seen all commented favourably about the effectiveness of the teaching. Industry and employer stakeholders reported very favourably about this, with at least two of the Department of Corrections managers who were interviewed stating that the teaching is excellent and that it is "hard to beat".

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

The most frequent need for support of learners within first aid and fire service training occurs when a scenario or photograph raises memories of a traumatic incident in the past. Teaching staff of Fire and Rescue New Zealand are well aware of the need to support learners in need of counselling, or where a careful repetition of the scenario is necessary for assessment needs to be met. Practical demonstrations in most courses will compensate where learners have literacy or numeracy needs. Assessments in first aid courses are routinely practical and are generally undertaken in pairs.

All students are provided with “joining instructions”, which contain any pre-course reading that is required as well as the usual information that should be provided to students. Re-sits are allowed where students do not initially meet assessment requirements, although they usually occur later in the course. Students work in pairs or groups through planned scenarios, so peer support is possible through the course delivery. As noted above, classes are kept small to ensure the best value is achieved from training equipment and that individual attention can be given.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand is planning to improve its self-assessment capability, in recognition that course evaluations completed at the close of a course sometimes do not measure outcomes as well as evaluations that take place after an interval of time. Students currently complete post-course evaluations immediately after the end of the course. There is a reference on the evaluation form to support during the theory and practical sessions of the course. The learner evaluations that were seen for a Department of Corrections First Aid and Fire Safety Recertification Programme were all positive with respect to all aspects of course delivery.

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

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

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

Fire and Rescue New Zealand is well resourced, with up-to-date and custom-built equipment, including live-fire simulators and extinguisher training systems. For example, because tutors always go to the client’s site for course delivery, the TEO has custom-built and fitted trailers, including all necessary fire safety and demonstration equipment. The fire trucks also carry first aid and fire safety equipment. Trailers used in the delivery of courses for the Department of Corrections are able to be taken into the prison compound for demonstration of, and practice with, live fire scenarios.

The TEO is a small organisation, which means that governance and management are undertaken by the same people. There is a small management team of managing director, office manager, and accountant/administrator. The managing director is also the captain,

training manager and lead tutor. Regular management meetings are held for decision-making with respect to strategic planning and resourcing. When necessary, the roles of governance and management are separated. For example, when there have been staff performance issues in the past, these employment matters have been deferred to an employment consultant and managed at a distance.

There are clear and well-maintained links between the vision, which is to provide "life-saving knowledge and skills" within New Zealand workplaces, and between the strategic planning and course delivery. Staff are well supported to undergo further professional development, including upgrading of qualifications.

The current contract for course delivery to the Department of Corrections is a major one for the TEO. Feedback from the department is listened and responded to. The Department of Corrections managers who were interviewed spoke positively about this responsiveness, evidence that the training effectively meets the needs of the client.

Fire and Rescue New Zealand intends to re-establish an industry advisory group so that there is an improved mechanism for hearing and responding to industry feedback and advice. Further improvements to the gathering of learner feedback, after completion of courses, are also planned.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: First Aid and Fire Safety course

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

Recommendations

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

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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